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Grad's Cam account 'hacked' by her Iranian captors

Meg Byrom
Senior News Editor

A former student has claimed the Iranian military "hacked" into her Cambridge Alumni account.

Dr Kylie Moore-Gilbert said that her account had been broken into by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a group who had previously held her hostage in Iran in 2018.

The Middle East researcher found that the contact information in her alumni account, including her name, address and phone number had been replaced with an address in Tehran and an email address in the name of Amina Mohamadi.

The former Wolfson student asked: "The big question here is, when did this data breach occur, and are the Iranians still there now in the University's computer networks?"

Moore-Gilbert, who studied AMES between 2009 and 2013, was detained in Iran under false charges of espionage in September 2018. She was held for 804 days, enduring solitary confinement and physical abuse, before being freed in a prisoner swap in November 2020.

The IRGC has a record of attacking universities. In 2019 the group was accused of targeting SOAS, posing as British academics to obtain sensitive information. According to a source, the IRGC also accessed Moore-Gilbert's former employer, Melbourne University's, internal system, including staff email accounts.

Moore-Gilbert said: "this is potentially a state supported attack and is a very serious matter, it should be dealt with by people with expertise in cybersecurity. It must be taken more seriously to see if more data has been stolen.



▲ Dr Moore-Gilbert was detained between 2018 to 2020 (ANDY ROBERTS/YOUTUBE)

"The AMES department is seen by the IRGC as a recruitment ground for MI6 and GCHQ. If they have gained broader access to the Cambridge Alumni network, that could include details of staff and students researching sensitive areas that are of interest to the IRGC.

"Today, for many authoritarian regimes, academics are the new journalists. However, while media organisations provide robust training for correspondents sent into the field, academics are largely left to fend for themselves."

Moore-Gilbert said the revelation of the hack was made "doubly painful", as the University did not make a public statement of support during her unjust imprisonment. "Cambridge should take a strong stance to defend the academic freedom of its staff, students and alumni", she said.

After looking in to the alleged hack, a University spokesperson dismissed the suggestion that the IRGC had hacked her account, putting it instead down to their "human error".

"At Dr Moore-Gilbert's request, we investigated irregularities in her alumni account and were satisfied that the incorrect data was added through human error. Dr Moore-Gilbert's personal data was not compromised and we have removed the incorrect information. The University has apologised to Dr Moore-Gilbert for the concern this must have caused her.

"We were, of course, concerned with Dr Moore-Gilbert's plight during her detention, but received clear advice that public intervention might do more harm than good. We are delighted that Dr Moore-Gilbert has now regained her freedom."

EAMC overload

Applications to the exam mitigation committee have tripled since 2013 with a record 1792 applications in 2021/22. **Page 3**

John's slashes support

The college's support for its poorest students has fallen by up to two thirds since last year with incoming freshers getting £7,500 less. **Page 4**

SU: Pandemic to blame

Zaynab Ahmed has said students are less engaged after the loss of "institutional memory" during the pandemic. **Page 5**

News

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Who in their right mind would join the SU?

Peter McLaughlin,
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WEATHER

FRIDAY



17 °C

SATURDAY



18 °C

SUNDAY



17 °C

MONDAY



18 °C

TUESDAY



20 °C

WEDNESDAY



18 °C

THURSDAY



17 °C

Oxbridge summer school hired mentors without DBS checks

Bella Shorrocks, Tommy Castellani & Hugh Jones

A popular provider of summer programmes to secondary school pupils employed Cambridge students to work as youth mentors without DBS checks, *Varsity* has learned.

A spokesperson for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) told *Varsity*: “for individuals in regulated activity, it is best practice to apply for an enhanced DBS check”. Supervising, teaching, or taking care of children for three or more days in a thirty day period constitutes regulated activity.

Immerse Education, whose summer programmes in Oxford and Cambridge cost up to £5500, employs current Oxbridge students as ‘mentors’ to support and guide attendees, aged 13-18.

While the company states that “all members of staff undergo extensive security and safety checks, including UK Government Enhanced DBS checks”, *Varsity* can reveal that at least three Cambridge students working on a programme hosted in Sidney Sussex College

began before their DBS checks had been approved. One mentor did not receive the results of their check until nearly three weeks after they started work.

Although the programme took place in Sidney, it was not run by the College, which is not affiliated with Immerse Education.

This comes amidst wider dissatisfaction among Immerse’s mentors, leading them to raise a number of concerns with management. Employees complained that their hours exceeded company policy, telling management that in some cases mentors were working consecutive 15-hour days.

In an email to mentors seen by *Varsity*, Peter Grieve, managing director of Immerse Education, rejected these claims. He told the employees that looking at their rota, the claim that they had worked 55 hours in their second week on the programme - their main complaint - could not be true.

He also told mentors: “I’m satisfied that, over the two weeks, the average hours per week for everyone was under the 55 threshold we set as an internal

measure”.

A similar row broke out at Oxford Summer Courses (OSC), another provider of summer programmes. OSC also rents the facilities of Cambridge Colleges and hires Cambridge students to work as mentors on its programmes, which can cost nearly £6000 for a two-week residential.

Three student mentors went on to write a letter of complaint to OSC, which they said was passed on to trade union representatives. Two of the employees said that they had left their roles “earlier than anticipated” as a result of the treatment they received.

Their complaint alleged a “consistent and degrading form of verbal abuse” and said that the “demeaning and uncaring nature of management” led to their premature departure. They demanded acknowledgement of wrongdoing on the part of the company and its staff, and sought compensation for the treatment they allegedly received.

OSC said they did not have a record of the complaint. Immerse did not respond to a request for comment.

Earlier Oxbridge deadlines detrimental for state school pupils, teachers warn

Kareena Rippingale

While Cambridge has accepted record numbers of state school students in 2022, the move to bring forward the pre-registration exam deadlines may disproportionately harm state school applicants, educators told *Varsity*.

Cambridge Admissions Assessment Testing (CAAT) brought forward exam dates by two weeks, to the 18th and 19th October, affecting medicine, engineering, and natural sciences applicants. As a result, the deadline to apply for these tests has been brought forward two weeks to the 30th September.

Varsity spoke to the head of sixth form at a London state school, who

said the difference of two weeks would be “critical” because it would disproportionately affect state-educated pupils.

Wealthier students would be preparing for the tests privately long in advance, he noted. By contrast, state school students will now face reduced preparation time once they return from the summer break.

Sam Pannu, a secondary school teacher, warned the new deadline may discourage applicants, particularly from low-performing state schools.

Students would be left with less time to overcome the “overwhelming stigma of applying to an elite university where they worry about fitting in.”

Pannu was also concerned that the shorter deadline could contribute to

anxiety among students who lack parental support.

Many potential applicants have “parents whose first language is often not English, and don’t really know about things like Oxbridge”, she said.

For some, the change represents a loss of critical time. Initially, Faiza was put off applying by Cambridge’s lack of diversity.

During her two-week period of self-isolation, however, Faiza changed her mind. She put in an application days before the deadline and is now at Cambridge reading English.

The University said the previous dates were “not ideal”, and that the admissions tests were designed to test ability, not preparation.

Oxford beat Cambridge in Times rankings

Michael Hennessey
Deputy News Editor

Cambridge University has once again placed third in The Times Good University Guide, with Oxford retaking the top spot in 2023.

Following St Andrews’ victory last year, this is the first time Oxford have topped the table in twelve years. Before 2021, Cambridge had held the top spot for eight consecutive years.

Despite another loss in the battle against Oxford, Cambridge students can take comfort in the University maintaining its position as the best university in

the East of England.

The University of Cambridge’s boycott of the Department for Education’s National Student Survey has continued this year, meaning that some of the ranking categories have no data, including the categories for student experience and teaching quality. The SU maintains the boycott in Cambridge due to “concerns about the survey’s role in the marketisation of Higher Education”. The Oxford Student Union also boycotts the survey.

A spokesperson for the guide said: “Cambridge slips to number three after an eight-year reign at number one until 2021 - but the ancient university leads in 21 of our subject rankings - more than

any other university.”

They continued to outline the reasons for Cambridge’s high ranking, as students “throw themselves into extracurricular activities” despite the workload, with the University also boasting a “thriving student media” and outstanding sports facilities.

However, these results maintain a trend of Cambridge losses against Oxford in university rankings. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022 placed Cambridge in fifth place behind Oxford, who led the rankings. Cambridge also languishes behind Oxford in the the Guardian’s 2022 university guide.

Virgo is a star: pro-VC belts out song from hit musical

Graham Virgo has long been a stalwart of the lecture theatre — but his spiritual home might be closer to the ADC, a video from 10 years ago suggests...

Michael Hennessey & Sam Hudson

Everyone knows that Cambridge is home to more than its fair share of theatre kids. Barely a day passes at the ADC Theatre without a new performance from the hordes of students desperate to follow in the illustrious footsteps of Emma Thompson or Ian McKellen. However a recently surfaced video has revealed that Cambridge's links to amateur dramatics are present and blossoming within the highest ranks of the university. Namely, pro-vice-chancellor Graham Virgo.

In the video from 2012, Virgo performs the show tune 'If I Were a Rich Man' from the 1964 musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, whilst wearing a black and red cape. The small audience is heard laughing whilst Virgo belts out the catchy number. Throughout the performance, Virgo stomps his feet and dances with his cape with a level of vigour that may prompt some jealousy from Cambridge's musical theatre

societies.

The performance is not entirely faithful, with Virgo often deviating significantly from the original script of the Jewish classic.

Virgo sings an abridged version of the tune and replaces whole verses of Sheldon Harnick and Jerry Brock's original. Virgo's own additions include his promise that "All day long I'd count up all my gold", and his aspiration to have "servants to wait on me hand and foot" with "fine wine to drink and plenty of food to eat".

Virgo's triumphant number originates from the 1964 Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, which has spawned five Broadway revivals and a 1971 film adaptation. It is based on Sholem Aleichem's book *Tevye and His Daughters*; Virgo plays the titular character of Tevye. The musical tells the story of Tevye, as he tries to maintain Jewish traditions as his daughters attempt to marry for love.

Virgo performs the tune as part of the Gamlingay Players, a local amateur



▲ Virgo performs the hit song in 2012 (ANDY ROBERTS/YOUTUBE)

▼ Tevye is the protagonist in Jewish musical, *Fiddler on the Roof* (FLICKR)



Despite initial fears that the musical could be considered "too Jewish" for mainstream audiences in the 1960s, it went on to have great success as it swept the Tony Awards, winning best musical, score, direction and choreography and becoming the longest-running Broadway musical at the time.

Scan to watch the video:



What was Virgo trying to sing?
If I Were a Rich Man, from *Fiddler on the Roof* (1967)

Oh, Lord, you made many, many poor people
I realize, of course, it's no shame to be poor
But it's no great honor either!
So, what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?
If I were a rich man
Ya ba dibba dibba dibba dibba
dibba dibba dum
All day long, I'd biddy biddy bum
If I were a wealthy man
I wouldn't have to work hard
Ya ba dibba dibba dibba dum
If I were a biddy biddy rich yidle-diddle-didle man

Applications to exam mitigations committee up 258% since 2013

Erik Olsson & Hugh Jones

Features editor & Senior News Editor

The number of Cambridge students applying to the University's exam mitigation committee has more than tripled over the past nine years, *Varsity* can reveal.

The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) received a record 1792 applications in 2021/22, compared to 500 in 2013/14.

Over the past nine years applications have increased by 258%, rising almost every year since 2013.

Applications made to the EAMC range from exam appeals and coursework extensions to requests for intermission and

grade exemptions.

Notably, there was a slight dip in these applications in the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 when take-home exams were introduced during the pandemic.

Varsity has also learned that the number of Cambridge students applying to take a break from their studies on the grounds of "medical or grave cause" has more than doubled over the same period.

The EAMC received 188 applications for "disregarding terms" in the period 2013/14. For comparison, the EAMC received a record 484 this past academic year (2021/22)

A student on "disregarded terms" is allowed to take up to a year out of Cambridge on intermission or "be put

in standing for examinations". These terms are only awarded on exceptional grounds.

This news comes at a time when mental health at Cambridge is under scrutiny, following a string of five suspected suicides last academic year and the leak of a damning external report into the University's mental health services.

That report described the University's provision of care as "ineffective", "untargeted" and "unsustainable".

These figures also follow a *Varsity* investigation into the EAMC which revealed a series of failings, amongst them the lack of transparency and the absence of Student Union representation on the committee.

One finalist on intermission told *Var-*

sity: "the main problem [with the EAMC] is that there really isn't any transparency in the process [...] there's so many layers of red tape that it's baffling how the intermission system hasn't been revamped already."

Speaking on the figures revealed by *Varsity*, Daisy Thomas, the Students' Union (SU) welfare officer and Elia Chitwa, the SU's disabled students' officer told *Varsity*: "The fact that students feel more able to take time away from their degree could be an indication of the de-stigmatisation of mental health and taking time for your own welfare."

"However, we worry that intermission is often being used by colleges as a plaster that removes students from their support systems and does not tackle the

real issue of an inflexible and highly pressurised academic context.

"The increase in academic allowances shows students are more aware of their options. However, this rise, as well as the drop in applications in the 2019-20 period where there was more assessment flexibility, is indicative that the current system of assessments and the current process around mitigations are not working for students."

"As well as lobbying for more assessment flexibility and mitigation options for students, we're compiling an intermission report based on the survey we ran in Easter term. The findings will help launch the SU's campaign to improve the process of intermission for students."

The University declined to comment.

News

As high prices bite, John's slashes

Michael Hennessey
Deputy News Editor

Financial support for freshers at St John's College has fallen by up to two-thirds since last year, with incoming freshers receiving up to £7,500 less from the College compared to last year's intake.

The College told *Varsity* that they were still covering the costs of students most in financial need.

However, the John's website has dropped an assurance to students matriculating in 2021 or earlier that the studentship scheme should still cover the living costs of incoming students with a household income of £25,000 or less.

For students matriculating in October 2022 with a household income of £25,000, the studentship has fallen from £7,630 in 2021 to just £100 in 2022. Students with higher household incomes will no longer be eligible for the scheme.

In 2021, the maximum grant of £7,630 was available for students with a household income up to £25,000, with a decreasing level of assistance available for students with a household income up to £39,090.

When combined with the University-wide Cambridge Bursary, students at John's could receive up to £11,130 to cover their living costs.

The maximum award level in 2022 has

increased by 4.1% to £7,940, falling short of matching the current inflation rate of 9.9%. However, the maximum funding is only available for students with a household income of up to £16,190.

Students who have already matriculated will continue to receive the same level of support as in previous years. Those who deferred an offer for October 2021 to October 2022 will receive the higher level of financial support offered in 2021, despite their peers in the same year group facing reduced funding.

In 2016, St John's College introduced the Studentship Scheme to "reduce the financial pressure on students from lower income backgrounds".

The scheme is made up of non-repayable grants for all undergraduate students who have Home fee status and meet certain financial criteria. It is funded by donations from alumni and "friends" of the College.

A fundraising video on the College's website shows past students describe how the scheme offered them "peace of mind" and allowed them to experience student life "without being held back".

The College's website also says that over 212 students have benefited from the scheme to date, and outlines their aim to offer "genuinely world-class means-tested support".

College has said that the studentship scheme will be supplemented by a Free Places Programme in the future. This new scheme will give students previously eligible for free school meals and with a household income of up to £16,190 access to free places at the College. Both maintenance and tuition fees will be covered by John's.

The programme will not start until next year, and will not fill the funding gap for students with a household income larger than £16,190 who were previously supported by the studentship scheme.

Despite these reductions in financial support for its students, John's is still Cambridge's second-richest College, with consolidated net assets of £905m in the financial year ending in 2021, up £77.5m on the year before.

A spokesperson for the College told *Varsity*: "The St John's College Studentship Scheme was launched as a five-year pilot in 2016.

The pilot was reviewed in 2021: the College decided to focus its resources on undergraduates with the greatest financial need, creating our £25 million Free Places programme.

"St John's continues to provide support for all students in financial hardship, via the significantly enhanced Cambridge Bursary Schemes."

How much will your Mainsbury's shop cost you?

The prices of student staples sold in Mainsbury's have increased inconsistently, a *Varsity* investigation has found. And the increase in prices in the local Sainsbury's store on Sidney Street have been, on average, less than the current levels of inflation (Daniel Hilton writes).

The most significant jump was for two pints of milk: prices increased by 25p, or by 31%.

Meanwhile, bread and ravioli also saw significant price hikes. The prices of both rose by 15p, or just over 27%.

Overall, there was 5.4% increase in the total cost of the items considered by *Varsity*, from £9.30 to £9.80. Inflation is currently running at 8.6%, according to the ONS.

However it isn't all bad news. Some prices have fallen or stayed the same. A box of cornflakes actually dropped in price by 15p, a decrease of 15%. The price of six apples also

decreased by 10p, or by just over 7%.

Digestive biscuits, chocolate, and a box of eighty tea bags all stayed at the same price over the past year. Sainsbury's provides "price locks" on certain products, which have helped to keep average price increases down.

Thus, while there have undoubtedly been some significant price increases, the trend has not been universal. And those prices that did go up were partially offset by decreases in the cost of other items.

This may provide some relief to students—many of whom are facing steep rent hikes, devalued maintenance loans, and a real-terms reduction in support from their colleges and the University, as they return to their studies for the new academic year.

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support for its poorest students

SU presidents: support will depend on what college you're at

Megan Byrom & Hugh Jones
Senior News Editors

For an organisation that is not yet three years old, Cambridge SU has seen its fair share of crises. From Covid-19 to the war in Ukraine, it might be assumed that our representatives in the student union would have grown used to working in unprecedented times. However, with the cost of living crisis escalating, SU presidents Zaynab Ahmed and Amelia Jabry believe the challenges of this Michaelmas term will not be entirely unique, but represent a worsening of problems that already exist in Cambridge.

Last week, it was the Russell Group who made headlines, calling on the government to support students, many of whom are turning to their respective universities for financial aid. A survey reported that the average student would now be £439 short of covering living costs every month, an increase of almost £100 since last year. Whilst the Bank of England expects inflation to peak at 11%

in October as students return to campus, maintenance loans have only increased by 2.3%. In Cambridge, increasing rents, stagnating bursaries and a national fiscal crisis will form the backdrop to this year's Michaelmas term.

Zaynab Ahmed, the SU's undergraduate president outlined that "We at the SU will be launching a set of demands next week which will address things like funding, student bursaries and rent. We will be looking at how the University uses its money and how it uses this to support students."

"Funding bodies, donations from alumni or benefactors is typically what the university uses to keep students going. When you get to the College system it's even more disparate, it really depends on what college you're at if you'll be able to stay afloat this year. That's really concerning for us."

On these College disparities, Ahmed said a pressing issue was the additional costs students have to pay. From deposits to compulsory charges, amongst others, she said: "we understand a lot of these

costs are to keep the College going but more than ever students can't afford to fork out an additional £250 deposit that they won't see for two or three years."

Ahmed said that the SU would be working "closely with JCRs and MCRs who understand their college situations" in order to help students, and that they would be pressing for "rent reductions (very optimistically) or something more



▲ Ahmed (left) emphasised that she'd be willing to work with JCRs (CAMBRIDGE SU)

practical like rent freezes".

Whilst Cambridge repeatedly tops rankings as an affordable university city, postgrad president Amelia Jabry explained that current ideas about the cost of living in Cambridge are "inaccurate", giving "funding bodies free reign to say it doesn't cost that much to live in Cambridge, but living in Cambridge is comparable to living in London." The SU will begin work on an undergraduate cost of living survey this term to reveal a clearer picture of student life in the city. A similar survey run by Jabry for postgraduates will be used to lobby for post-grad support, action she believes is possible after the UKRI increased PhD stipends earlier this month by 13.1%.

Both Zaynab and Amelia were committed to encouraging students "to go to [their] College first" for financial support, as well as to utilise the SU's own student advice service. When questioned on the concerns of the 'stretched middle' who would be unlikely to qualify for bursaries or hardship funds, the presidents did not seem to have a clear answer. Ahmed commented, "It's really difficult,

particularly for students not receiving a maintenance loan or for those whose loan does not reflect their actual financial situation."

Jabry however was keen to add that students should not feel that taking up work is "a solution to the cost of living crisis; you come here to do a degree, you should not be worrying about money."

Despite Jabry's concerns, many students will be. The postgrad president also said that she was assisting the University on a review of "the rules around postgrad work. There's lots of stipulation on the type of work postgrads can do, current rules basically bans anything that isn't supervising undergraduates or research."

The SU are clearly working with the University to try to resolve the issues which will plague students' finances this year. Nonetheless, the presidents have a lot of work ahead if they are to make a difference to struggling students. Jabry and Ahmed are aware of students' problems, but the question remains: can they find the solutions.



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News

‘Sometimes it feels like the SU doesn’t know what’s up with students’, SU president concedes

Meg Byrom & Hugh Jones
Senior News Editors

Turnout at the SU election which brought Zaynab Ahmed and Amelia Jabry to office was a mere 12%, down 6 points on the year before. When we sat down with the new SU presidents, dwindling engagement with the Students’ Union elections was high on the agenda.

Despite the tricky situation, Ahmed told us she hoped that help would come from an unexpected quarter: “the cost of living impacts everyone, we hope everyone would care enough to be engaged. Sometimes it feels like the SU doesn’t know what’s up with students, or is working on things that seem insignificant.” The hope is that the pressures of the cost of living will encourage students to pay more attention to their representatives.

When asked if the SU was suffering from a vicious cycle, in which falling student engagement undermined their mandate, making it harder for them to secure wins for students, which in turn made students further question the value of their representatives, the presidents demurred.

Jabry, the postgraduate president, blamed the decline in student interest on the pandemic and said that “institutional memory has been lost.” As a result – now that Covid is largely over – the presidents hope to reverse some of the decline.

They encouraged students to attend SU Council, which this term will be in person for the first time since the pandemic. Ahmed told us: “We encourage everyone to come and speak to us.”

The presidents also indicated a desire get involved more directly in boosting engagement, telling us that they would be visiting “pretty much every J and M CR” during Freshers’



Week. It is, however, unclear if this will be enough to increase student interest in the SU. There is a danger that in focussing on the world of JCR meetings and student councils, the SU is preaching to the converted and is struggling to engage with the apathetic students who are not involved with either college or university governance.

Jabry also expressed frustration that it was hard to get people to pay attention to the SU’s wins, especially when it came to postgrads. As an example, she cited Varsity’s coverage of the University’s decision to drop application fees for PhD students, describing it as very limited.

The fight to deliver a reading week continues too. Ahmed reported that “at the end of Easter Term it went through two of the highest committees and it was really well received and there was general support for it, we’re now working on the next democratic stages. We’re making sure the proposal is really strong, taking into account feedback from students, both positive and negative, so it works for all students or as many as possible.”

Returning to the subject later Ahmed was assertive, saying: “we’re so close to the finish line”.

With the SU making climate change and decolonisation priorities, as well as an in-depth review of Cambridge’s welfare and mental health provisions, we asked if the presidents felt they had the capacity to take on such long term challenges, where solutions are often difficult. Jabry said the SU has a “two pronged approach, through both committees and empowering students” and Ahmed commented “we’re not beyond reacting to changing situations and we’re not beyond changing our priorities accordingly”.

Jabry also strongly rejected the suggestion that the SU’s focus on climate change came at the expense of more tangible concerns such as the cost of living. Instead, Jabry insisted that the two were inextricably linked.

The SU believe they are prepared for the coming year — but the question remains, will it be enough?

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Stoners not as lazy as we thought - new research

Jeremy Weinstein
Science reporter

Cannabis use is unlikely to have an impact on the ability of adults or adolescents to find enjoyment and motivation, according to a new study.

In an attempt to combat stereotypes around drug use, researchers at the University of Cambridge and other leading universities have shown that regular cannabis users are no more likely than non-users to exhibit a lack of motivation for rewards, and no less likely to experience pleasure from receiving rewards.

The study challenges the prevalent stereotypes surrounding cannabis users, including the label of ‘stoner’, which is associated with laziness and an apathetic approach to life.

The 274 participants were put into pairs, with each pair comprising one person who had used cannabis regularly in the previous three months, and one who had not. Direct comparisons were made based on responses to a questionnaire, where participants were rated on their ability to feel joy.

The results challenged preconceptions about cannabis users; there was no significant difference in responses between the two groups, and users even showed lower levels of apathy compared to non-users.

The researchers also investigated responses to both the prospect and receipt of a reward, confirming that there was no difference in effort displayed

by either group. These results are contrary to popular beliefs that portray cannabis users as lazy or lacking in motivation.

PhD candidate Martine Skumlien, who was involved in conducting the study, commented: “Unfair assumptions can be stigmatising and could get in the way of messages around harm reduction. We need to be honest and frank about what are and are not the harmful consequences of drug use.”

Cannabis is one of the most widely used controlled substances, behind only alcohol and tobacco. According to a 2021 survey by NHS Digital Lifestyles, nearly one in six 15-year-olds in the UK had used cannabis in the previous 12 months, and in the US this figure is estimated to be significantly higher.

The study could mark the start of a more active discussion around cannabis use and its regulation, potentially challenging the disparity with alcohol in its legal status as a recreational drug.

Further questions may also be raised about the viability of prescribing medications derived from cannabis; even now, very little is known about potential benefits and side-effects. Certainly, medicinal cannabis presents a two-sided coin, and lessons learned from the opioid epidemic will be at the forefront of concerns about inducting cannabis into common medical practice.

While further research needs to be done to determine the long-term effects of cannabis use on brain development, this study suggests that our preconceptions around cannabis users may, in fact, be misconceptions.

Tory club ‘drinking up donations’, says former member

Nicholas Lindsey, Tommy Castellani and Hugh Jones

The Cambridge Conservative Association (CUCA) has been accused of “drinking up donations” from alumni by a former member.

CUCA alumnus Jack Drury replied to a fundraising email from the club which was sent to all former members speculating that the request for donations was “apparently because too much has been spent on booze...”

The fundraising email, sent by chairman Eric Williams, asked alumni to purchase a photograph from the club’s centenary dinner to help CUCA “at a time of some financial distress (recent assets being all too liquid)”.

Drury, who ran to be president of the student union in 2017, said the fundraising email was “foolish in tone” and raised “serious concerns” about the association’s finances.

Focussing on Williams’ use of the word “liquid” Drury said: “If I am somehow misunderstanding Mr William’s use of ‘liquid’ then so will be others”.

Reminding the association that its

role was to “challenge the wave of wokery running through the place”, Drury wrote that CUCA “does not endure by the Committee drinking up donations”.

The reminder was accompanied by a condemnation of the “unfathomably stupid” act of publishing minutes from the association’s Termly General Meeting (TGM) in which the now-chairman of the society, James Appiah III, said: “we are not constitutionally bound to democracy”.

Drury warned the CUCA committee against letting short-sightedness limit the association “again”, and concluded his email by saying: “Please publish the accounts for the academic year ’21-’22; set out the nature of the current ‘financial distress’; and set out what you would do with the donations you request.”

When asked to elaborate on his concerns, Drury told *Varsity*: “Money is an inevitable element of putting on an ambitious termcard. CUCA enjoys the support and confidence of alumni who care deeply about the Association and what it offers the university”.

In the end, it seems that Williams was able to persuade Drury that he had



▲ CUCA alumnus Jack Drury (LUCAS CHEBIB/VARSITY)

indeed misinterpreted the former chairman’s email.

Describing the suggestion that CUCA faced financial distress, Williams told *Varsity*: “A large and flourishing society like CUCA has lots of costs before the beginning of every Michaelmas (to put on its popular freshers events and put down deposits on large venues for big events).”

“At the same time, there is no revenue over the Long Vacation. I referred to this annual situation faced by many societies as a ‘time of some financial distress’. This was misinterpreted by Mr Drury, who was satisfied once I explained what I had meant.

“I have not seen detailed accounts

since I was Chairman, but I have every confidence that the healthy balance of payments I left behind was well-managed by our Treasurer and subsequent committees. Any suggestion that I had concerns about particular financial difficulties is false.”

Specifically responding to the claim that CUCA’s committee had been “drinking up donations”, Williams said: “The allegation is totally false and arose from a misunderstanding of a poorly-timed attempt at levity. This was acknowledged by Mr Drury only hours after his complaint.

“During my time, CUCA raised no funds from alumni. At the event in question, which Mr Drury did not attend, no donations were requested or received. When I was Chairman, subsidised refreshments for members were funded by ticket sales and subscriptions.”

James Appiah, CUCA’s current chairman, also said that the association was financially sound and that Drury’s concerns stemmed from a misunderstanding.

CUCA still had not published its accounts when *Varsity* went to press.

Cancer lab opens in Cambridge

Michael Hennessey
Deputy News Editor

The University of Cambridge’s Early Cancer Institute (ECI) is the UK’s first institute dedicated to detecting and studying early stage cancers.

Scientists at the ECI will focus on cancers which are hard to treat, including lung, pancreas and liver cancers. Institute director Rebecca Fitzgerald said: “Outcomes can be transformed if the cancer is diagnosed early enough and we have the right treatments.”

The ECI is based at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, and will be home to up to 120 scientists. The brand new Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital is also set to start construction on the Biomedical Campus next year.

The ECI will sit within a cluster of biomedical research facilities, including a major AstraZeneca research and development facility, the Wellcome Trust stem cell institute, and the Cancer Research UK Cambridge institute.

The idea is that by locating the ECI on the campus, it can benefit from research links and easier access to medical and industrial partners.

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News

Cantab becomes Met boss

Sir Mark Rowley became the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police earlier this month (12/9), promising “more trust, less crime, high standards”. Rowley studied Maths at St Catharine’s College, where he also rowed for his College’s 1st VIII. He takes office at a difficult time for the Met following a series of scandals that ultimately led to the resignation of former commissioner Dame Cressida Dick.



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL NEWS / CC BY 2.0

Climate festival returns

The Cambridge Zero climate change festival returns this month, with a focus on the theme of climate accessibility. This will be the third year that the festival has taken place, after it was launched by the University in 2020 to raise awareness about global warming. The festival, which runs from the 14th to 16th of October, will feature events on topics including sustainable finance, environmental art and climate anxiety.

‘Racist’ Cantab loses whip

Rupa Huq, Labour MP for Ealing Central and Acton, lost the whip on Tuesday after calling Kwasi Kwarteng “superficially” black. Huq later apologised, calling her comments “ill-judged”. Huq said Kwarteng went “all the way through top schools in the country. If you hear him on the Today programme you wouldn’t know he’s black.” Labour leader Keir Starmer said the comment was “racist”.

Toope says goodbye

Vice-chancellor Stephen Toope will leave Cambridge at the end of September, after five years in the University’s top job. His term, ending two years earlier than anticipated, was defined by the COVID-19 crisis, rows over free speech, and controversies over University links to China. Toope has also presided over research into the University’s link to the slave trade, the introduction of a foundation year scheme for disadvantaged students, and the announcement that the University would fully divest from fossil fuel companies by 2030. Toope was widely criticised in parts of the British press, including being branded “disastrous” in *The Spectator*. He will be temporarily replaced by the outgoing president of Hughes Hall, Dr Anthony Freeling, for a six-month term from 1 October.

Bus stops

Stagecoach East is under fire after announcing the closure of 18 bus routes around Cambridge. Stagecoach said the routes are no longer commercially viable. The move will affect routes from Trumpington to Addenbrooke’s. Nik Johnson, the mayor of Cambridgeshire, called it unacceptable that “Stagecoach are pressing ahead with such severe changes to the network whilst continuing to accept the funding from the government that is designed to protect it”.

Dons pledge direct action

Fifteen Cambridge-based scientists have formed a climate group, called Scientists for XR [Extinction Rebellion] Cambridge. A spokesperson for the group said that people working in ecology, atmospheric chemistry and crop science came together at the event and decided that “our only remaining choice is to get involved in political action for climate justice and system change”. The new group promises future “direct political action” in Cambridge.



Kwasi Kwarteng
POLICY EXCHANGE / CC BY 2.0

Universities UK bashes kami-Kwasi

Universities UK, an advocacy group for universities, has appealed to the government for greater support for students during the cost of living crisis. A spokesperson for the organisation said that “tax cuts for high-earners will not benefit students struggling to manage their costs this autumn”, warning that students who can’t make ends meet may drop out. The organisation asked for greater government help in the form of increased hardship funds and maintenance support.



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It's beginning to look a lot like mullet-mas

Pembroke and Girton rugby club are growing out their locks for charity this Christmas, Ellie Austin explores

The Marmite of hairstyles, the mullet, has recently been announced as the focus for a fund raising charity event. This Michaelmas, Pembroke and Girton Rugby club (Pirton) has announced their plans for "Movember", spotlighting the very best of Cambridge's mullets for charity. After stumbling upon an advert for the 2022 US Mullet Championships, which is currently awaiting its final round of voting, Finn Mortimore rushed to share the advert to his mullet-obsessed college rugby club. From here, he became "giddy with excitement" as they developed a plan to recreate the event themselves in Cambridge.

Whilst the official voting period is yet to be announced, the founder has grand plans for the championship: "The idea is, towards the end of Michaelmas we're going to try to run an in-person event where the winner gets announced...and we're going to try to get a celebrity guest to come and have a mullet shaved [on stage]".

The decision to run the event for Movember came naturally, according to Finn, "there's quite a big link between rugby players and mullets...[and] is there a more infamous combination than the mullet and the moustache?". However, according to their donation page, "a moustache is not needed, but welcomed".

Since 2003 Movember has funded more than 1,250 men's health projects around the world on prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health and suicide prevention. The charity is famous for running their annual Movember event during which participants commit to growing a moustache throughout November.

The Pirton RFC plan to open their competition to both newcomers and veteran mullet-kind, with two separate votes for each. Voters donating to Movember will be rewarded with greater voting powers,

while inspired mullet-less attendees will be able to opt-in for the haircut themselves at the event in exchange for further donations.

Keen to encourage wide participation in the event, the club are welcoming entrants to any-and-all mullet-lovers in Cambridge regardless of gender.

On the instagram post advertising the championship, the Pirton club announced that there would be two separate mullet competitions: the best newcomer, "for the mullet whose life is only just beginning", and best overall, "for the mullet who's all grown up".

The post ended with a quote from the Iliad: "Their forlocks cropped, hair grown long at the back".

The Pirton rugby club is well-known for its philanthropy, with previous events including a collective 400-mile running challenge which successfully raised £2350 for SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD. A Pembroke director of studies took part in the run.

Former captain of the club Max Murphy said at the time: "Rugby has always been about coming together and having fun - that's what it should be about. Drinking and partying will probably always be a part of rugby culture, but racism should never be."



► Mullets galore (PEMBROKE & GIRTON RUGBY CLUB/ BETH BALJAK)



Splitting headache after a night at Rumboogie? Tough luck: hangovers are unavoidable

Julia Dabrowska
Science reporter

Do you ever wake up groggy and confused, with a splitting headache and waves of nausea? Chances are, you're hungover. Many of us love a party or a night out, but the consequences the following day can be insufferable.

The human body is primed to keep us alive and healthy, whilst alcohol is primed to do the exact opposite. The unpleasantness of a hangover is there for a reason: to stop you from drinking too much, too often.

Typically, hangovers occur after medium to high alcohol consumption levels,

and begin roughly 10 hours after the peak of blood alcohol content — although this can vary with sex, weight, and genetic factors. They can last from a few hours to over a day and are actually just a milder version of withdrawal.

So, what happens when we get hungover? The consensus is not yet clear, largely because the symptoms vary so much from person to person. However, there are a few notable components that can truly punish an evening of frivolity and decadence.

The first problem is the excessive build-up of acetaldehyde, a toxic substance formed during the breakdown of alcohol. Acetaldehyde builds up when alcohol breakdown occurs more slowly. This can be due to genetic factors, such as a

mutation in the enzyme aldehyde dehydrogenase (common in those of Asian descent), or because the body can't keep up with the intense rate of consumption. The build-up of acetaldehyde results in nausea, a rapid heartbeat, sweating, and flushing.

Similar effects are observed with the build-up of methanol (a product of sugar fermentation), potentially explaining why sweet cocktails give worse hangovers than clear spirits. Additionally, dark liqueurs like whisky or red wine will give you a worse hangover due to their high concentration of congeners — chemical by-products of fermentation. This also explains why mixing drinks isn't the best idea (so try to remember this next time you're having a

boogie in Revs...).

Moreover, alcohol stimulates the release of GABA, a neurotransmitter in the brain responsible for inhibition. While this makes you feel more relaxed in the short-term, after heavier consumption this can lead to a loss of consciousness, reduced judgement, and an inability to make new memories.

Alcohol also suppresses glutamate, an excitatory neurotransmitter. To counter this, your body increases glutamate production af-



ter alcohol consumption ends, leading to light and sound sensitivity, and headaches. The latter is also linked to dehydration — alcohol blocks a hormone that helps your body retain water. Without this hormone, the kidneys send all water to the bladder rather than to the body's tissues that need it.

Another key effect of alcohol is inflammation of the blood vessels and gut, leading to both physical and emotional hangover symptoms. Dilated blood vessels in the brain cause headaches, while damaged stomach and intestine lining can result in diarrhoea and feelings of nausea. Inflammation in the brain may also lead to emotional effects such as irritation, mood changes, memory deficits and cognitive impairment.

Now that we know why it all happens — how do you prevent it? The most obvious option is to drink less. However, assuming rational thinking goes out the window as soon as you leave your suppo, we can cross that one out, so the next best thing is to pace your drinks to allow your body to metabolise the alcohol. Drink water and other non-alcoholic beverages in between the spirits to stay hydrated and chug more water right before you go to sleep (which is also very important in minimising a hangover in itself!). Don't drink on an empty stomach, as food helps slow down the rate of alcohol absorption.

If all that fails and you've had too much, what next? While the only thing that can cure a hangover is time, you

can manage your symptoms. Anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen reduce inflammation (clearly); sports drinks or Berocca replenish your body with vitamins and electrolytes; carbohydrate-rich food or fruit juices raise blood sugar; and caffeine will decrease headaches and feelings of grogginess (but dehydrates you further — so make sure to chug that water while you're at it).

Clearly, hangovers are extremely unappealing and best avoided. However, the temptation of a 2-for-1 happy hour is sometimes just too strong — so go for it, if you so wish. Just don't tell us we didn't warn you.

News

A European princess, an award winning author and the sixth-former who called Megan Markle beautiful. **Erik Olsson** and **Abby Reyes** catch a glimpse of life with...

The famous freshers starting Cambridge

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What do an award-winning nature writer, a European princess, a bloke who made tabloid headlines after meeting Meghan Markle, and a BRIT-nominated soprano all have in common? They're all coming to Cambridge, so keep an eye out for these famous freshers this freshers week.

Aker Okoye

Aker Okoye, 18, made headlines the world over in 2020 when he told Meghan Markle she was "beautiful" at a school assembly.

Marking International Women's Day at Aker's school in Dagenham, the Duchess of Sussex invited a "brave young man" to the stage to speak on the day's importance.

After a brief exchange of words with the Duchess, head boy Aker Okoye approached the podium where he memorably told his peers: "she really is beautiful".

Speaking on Good Morning Britain, Aker told Piers Morgan and Susanna Reid that he wanted to go on stage to speak about International Women's day because he "wanted to recognise the strong women in his personal life".

Aker achieved three A*'s in Economics, History and Sociology, meeting his offer to study Education at Jesus College.

His sixth form academy, Brampton Manner, tweeted: "Aker achieved A*A*A* and he is off the Jesus College, Cambridge University to study Education. Well done Aker"

Aker does not only excel in the classroom. He was also the Deputy Chair of The London Youth Assembly in 2019/20.

Aker describes in his LinkedIn profile his hope of becoming "a world-leading innovator and an influential creative, facilitating the next generation of trailblazers in both STEM and the creative arts to flourish, two components that lay close to my heart".

Aker told Varsity: "I'm super excited to start, and I still have trouble believing I've made it!! I can't wait to explore a new city, new friends and studying something I'm truly passionate about

(and hopefully learn the skills I need to change the world!)"

Dara McAnulty

Dara McAnulty, 18, is an acclaimed writer and environmental activist from Northern Ireland.

Described as "one of the most talented and passionate writers of our era", he is the youngest person ever to win a major literary prize in the UK.

Dara's debut book *Diary of a Young Naturalist* - written in poetic prose - was BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week.

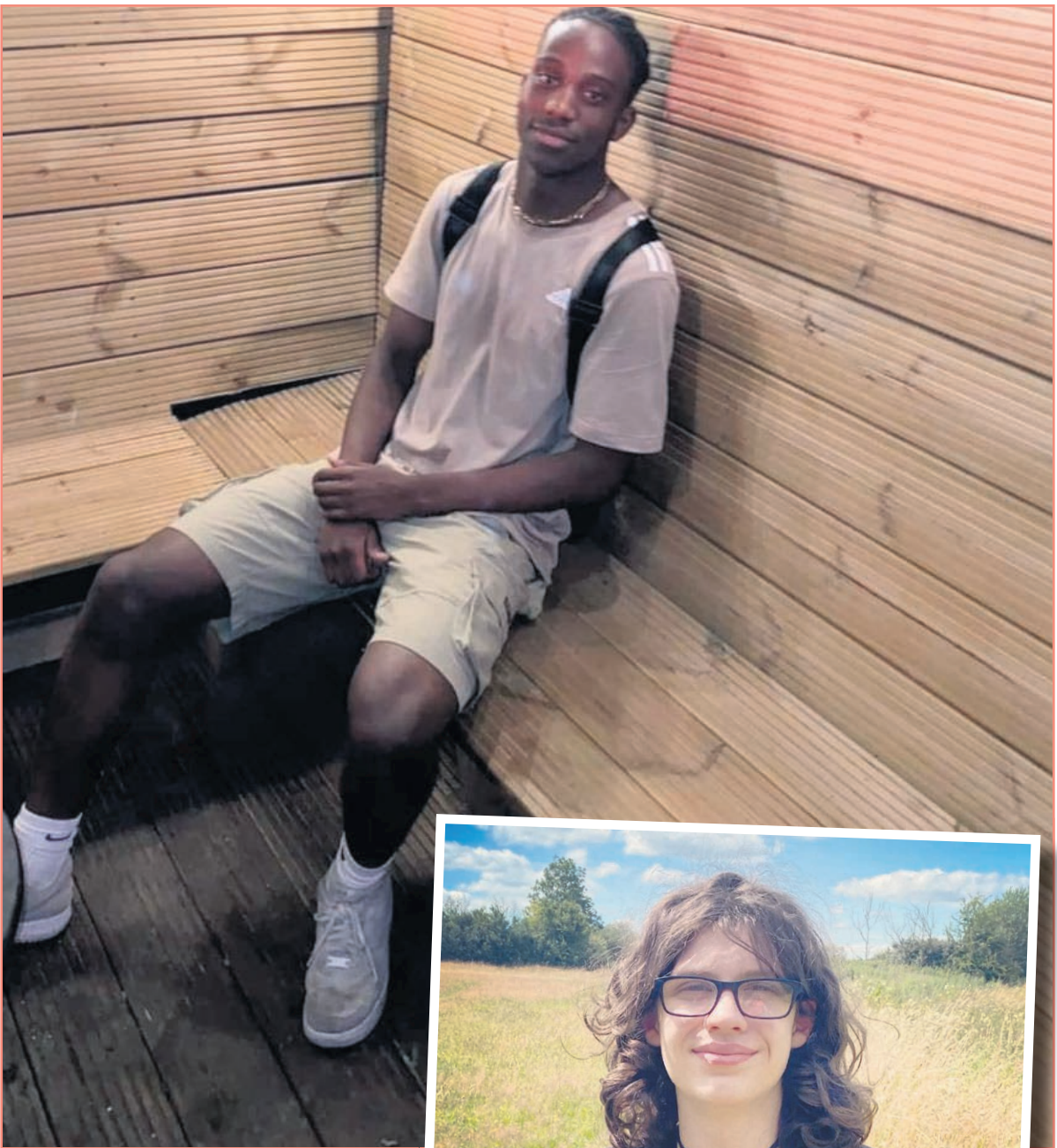
The Observer described his "miracu-





lous memoir” as “profoundly moving” whilst *The Times* celebrated his “extraordinary diary”.
 Dara wrote on his website: “I thought people might like to hear my thoughts, but mostly I wanted to have a journal of sorts, where all my collection of days and moments could be in one place. A place where I could express myself and feel a freedom to ‘speak’, a freedom which life couldn’t quite give me, in real time”.
 Dara will be studying Natural Sciences at Queens’ College.

Katie Marshall
 Katie Marshall, 18, is a BRIT award nominated Classical Soprano who has performed throughout the UK and overseas. She was one of only two Classical singers in the UK to get through to the final of the Next Brit Thing at the O2.
 Katie released an album titled “Voice Divine” in 2018, a collection of classical, sacred and musical theatre pieces.
 A verified twitter user, she has just under 17,000 followers on the platform.

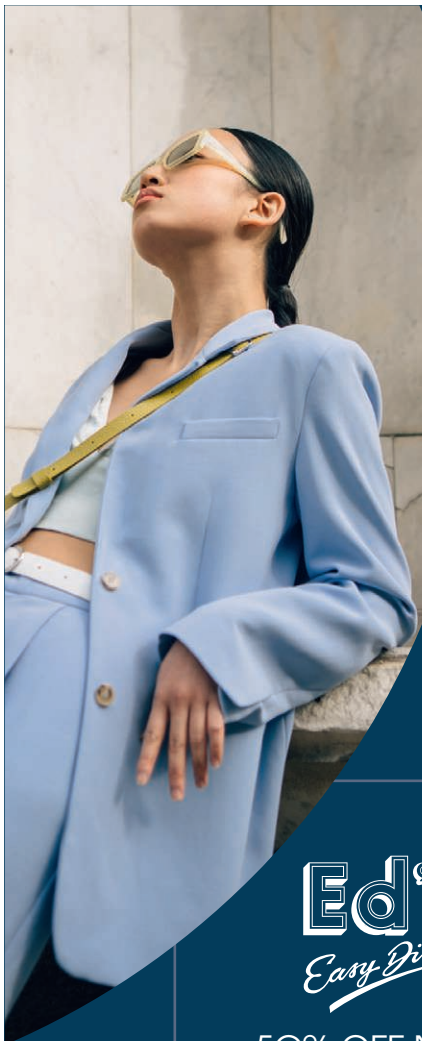


▲ Left to right (clockwise): Aker Okoye, Katie Marshall, Dara McNulty (CREATORS)

Alongside performing at concerts, proms and special events, she is involved with a number of charities. She is an ambassador for The Prince’s Trust and the Children’s Air Ambulance as well as a Patron for the Born Free Foundation.
 A life-long history fanatic, Katie has featured on many historical podcasts, discussing topics ranging from Elizabethan houses to Tudor fashion.
 She recounted an incident to *Varsity* when she “was reduced to tears” at age 12 upon seeing the “Elizabeth and her people” exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, having “spent so long researching [the Elizabethan age] herself”.
 Katie will be reading History at Newnham College.
Princess Theodora von Lichtenstein
 H.S.H. Princess Theodora von Lichtenstein, 18, is the founder of ‘The Green Teen Team’ (GTT) foundation, whose global projects are focused on empowering young people to take action against climate change.
 Teaching about biodiversity in schools and communities, the foundation helps both children and adults

learn about the changes they can make in their lives to help save the planet.
 Theodora says that “young people are the future”, and that “GTT’s mission is to empower teenagers and young people to make a positive change for the future”.
 From summer camps to educational workshops, this is a charity that aims to create a “global community” that can make a difference.
 She is not only the founder but an active participant in the foundation’s projects, promoting GTT’s message far and wide.
 Most recently, she spent a week in Seychelles, where she signed an agreement with the Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority as well as the Department of Environment.
 From the Purple Community Fund in the Philippines to the GTT x Protect African Lions project, von Liechtenstein is hugely dedicated to her

conservation work.
 Since setting up the Foundation in 2014, empowering children to speak up has been at the centre of the work she has done, “in a bid to create positive change at grassroots level”.
 Princess Theodora told *Varsity*: “I love being able to work on projects that focus on bringing children and teens closer to their local biodiversity”. She reflected on growing up in the Italian countryside, and tells us that taught her to value the environment and become an ambassador “for the wellbeing of our planet”.
 “Thanks to my fortunate upbringing, I was given the opportunity to start volunteering at our local zoological park in Verona and eventually also convinced my head mistress at the time that it would be a great idea for my class to learn more about our local fauna and flora.”
 She will be reading architecture at St. Johns.



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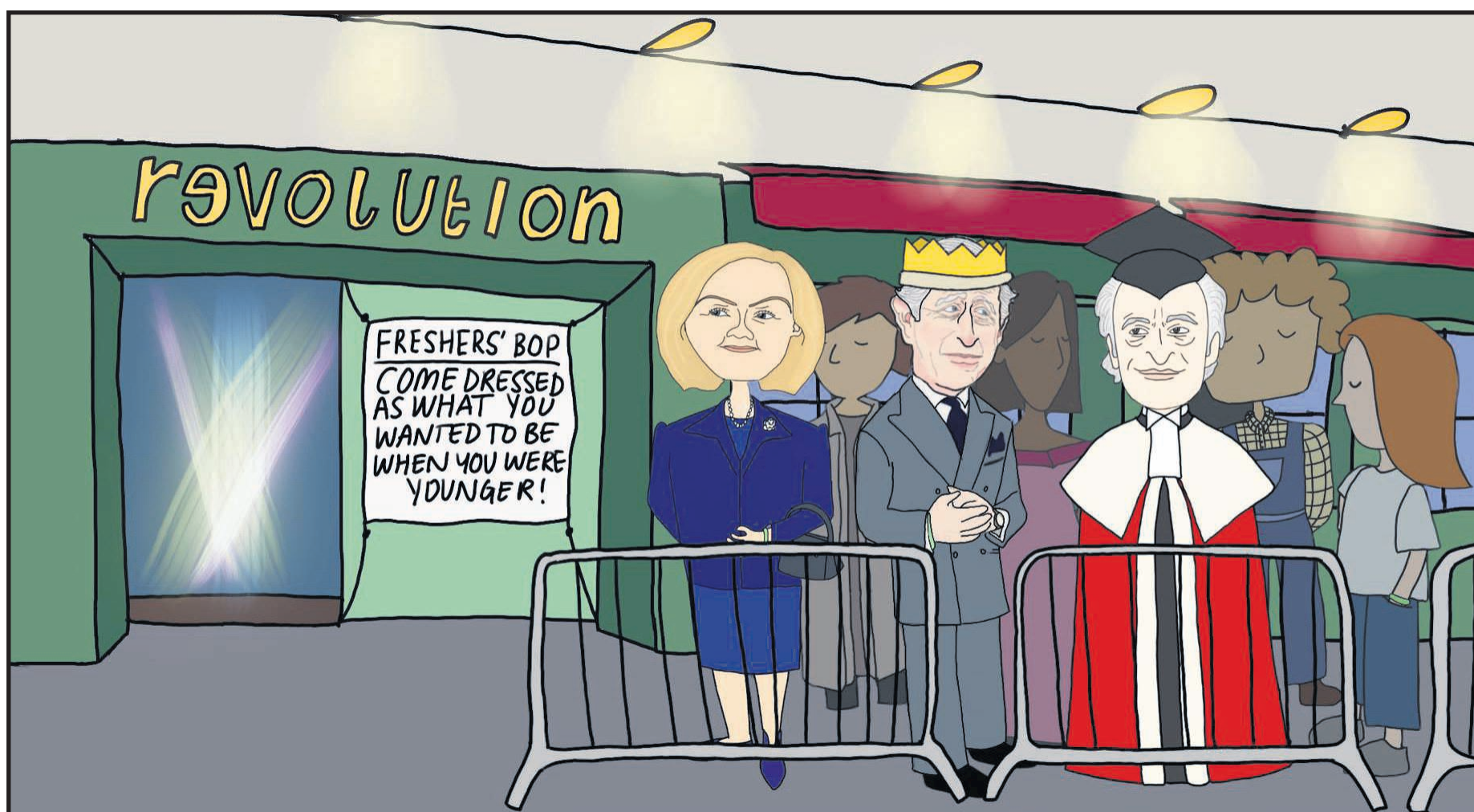
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Cartoon: Hannah Castle

Who in their right mind would join the SU?

At its heart, the Student Union has no accountability, a toxic culture, lazy and self-serving leadership, and a long history of failure. Is it even worth trying to fix?

Peter McLaughlin



I have officially been a student at Cambridge University for five Freshers' Weeks now. In that time, I have seen many bright-eyed politically-engaged students arrive in Cambridge, interested to learn about student politics; and I have seen just as many formerly bright-eyed students leave Cambridge jaded and frustrated by the Students' Union.

The list of SU scandals I've observed has been as long as your arm. Some of them are genuinely absurd: voting to ban the Rifle Association from bringing firearms to the Freshers' Fair to 'demilitarise' it; nearly voting through a motion to insist on online-only teaching for all students even after lockdown, being forced to U-turn only after widespread student outrage; bringing a motion on the Israel-Palestine conflict on Shavuot when observant Jewish

students could not appear to speak; and so many more. The SU is widely perceived as out-of-touch and unrepresentative— with students feeling disconnected from it and much closer to their JCRs and MCRs— and a vast majority deigning to vote in its elections.

The reason the SU ends up in this position constantly is simple. There is no accountability for paid Sabbatical Officers ('sabbs' in SU lingo) whatsoever, so why should they bother doing their jobs well? In theory, accountability comes in the form of the SU Council. Council's job is twofold: first, it is supposed to set the policies that the sabbs carry out; second, it is supposed to scrutinise the sabbs (and other members of the SU Executive) to make sure that they are in touch with and accountable to student opinion. Your JCR or MCR may have a member whose job it is to sit on Council—often a vice-president or VPX— to ensure that it functions well.

But rather than designing and voting on policy that the Exec carries out, Council typically just waves through policies designed by the sabbs. Even when it's not unanimous, the sabbs still typically win. On the very rare occasion where they don't (as with the online

teaching motion), the end result is an amended compromise— rather than an outright defeat.

How did we get here? Many people assume it's just apathy, which is certainly part of the problem. But think about it numerically for a second. Suppose there were a huge shift in student opinion, leading to a huge swing in voting. Two-thirds of JCR and MCR representatives on Council are now highly-engaged. They're ready and willing to represent student opinion and hold the SU Exec to account— something, in reality, almost guaranteed not to happen. I'm sorry to break it to you: *this would still be a minority.*

That's because Council isn't just made up of reps from your JCR and MCR. It also includes representatives of the SU's campaigns, various other members representing student groups and academic 'Schools', and the sabbs themselves who get a vote each. Between the sabbs, the campaigns and the remaining student representatives, even in my dream scenario there would still be an *outright majority* for the coalition of the radical and the bored: same-old same-old.

So, when sabbs consistently fail to live up to their promises, or go directly against student opinion

on things like online education, or take extremist positions without real input from students, we can't do anything at all— and change is almost unimaginable.

The University is content to let the SU chug along, at great expense, because it has no particular reason to care about it— unless the SU's failures seriously threaten University interests. And, as long as the SU's failure mode is toothless, apathetic, and unrepresentative, it doesn't care. Nowadays, the only times the SU causes so much as a headache for the University at an institutional level is when it's acting as the guerrilla wing of UCU, as with the online teaching motion. Even then, the University would rather just deal with UCU directly and let the SU protest into the ether.

Precisely because the institution is so broken— and there are so few people with the right priorities— when there's someone that actually *does* have the right priorities, they have a significant amount of leverage to get good work done. I know many individual examples of hard-working and caring Council members, sabbs, Exec members, and JCR committee members. On the margin it's amazing how much good they've done. Particularly on

climate issues, the way the University works affords a ton of power to students. But this has been underutilised by sabbs, who care more about protests than policy. You can do really important things in the SU. But a few good individuals working within a deeply broken system will always be fighting an uphill battle.

So if you are a Cambridge student who wants to fix things, I would love for you to get involved in student politics. But you must know what it entails. You will find yourself struggling uphill constantly, with concrete wins that you can count on the fingers of one hand. You will feel a constant weight on your shoulders that will never be lifted until you are out for good. You will be surrounded by the most ideological people that you will ever meet, and also the laziest people you will ever meet. You will likely have few constant friends. Scandals will regularly destroy your coalition of acquaintances. And you will never—not ever—change the system in your favour. If you can find meaning in marginal change which imperceptibly and temporarily improves the lives of a few people you will probably never meet, go for it. But if you are like most people, my advice is simple. Just give up. Go join the Rambling Club or something.

Comment

Participation trophies are what make America great

American students and universities are in a bad way, but their give-it-a-go mentality is something Cambridge would do well to learn from



There's one thing you need to know about the United States of America: their roads are big, but their minds are small. Or so said my Uber driver, steering nonchalantly across the 'freeway' with one hand on the wheel, and his neck twisted uncomfortably to deliver his aphorism. We were driving from Washington Dulles International Airport to Georgetown University. This was the start of a five week study abroad programme and a love-hate relationship with American higher education. I'd responded to the 'bon mot' with a breathy laugh and a look out of the window, in disbelief that I hadn't yet been in the country for 3 hours and the first person I met had already begun his own TED talk on the state of the union. The first part of his observation seemed empirically verifiable. But the second seemed slightly harsh. I decided that I would be the judge.

In popular culture, American higher education has a bad rep. 'Operation Varsity Blues' revealed the deep rooted corruption at the heart of admissions

processes in prestigious colleges, and crippling student debt shows no sign of abating. A friend I met on my travels had actually been accepted into Georgetown but had ended up attending a larger state university because of the expense of private college. Somewhere along that journey of institutional failing, the ivory tower lost sight of the people on the ground: the students it was meant to serve. But I wonder if, beneath a sclerotic university system, there is something about the forwardness with which my Uber driver launched into a lecture unabashed, that we might all do well to learn.

My first American college class – writing and culture, a compulsory course for all Georgetown students – was jarringly reminiscent of the Disney American high school trope that I had been spoon-fed as a child. And, also like on TV, real life Americans were just as keen to talk about themselves. The girl to my left was a "rising sophomore" from Texas; the student behind me a former professional ballerina with the Washington Ballet, who had been taking part-time classes for over five years. Across the room were 'student athletes', basketball players who were required to take summer classes, so they had time for more training during the academic year. Our professor was a lively, jolly

woman, eager to affirm everyone's opinion; and even more eager to hear opinions voiced, even if they weren't very sophisticated.

My first class was reminiscent of the Disney high school trope I had been spoon-fed as a child

What was even more striking was how the American go-getter culture is almost perfectly encoded in their academic grading. An American classmate was horrified to hear that, approaching the last year of my degree, nothing I'd done so far – no supervision essay, no seminar attendance, no set of exams – would count towards my final grade. The culture of cumulative grading and

rewards for attendance are the norm in the States. I was graded on 'participation' (how much did I contribute to class?) as well as 'low-stakes writing' (could I answer comprehension questions on the assigned reading?). I was sceptical at first. Graded participation creates a culture of sticking your hand up in the air when you don't really have anything to say. Of piggybacking off someone else's point just to have your voice heard that day. But the longer I was there, the more it was a welcome break from home, where it can feel like pulling teeth to get anyone to say anything. And most of the time, it's not that people don't know 'the answer' – but that they do, and they know everyone else does as well. I'm guilty of it too. Unless I think I have something genuinely interesting to contribute, or vaguely original, I probably won't say it.

America, and its 'participation trophies', flip this on its head. They provide incentive to give it a go, even when we think we've 'got it wrong'. They avoid that heart-wrenching drag of silence between a lecturer asking a question and someone finally proffering a response. When a class slips into a flow, lectures become discussions. Information communication turns into the formation of opinion. People who might not have been bold enough to say anything at all, now have to. And

maybe they find their voice along the way. It does mean a lot of rubbish and repetition. But it's only in wading through the landfill of our everyday musings that true treasure is found.

Part of the reason I applied to the programme was to see whether a graduate course in America would be for me – if I respected the academic culture, or if it suited me. I was searching for confirmation that the US would be a comfortable fit. But what I found was a system that simultaneously baffled and intrigued me. What if every supervision essay counted towards our final degree? What if essays became only one half of the way humanities subjects were assessed? What if we started, like they do, to think about participation rather than exams, as the core of studying? After all, participation is where learning happens.

Going outside your culture, even to a place as seemingly familiar as America, opens up even the most minute opportunity for cultural reflection questioning them. But it's worth it – reflections are seeds that could grow into changed attitudes, new behaviour. Maybe next year, when my lecturer asks a question, I won't 'um and ah' about how intellectual my answer sounds; about what vocabulary will impress the most. I'll just think for a bit, and then say what I think. In other words, I'll participate.

Notebook After a night out, Voulez-Vous rings in my ears

Not everyone is on the edge of their seat awaiting the return to Cambridge — the time apart has lessened the rose-tinted glasses of term time, argues Nick Davis

This week has revealed an inconvertible fact about the summer break. It peaks too early. July is fun, August less so, and September is basically filler. I count the weeks to go back to Cambridge, like the masochist I am. I know I'm not the only one who looks back on university term time with rose-tinted glasses and yearns for the place which enjoys inflicting pain on us. I guess that makes Stephen Toope and his inevitably grey-haired replacement our collective dominatrix, making us wait for the lashes of long essays and cruel feedback.

Now the return to Michaelmas looms nearer, I've decided to remind myself of all the things that irritate me about Cambridge. This is an attempt to dampen my immediate longing to go back and to get me to appreciate the present moment more, in all its boring glory. There are three trivial pet peeves regarding our university which I feel like having a nitpick about.

First things first — the other colleges' strange attitudes to students

from other colleges entering their guided walls. When I first arrived at Cambridge, I had a naïve view of the college system. I knew there were distinct social hubs that made up the university, but thought it would be easy to access them, since we're all Cambridge. Little did I realize that certain central colleges (e.g Trinity, Magdalene) seem to have adopted their approach to students from other colleges trying to enter their gates, reminiscent of Donald Trump's border security stance. Showing your camcard to these colleges porters is about as futile as using your Sainsbury's loyalty card as a passport. There's something a bit weird about having to sneak into large swathes of your own university just to have a quick look around at the nice architecture. Cambridge needs to drop this hyper college nationalism so we can collectively direct our full frustration towards where we know it is truly deserved — Oxford. After all, Trinity may have a reputation for producing pricks, but only the University of Oxford produced Boris Johnson.

Another gripe is the clubs at Cambridge. People say to me as a Londoner, that I must be used to the sweaty and packed nightclubs which presumably come with living in a capital city. Yet it comes as surprise when I answer the Cambridge nightclubs are far more absurdly packed and grimly sweaty than anything I had experienced. My very first night at Cambridge, I found myself jammed at the centre of a mob of bewildered freshers, unable to escape the dance floor as I was forced to endure listening to an EDM remix of All I Want for Christmas is You... in September. Yet, despite desecrating Mariah Carey and being so packed the club blends into a permanent mosh-pit of BO-infused lynx deodorant,



Rumboogie somehow still has cult status. Alongside the likes of truly great Cambridge institutions Camfess, Jack's Gelato and Ta Bouche — Rumboogie has somehow wormed its way into becoming one of those iconic public services beyond reproach.

Also, weirdly about our nightlife: Cambridge nightclubs have a very strange obsession with ABBA. I've noticed after a long night out, I'll close my eyes on my uncomfortable bed at college, with Voulez-Vous still ringing in my ears. The timetabling of

supervisions and lectures is my third pet peeve that comes to mind. Genuinely, I've had three supervisions a day an uncanny amount of times, and the pattern of supervisions varies drastically every fortnight, messing up any kind of rhythm for organizing the time I should spend on each essay. It doesn't seem like this is merely disorganized – that would be too charitable. Call me a conspiracy theorist, but sometimes it feels like there's a complex cross departmental operation at work attempting to co-ordinate supervision times in the most awkward way. Also, speaking of awkward: why are some supervisions past 7PM? It's essentially a date at that point, complete with all the awkward pauses and polishing white lies of an actual first date — except you're not trying to seduce the person sitting at the table opposite from you (hopefully).

Reminding yourself why you dislike Cambridge can be a cathartic exercise and encourages you to enjoy the present moment more. In the bleak mid-week five, my present boredom will be a privilege sorely missed.

Cambridge needs students who are free to speak their minds

University requires students willing to think for themselves – freshers should resist the pressure to be silent



Arif Ahmed is a Philosophy lecturer at Gonville & Caius College

Why are you here? I'm not asking in a professional capacity. I don't mean: why do you exist? (My day-job is philosophy.) I mean: why are you at a university? What are universities for?

Well, it is clear enough what this one is for. According to its mission statement, Cambridge exists "to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence." Education, learning and research – nothing else. Not (or not directly) other desirable things like economic growth, or social justice, or

equality of opportunity. As the University of Chicago puts it: "[A university's] prestige and influence are based on integrity and intellectual competence... It should not, therefore, permit itself to be diverted from its mission into playing the role of a second-rate political force or influence."

How it pursues that mission may be different from how schools do it. Consider my own subject. I do care that they can (a) think for themselves; (b) defend their views against criticism; or (c) if they can't do (b), change their mind.

Supervisions can help achieve this. Every week you write an essay: on democracy, or the mind, or religion. Your supervisor discusses it with you. The discussion will challenge you; and you must respond. This goes on for an hour. Then you do it again the following week. One student – now a successful advertising executive – remarked to me that after three years of that she knew she'd never be intellectually intimidated by anything ever again.

But the process only works if student and teacher are completely free to air any views. Suppose a student

writes an essay arguing for the benefits of immigration. The teacher should feel free to draw a vivid picture of its costs. (What the teacher really thinks is immaterial.) Or suppose a teacher argues that trans women should have access to certain single-sex facilities. The student should feel free to argue that they shouldn't. She might be right about that. But unless she can freely defend that view, she'll never understand why it is wrong.

And of course lecturers should be free to teach as they like. Unfortunately none of this seems to be happening.

There are several causes of this situation. One of them is a well-meaning but misplaced idea that we should respect everyone else's beliefs, identities and values.

For instance, in 2019 Jordan Peterson accepted an academic invitation to visit Cambridge. But the Divinity Faculty cancelled it. The ostensible reason was that he had been photographed next to a man wearing a T-shirt that was rude about Islam. Endorsing the cancellation, the vice-chancellor wrote that 'robust debate can scarcely occur... when some members of the communi-

ty are made to feel personally attacked, not for their ideas but for their very identity'. Then the senior leadership tried to impose a 'free speech' policy demanding respect for all identities and opinions.

Don't agree with something just because everyone else finds it obvious

But a university education must question your most basic beliefs. These include beliefs, for instance religious beliefs, that may belong to your 'identity'. For that reason, academic inquiry cannot be a respecter of persons, or dogmas, or institutions, especially not those that our society most venerates.

It can only respect truth.

Don't agree with something just because everyone else finds it obvious. Truth is not a social but an individual possession: each of us must find it for herself. Don't join in bullying anyone who contradicts an ideology, as happened in 2020 when students mobbed a Clare College porter who stuck by his principles. If someone that you otherwise respect says something that fashion or ideology calls bigoted or offensive – whether on trans or race or Israel, or just being rude about the monarchy – don't reflexively disengage, but stop and think: maybe there are principled reasons for disagreement.

And above all, listen to that voice at the back of your head, the one saying that what you are being told, so vehemently, so often and by everybody, doesn't quite make sense: maybe it isn't true; maybe you need to think it through for yourself. That voice has been nagging us since we came down from the trees; it has driven the moral and scientific progress of our species; it is our most precious possession. You must never let anyone silence it.

THE MAYS



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

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The ashtray

SUMMER NOSTALGIA

Tobia Nava

Students play croquet at King's garden party. Anyone missing summer yet?



My idea for the Queen's biopic

Ted Bruce's idea for how to commemorate HM

After 96 difficult years, Her Majesty has finally passed on to a happier place. A place where Paddington comes for tea every night, and where the FBI only want to have a chat with your son— because he's just a really super chap.

The royal family have taken centre stage since the death: Charles pushing for a royal sponsorship from Biro; Andrew crying (but not sweating); and Meghan Markle repeatedly dancing on her grandmother in law's grave (citation needed).

Of course, many in the public have been hit hard— largely by microphones, as overzealous news reporters begin accosting Londoners as they try and draw out some newsworthy tears. Woe betide those who do not join in the Stalinesque festival of praise. In the spirit of collective mourning and a united nation, those who find Andrew's "enthusiasm" for young girls distasteful (or question the idea of a royal family at all) are promptly arrested by the police. As always, the palace PR machine is in overdrive in response to recent arrests. And already, rumours are swirling of a biopic for her Maj. So I thought I'd throw in my pitch for her big screen debut.

London: 1926. A young Elizabeth (played by posh British dramatist or American with dodgy accent), stumbles into her slum neighbourhood. Her humble mining family add the streak of ubiquity that she's so well celebrated for.

Due to her poor background, Lizzie cannot go to school. Instead, she works long hours as a labourer.

In the night, she teaches slum children how to read. "Wouldn't you like a marmalade sandwich, dear?" asks her mother. But Lizzie refuses. "I cannot eat until the proletariat of the world all have full bellies."

Lizzie begins to perform musicals on the streets of London. Her rousing performance— about why we should keep the Elgin Marbles— causes the royal family to seek her out and adopt her. Lizzie finds it hard to fit in being a princess and often scales the palace walls to talk to old slum friends and talking animals that follow her everywhere.

After her ascension, Queen Lizzie has a raft of new problems to deal with. She begins losing all her friends (former colonies). The government keep passing laws that require people of colour to be given opportunities in all sectors (in a triumphant moment the Queen makes herself exempt from this rule). And despite her best efforts to single-handedly mould the NHS and welfare state (are you sure you've got this right? —Editor's note), she can still see 'poors' from each of her many palaces.

Anyway, maybe it isn't so bad that we're all being frogmarched into synchronised mourning. The whole point of the monarchy is to reinforce the idea of a natural hierarchy. Some are rich; some are poor, and that's the way God meant it. As we enter a winter of discontent where many may feel poor like never before, isn't it important that that message is drummed into us again, lest we begin to look upwards and start asking questions?

NOT *the* NEWS

What were the stories that didn't make the cut?

Cambridge fresher feeling 'confident' about relationship going long distance

After dropping his high school girlfriend off at Nottingham Trent, a Cambridge fresher declared himself "confident" that their relationship would stand the test of time.

"It's OK, because unlike other relationships, we've decided we'll be open so we can enjoy ourselves at university," he said sweating furiously.

'What song are you listening to?' guy asked to 'shut the f*** up and go away' by students

After going viral earlier this year, social media influencer Josh Robinson has continued his gimmick of stopping passersby and asking what music is playing on their headphones.

One disgruntled student complained about Robinson's work, saying: "Look, this idea was cute at first, but now it's just a pain in the arse. The other day I saw this twat yelling at passersby for 'getting in his shot'. He's a tiktokker, not Quentin Tarantino."

Dublin Times: Your guide to 12 days of mourning

"This is one of the most solemn moments any of us have ever experienced," uttered one Irish citizen, tricolour painted on his face and with a pint of Guinness in each hand.

"Indeed," agreed another concerned Dubliner, momentarily removing the party horn from his mouth. "We've almost finished the Celtic FC press release over this tragic incident. The club have

unanimously agreed to a minute silence and changing their twitter profile to black."

Student stunned to learn that she is, in fact, one of the elite

The nation was rocked last night after news filtered through that not every socialist in Cambridge is a member of the working class.

"I was stunned," said Penelope Magiccirclelawfirm, head of the Cambridge University Labour Club. "I'd almost finished walking our dog around Chelsea when I heard the news. To find out that some people are merely adopting positions that they consider fashionable, while having enough wealth to secure them from any negative consequences of populist left wing policies, well it almost made me spit my earl grey over the Range Rover."

Electricity and hot water now reserved for fellows in attempt to tackle the energy crisis

Rising bills have forced colleges to make some tough choices this winter. When pressed about Christ's controversial new plan to allow utilities to be accessed by fellows, while students are forced to work by candlelight and use a nearby well, the college master said: "Students are actually our lowest valued clients. Their rent is controlled, they cause damage and noise, so frankly this decision was a no brainer. Of course if they become successful we'll plug them for donations until the sun burns out the sky; then they can use the water."

Trumpington

Cambridge's diarist brings you the latest university gossip



Date a Mathmo.com

In the age of instant hook-ups, dating apps and vile pornography it's easy to think the age of romance might be over. But this couldn't be further from the truth for one top-Mathmo. Trumpington has heard that one millionaire-bound graduate has set up a google form for potential lovers wherein respondents are asked to fill out questions like: what you find it exciting to talk about? What about me resonates or seems interesting? And is there anywhere online I could learn more about you? Our 21st century Romeo concludes the form with a link to his blog on what his ideal relationship would look like. While most students would take to the MASH dancefloor or Revs' smoking section to meet a partner, Romeo's scientific thinking suggests otherwise. "Social norms around romance", he writes, "can make expressing interest fairly high cost, which really sucks, because the value of information is so high". Even more mathematical: "I think that it is hard to judge compatibility without trying things, and that the downside of an unsuccessful date is low, while the upside of a successful date is very high (at least personally)". He's open to virtual dates from anyone in the world or in-person walks around London. They say Gen Z are the sexless generation. What tosh.

Is that you Mr Clinton?

Trumpington has heard that naughty acts have been performed behind - quite literally - closed doors at the Cambridge Union's holy of holies: the president's office. A student with a background in security was having a wild time desecrating his boss' desk until he was caught on CCTV. Boo! It is unclear if he was punished, though given his politics, he probably didn't think he had a lot to lose.

Hack house, in the middle of our street

Trumpington has heard that Union hacks - past and present - will be living together under one roof this year. Kier Bradwell (last Michaelmas' president), Chris George (set to be the Lent president) and Lara Brown (current president) will be roommates together in an unknown location. Trumpington is unaware of the domestic arrangements, but given Bradwell's knack of boozy festivity it's assumed he'll be in charge of maintaining a handsome supply of red wine should anyone decide to break into an impression of a 20th century dictator.

Portillo pull-out

Trumpington has heard that former Tory politician and self-confessed attendee at the infamous all-male dining society, the Adonians, Michael Portillo, was offered the position of master at his former college, Peterhouse, but turned it down. He's got priorities.

Got a tip? Send it to editor@varsity.co.uk

Leaders & letters



The next VC is in for a culture shock

Cambridge's next vice-chancellor cannot afford to make the same mistakes again. Ex-Princeton provost Professor Deborah Prentice, the second North American to occupy the university's most senior post, will succeed Canadian Stephen Toope two years ahead of schedule after a term disrupted by the pandemic and a series of scuffles over free speech.

At Princeton, Prentice led some of the US' strictest Covid-19 policies, imposing travel restrictions on returning students as recently as January of this year (though the rules did not extend to faculty or staff, nor to members of Princeton's sports teams). But Prentice is in for a culture shock if she proves unwilling to adapt: patience in Cambridge for overly stringent Covid-19 policies has long run out, as incoming students are set to enjoy the first uninhibited freshers week since 2019.

Toope's failures should serve as a lesson: administrators must not compromise on upholding student freedoms. This necessarily includes securing the fundamental values of free speech and academic liberty, an unenviable task amid campus culture wars.

Prentice's leadership record on that front, unfortunately, leaves little ground for optimism. Earlier this year, she presided over the firing of Joshua Katz, a classics professor who criticised the anti-racist measures proposed by Princeton's faculty at the height of the George Floyd protests in 2020. The University maintained that his dismissal rested on dishonesty about a sexual relationship with an undergraduate 15 years ago that he had already been punished for – others branded it a witch hunt intended to quell the very same “campus civil war” Prof. Katz had warned of.

British institutions are far from immune from such nasty fights on free speech - Cambridge under Toope was on several occasions met with fierce pushback over administrative changes which restricted academic freedom in the name of “respect” for differing views. There are signs of a transatlantic disconnect. Let's hope they can be overcome.

Freshers: make the most of what we missed out on

Despite the tumbling pound and ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation, Freshers have never had it so good - at least within the confines of our cursed decade. This week, Freshers will be able to go pubbing and clubbing carefree, a privilege their Cambridge elders did not have. For the first time in 3 years, Cambridge is having a “normal” Freshers week.

2020 witnessed the transformation of Cambridge from a vibrant university into what felt like a mass prison. Fines were handed out and accommodation licences were suspended for the simple crime of having fun and socialising - as you are meant to normally do at university.

With cases down and jabs in arms, last year was far less restrictive. But the effects of Lockdown lingered longer than the virus it-

self. This time last year, track and trace was still in full force and lecture halls were still empty. Even 8 months later, many exams were being held online and in bedrooms.

But a new year brings change and it finally feels like the university is moving past the pandemic. The last remnants of the pandemic are gone and we are on track to have a “normal” Cambridge year. So make the most of this Freshers week. It's a long way to the end of the year and this will be the last chance to enjoy university life unencumbered by the infamous Cambridge workload. As those discovered three years ago, this week shouldn't be taken for granted.

Concerning Christians

I have no idea whether or not Fitz are in the wrong here legally speaking [Christian charity sues Fitz over ‘discrimination’ 19/09/22], but there is no question that they did the right thing. Christian Concern is perhaps the most prominent American-style evangelical organisation in the UK, lobbying to roll back the liberalisation of British society and some of our hardest-won secular freedoms.

This includes holding to a ‘traditional understanding of marriage’, as mentioned in your article, but that's only the start: they explicitly campaigned against precursors to the Equality Act that outlawed forms of discrimination, they are one of the biggest groups lobbying for more restrictive abortion laws, and they promote ‘sexual purity’ abstinence-only sex education. Recently they've moved into explicit Islamophobia.

Through their de facto subsidiary the Christian Legal Centre, Christian Concern are especially noteworthy for exploiting parental anger and grief to astroturf moral outrage, for the sole purpose of bringing unwinnable cases to the courts (as with their ‘support’ of the parents of Alfie Evans and Archie Battersbee).

Often, the rhetoric of Christian Concern verges on the laughable, something you can't take seriously; but it covers a dangerous and illiberal politics. Consider a talk given as part of the ‘Wilberforce Academy’ (which would have been held at Fitz), where Christian Concern's Head of Public Policy argued that the existence of maths proves that God exists (quite funny) to distract listeners from the implicit argument that Christian education should be enforced on and mandatory for all pupils (Tim Dieppe, *The Myth of Neutrality in Education*, 1 September 2022).

If the law genuinely would prohibit Fitz from discriminating against Christian Concern - and I have no idea if it does or not, it's not unlikely that

this is just another unwinnable lawsuit for publicity - then that law should be changed. The hypocrisy that an organisation that wants special protections for Christianity is now claiming to be martyrs for ‘free speech’ should not be lost on Fitz, who should stand their ground for genuine freedom.

Peter McLaughlin, Downing College, matriculated 2018

The SU needs a bar

As we enter freshers week, college JCRs will run many events to welcome new students to this university. But these events will usually only be open to members of that one college - this means few events where students from different colleges can meet each other. This is where the SU can come in - an SU bar could be a social hub for students, a place to organise pub quizzes and karaokes and an affordable place to pre-drink before a night out. With a new SU building, now is the right time to start pushing for an SU Bar.

Joshua Parmar, Chair of the Cambridge University Liberal Association

An MP's Questions

It was interesting to get Mr Zeichner's perspective on the state of the current Conservative Party. I think he is correct about just how extreme this government is in the context of recent history and I like how he was asked about how Labour can retain the enthusiasm large swathes of young people had for Labour in the recent elections of the past. What lacked was a discussion about how Mr Zeichner thinks Labour can energise young people on issues like the housing crisis and tuition fees, especially since both are exacerbated by the inflationary crisis and are direct and pressing issues for us.

Nick Davis, Co-Chair of the Cambridge University Labour Club

Send us a letter:
letters@varsity.co.uk

Repeating the past's mistakes

Our soon-to-be former Vice-Chancellor Professor Toope hopes that the recently released Legacies of Slavery Inquiry will enable some of the conversations and discussions needed to make the Cambridge of tomorrow “more self-reflective, more equitable and more open to all talent.”

May I suggest that one of those conversations include the way in which University policy towards China may in fact be repeating the sins of the past. Instead of waiting two hundred years for future Hong Konger and Uyghur faculties and students to release a report on the complicity of the University in human rights violations, maybe it is time to become more ‘self-reflective’ and consider a change in policy. Professor Toope was correct in saying that “it is not in our gift to right historic wrongs”, but surely it is in our gift to correct present ones.

Reuven Leigh, Cambridge

Land scarcity is a threat

In Oxford and Cambridge shortages of lab spaces for rent are undermining the areas' growth in the life science sector. In Glasgow new students have been told to consider dropping out if they cannot find affordable housing. This has had the effect of pushing up the price of land, pricing out students, as well as residents and anyone else wanting to live in these areas; inadvertently preventing valuable agglomeration effects, therefore reducing growth. This makes top universities a prime location for Truss' new investment zone scheme. By liberalising planning restrictions around Universities, and thus incentivising business investment in these regions, we can allow Universities to increase student numbers allowing more to benefit from the education they offer. This seems to be the easiest way to create the economic growth the Government so desperately wants.

Tom Essi Spencer, Clare Hall

Get involved!

We're always on the look out for new talent.

If you want to start writing for a section, email a section editor. Anyone is welcome.

Still unconvinced? Come along to our fortnightly social at the Anchor pub: 9pm on Thursday evenings. First trip is October 14!

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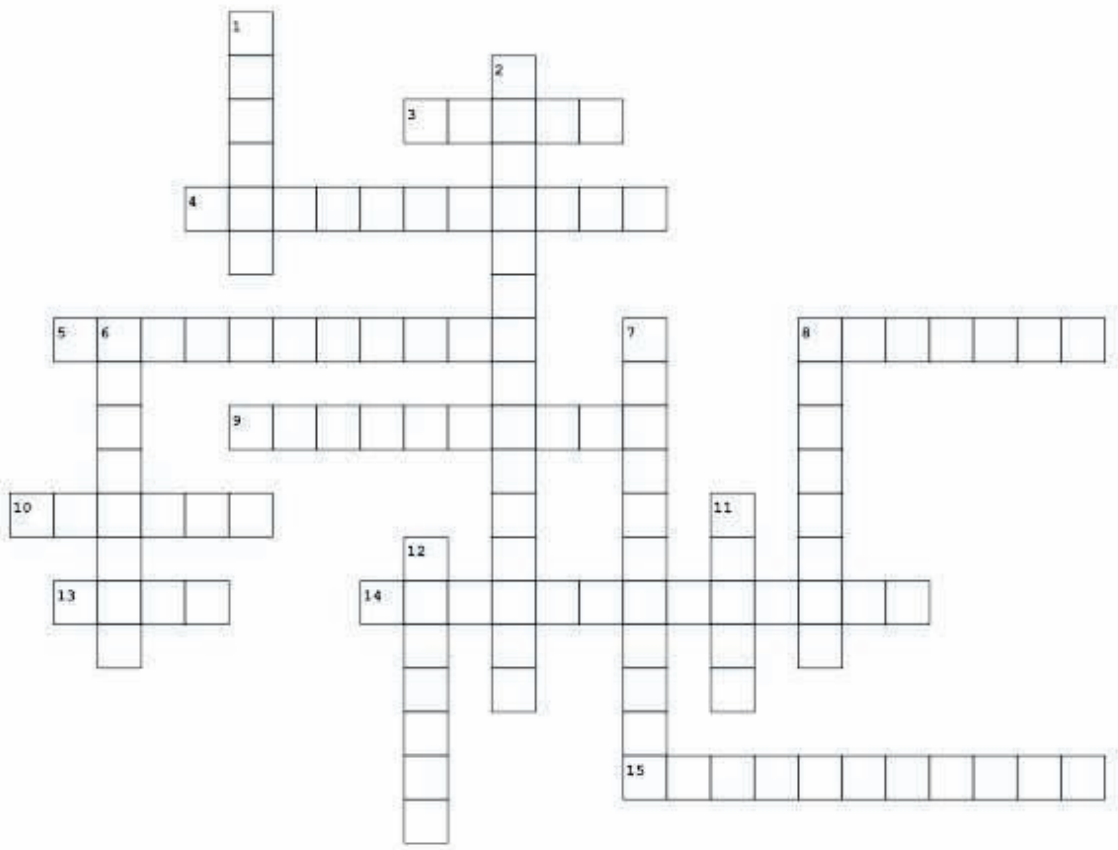
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The smoking area

CROSSWORD



Across

- 3. A panicked-last minute decision (abbrv.)
- 4. Cambridge has more of these than any other academic institution (pl.)
- 5. Fitzbillies' famous attraction
- 8. Cheerleading Society's club animal (pl.)
- 9. Nickname given to Cambridge due to its popularity with tech start-ups
- 10. Doesn't count
- 13. Electric vehicles introduced as a trial in 2019

Down

- 1. The poorly reviewed bar of the Union
- 2. Two colleges with virtually identical crests (3 wrds.)
- 6. College with the most students
- 7. Latin name for Cambridge
- 8. The statue of Henry VIII on Trinity's Great Gate is holding one of these
- 11. Sportsmen of unnecessarily high clout
- 12. Cambridge nightclub that officially closed in 2021

QUIZ

Which Cantab said...

- 1. "Superficially he is a black man... if you hear him on the Today Programme, you wouldn't know he is black" [on Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng]
- 2. "I will try my best to listen, like actually listen" [on his top pledge for his campaign for his union president campaign]
- 3. "As you can probably tell by the incoherence of my opening remarks tonight, I am quite drunk"
- 4. "Only connect!"
- 5. "Oh fuck, I've forgotten... Oh fuck!" [on University Challenge]
- 6. "Oh, God. I'll just live inside your trousers, or something. It would be much easier!"
- 7. "Remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it."
- 8. "To betray, you must first belong. I never belonged."
- 9. "We're not doing this... If that's what you're doing I'm not getting involved." [in response to getting confronted by climate activists]
- 10. "I never read. It prevents me from thinking."
- 11.. "Did you threaten to overrule him [Derek Lewis]?"
- 12. "Because to play the boss you gotta pay the cost
And that cost might come as a major loss
And that's Just the life I chose"
- 13. "Every moment happens twice: inside and outside, and they are two different histories."
- 14. "No people whose word for 'yesterday' is the same as their word for 'tomorrow' can be said to have a firm grip on the time."

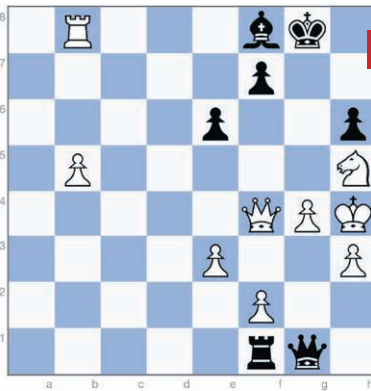
CHESS

Gwilym Price

The chess summer of 2022 was a fruitful one for recent Cambridge graduates, with IM Matthew Wadsworth (Queens' 2018-22) winning the strong Northumbria Masters and FM Harry Grieve (St Catherine's 2019-22) becoming British Champion after a titanic last-round battle against Wadsworth. Below are two puzzles from their victorious events.



Wadsworth - Makkar,
Northumbria Mastters (GM) 2022
White to play and win



Grieve - Eggleston,
British Championship 2022
White to play and mate in 5

Cambridge University Chess Club will meet on Monday evenings at St John's College

VARSLITY SCOPES 30th - 14th October 2022

Libra: Libra. You're everyone's crush this Michaelmas. Your laid back lifestyle means you exude pheromones. It's time you started thinking so too. You may find self love this Autumn at the Cambridge Yoga Studio just off Jesus Green. Channel that Zen darling!

Scorpio: Come on Scorpio, it's time to broaden your culinary skills. Everyone is sick of the three meals in your repertoire, especially you. Meal planning isn't working. Where's that spontaneity? Chances are, if you learn some new kitchen tricks and pop a cork, they'll reward you in the bedroom.

Capricorn: Don't be so serious this year capricorn. You won't die if you get a 2:1 on that problem sheet. Letting your hair down might even feel a little better than the stress you carried over Easter.

Channel your energy into being a social butterfly rather than living in the library.

Aquarius: Feeling unlucky in love? We have a funny feeling it's time to look for love outside of college confines. Broaden your horizons - there's someone waiting to catch your eye in Arc Cafe, and you might just be going on study dates to AMES together come Week 7 if you pick up on their signals...

Pisces: Don't cry Pisces, you'll be home again soon. Save your tears for the stage. That's right! The ADC stage beckons. This is your sign to finally come out of your shell and show the world who you are: Olivia Rodrigo Spicy Pisces Style.

Sagittarius: You thrive with new beginnings! You love the promise of a night of chattering and new people. How-

ever, your social battery may dwindle come week 6. We predict burnout! Take breaks; you'll feel fully charged if you



pop on regular face masks and watch a film from the comfort of your sweet crib.

Aries: It's okay to be argumentative

Aries; it's in your nature. But, know when to put it to good use. You could have a real fall out with your DoS otherwise. And nobody likes being the teacher's least favourite. Don't push too far, you may find new academic avenues open for you.

Taurus: This Michaelmas, a sensitive soul is on the cards to balance out your grounded, pragmatic energies. Opposites really do attract. If a Blackbird Poet starts paying you some attention, heed our words and don't let them go.

Gemini: Oh Gemini, you're snowed under this season. But this Michaelmas, it's time to get out more! Get creative with your free time. Take a walk on the wild side - it'll pay off when those deadlines start hitting, and your free spirit will be feeling the love.

Cancer: Watch out Cancer there's Romance on the horizon this Michaelmas. And you won't find it at Sunday Lola's. An old flame from Selwyn is on the cards. Can they light your fire once more?

Leo: You are the lion of love, except when it comes to STEM students. Stop avoiding those DMs from the Phy Natsci; you're shutting out a potential rocket of a relationship. Open up and maybe they can be a real star in your constellation.

Virgo: Strut your stuff Virgo, especially on Downing Site. Legend has it that Sidgwick is the place for style, but I've heard Downing is the new stomping group for BNOs. If you wear your best outfits by Chemistry, you could be the Diamond of Downing this Autumn.

Vulture

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PHOTO: NORDIN CATIC

'My friend broke the rules by shagging another undergraduate'

Why did Peterhouse shut down a gay Cambridge institution?

“I only speak to the gentleman of the press over lunch at Claridge’s,” rebuffs a typically secretive Adonian insider to my suggestion of a quick phone call. I had hit yet another dead end. “P.S.,” he adds. “As you must know, Peterhouse is not called ‘Peterhouse College’, a solecism which I am sure you will not repeat”. Suitably chastised, I thought it best not to email him again on this or indeed any other matter.

Once described by *Varsity* as a “gay Cambridge institution”, the Adonian society was amongst the University’s most notorious secret societies. Hosting invitation-only dinners at Peterhouse, the society’s exclusively male soirees were the object of extensive student journo intrigue. And – naturally – the subject of permanent rumour.

Founded in an effort to connect gay members of the University, gossip fixated on the allegedly

intimate relationships these candlelit dinners facilitated between students and academics. Undergraduate attendees, who were often “sponsored” by older members to attend, were reportedly seated in-between academics to allow for greater “inter-faculty familiarity”.

One source, who matriculated in 1977, told me: “Obviously the undergraduates don’t pay, the fellow sponsors them which makes it a little like prostitution”.

“My friend, who went, broke the rules by shagging another attractive undergraduate [...] And wasn’t invited back, I don’t think, as a consequence”.

The dinners themselves were lavish. A gossip columnist for *Varsity* wrote: “Endless claret. The best food in Cambridge [...] The wine was bounteous and plentiful, impressing in me the importance of learning the correct protocol for drinking port, claret and

dessert wine simultaneously.” But did the reality of these dinners align with a sleazy mythology that largely led to the society’s downfall?

James Kirchick is an American journalist and author of *The New York Times* bestseller *The Hidden History of Gay Washington*. He attended one of these infamous Adonian dinners more than ten years ago.

“It was about 2011 or 2012,” he tells me over Zoom, clutching onto the memory of that dimly lit evening. A fellow American managed to wrangle him an invitation to the event, and as a keen anglophile – coupled with his uniquely American fascination with Harry Potter – he happily obliged.

“It was actually a lot of fun,” he remembers fondly. “I met some pretty interesting people, and I actually made two friends from that evening.” As for the dinner’s extracurricular activities, the

conspicuous rustling outside didn’t go unnoticed by American ears. “There may have been some hanky-panky in the bushes,” he tells me with a smile. “There was definitely a homoerotic subtext to the whole [dinner].”

An anonymous source told me that, in anticipation of the evening’s festivities outside, “the chap in charge – I think the earl of somewhere – would stand on the table and announce the weather forecast for the deer park”.

But as far as the more salacious gossip is concerned, James is unconvinced. “There were definitely some alumni who came in from London. I don’t recall that many professors, there must have been some of them, but I don’t recall that many.”

“Homosexuality up until recently has been secretive and it therefore lends itself to conspiratorial interpretations,” James explains. An expert on gay

Ella Mann

The Essex slander at Cambridge needs to stop



It's my first day at Cambridge. The first people I meet are two privately educated boys- one in chinos and the other sporting a Hilfiger quarter zip. In between the "Yah's" and "darling's", I'm desperately trying to make sense of what they're saying- to no avail. When I decipher one asking me where I'm from, I smile and falter- for I know what will come next. "Essex", I respond. "HA HA- Towie! Oh god!", he laughs, eyeing me, now infatuated, like a cultural artefact in an exhibition. Well, at least it's a conversation starter.

The next few weeks are a true test of my sense of humour. There's only so many times I can explain that, no, I don't personally know Gemma Collins; or be asked to say "Shut Up babes" in 'that voice'. Some encounters are genuinely amusing. Take, for example, a lovely boy from Gloucestershire who lived on my floor in first year, asking me - with not a hint of irony - if people from Essex had WiFi. The same boy I later had to teach to take the plastic film off the lasagne *before* it goes in the oven, and to keep milk in the fridge otherwise it goes sour. People from Essex, after all, tend to be more 'street smart' (a synonym for common sense).

Other encounters were downright prejudice. Chatting innocently to a friend at a party, I was approached by a boy who'd been listening in. He interrupted me mid-sentence to instruct me simply to "speak in the Queen's English", before walking off. I was left speechless. More common interactions include being called a 'CHAV' (an acronym for 'Council Houses and Violence' for those unfamiliar with the term), being corrected on my pronunciation of certain words, and being asked endlessly to repeat myself at times when I really don't know how they can't not hear me (I'm a loud Essex bird after all).

But don't think I've taken this Essex slander lying down. *Oh no*. I've had fun with it. After all,

A lovely boy asked if people from Essex had WiFi

after 12 years at an all-boys boarding school, 'a bit of rough' is a hot commodity at Cambridge. I also learnt early on that if I couldn't beat them, I'd join them. Hence a particular highlight of first year was the Essex-themed party I held for my 19th. Now I know what you're thinking: I'm not helping myself here. But what ensued was a booze-fuelled cultural enlightenment for my boarding school chums who'd never had the chance to get out of the chinos and were thrilled at the prospect of dressing as a 'road-man'. People embraced the skinny jeans, leopard print, backcombed quiffs and (for those who went the extra mile) fake tan, so that I almost felt back at home.

Being from Essex, I've learnt, is something to shout about at Cambridge, not something to distance yourself from. No one else gets to experience the joy of meeting a fellow Essex undergrad and bonding over similar experiences. The friendliness, directness, and good humour behind the eyes is a characteristic I can spot a mile off. I regret ever thinking I should tone down the accent, ditch the blow dry and nail varnish, and become an RP sheep. When my sister told me at the end of first year that I "sounded different", "posher", I felt deep-seated guilt. Because a strong work ethic, family values, honesty, and good character are what I associate with being from Essex, not stupidity or materialism. I felt similarly disheartened when a well-intended friend reassured me that she could "barely notice the accent". To begin pronouncing my "t's" and "o's" would be a betrayal of these qualities. I won't do it for anyone - not even for Cambridge.

As someone from a family full of Geordies, Cockneys and Midlanders, I find it shocking that one voice should dominate Cambridge University- a global 'seat of knowledge'- in every way. I'd love to see a fellow Essexonian preside over the Union; edit *Varsity*; or row for Blues. And, dare I say it, we're inching closer. One concerned parent asked me at my College's open day if their child was going to be 'disadvantaged' because they were from a London private school. Perhaps they might just be! If Cambridge's interviewers start to realise what valuable people Essex produces, they might stop looking elsewhere. My country has produced such greats as Helen Mirren, Richard Madeley, and Dame Maggie Smith. To my fellow Essexonians at Cambridge- let the proof be in the pudding.

history, he offers the example of another notorious University clique, the Cambridge Five.

A spy ring consisting of Cambridge graduates who were recruited whilst students at the University, it was most active in the 1930s and 1940s. Much like the Adonian society, there was considerable intrigue around the sexual activity of its leading members, so much so that many rumours were falsely overlaid.

"Homosexuality is so integral to the understanding of the Cambridge Five," James explains. Yet "really only two of them were gay."

Were many of the rumours which followed the Adonian Society similarly exaggerated? "I think that is probably true," another Adonian goer tells me.

"What was going on at this dinner in many respects is completely unremarkable because you could go to a [gay] house party in London and it wouldn't be particularly uncommon to see a chief exec chatting to a drag queen or an accountant. It doesn't necessarily have to have this sort of preda-

tory undertone that I think people would assume is the case in a society like [the Adonian]."

A lot of the myth-making around the Adonian society is fundamentally a misunderstanding of gay culture, my source vehemently argues.

"There's an entire interaction style that you find in most groups of gay guys which is much more collaborative and willing to help each other out [...] in a way that is totally benign."

"It was just a fun, formal style dinner in an environment where it is conducive for people to socially interact," he adds. "I actually met someone who I went on to date [and] people who became lifelong friends."

Yet it seems Peterhouse succumbed nonetheless to the rumours and gossip. The Adonians held their last supper there in 2018. Following escalating tensions and prices, the society were soon left without a venue in which to hold its dinners.

In an email shown to *Varsity* at the time, Adonian organisers told members: "Peterhouse has

decided not to host further dinners for us and, as a consequence, no further functions are planned."

"I think closing [the Adonian] down was actively to the disservice of students, Peterhouse and Cambridge more generally - and would have been done out of an abundance of caution, rather than on the basis of any real reality."

But this same Adonian source, who attended as an older graduate, is quick to caveat such a statement. "Now, having said that, if you were to ask an undergraduate they may have had a completely different experience."

The line between truth and gossip is one that is often blurred, but none perhaps quite as clearly (or obscurely rather) as the infamous Adonian society. The reality of these dinners is as ambiguous as the sexuality of the Greek mythological figure Adonis, after which the society takes its name.

Peterhouse declined to comment (23/09).

QUICKFIRE

Lara Brown is the Union president and studies English at Downing

What are you reading?

The Lost Art of Keeping Secrets
by Eva Rice

Where do you sleep?

In the Union President's office.



Where will you be on Wednesday night?

The Free Press. R.I.P. Wednesday Cindies

When did you first realise you wanted to be a megalomaniac?

Some are born megalomaniacs. Some achieve megalomania. Others have megalomania thrust upon them. I'll let you decide which camp I fall into.

What's the worst joke you've ever heard?

Social Contract Theory.

Who's your Cambridge arch-nemesis?

The person reading this.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Taller.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Shorter.

What will be written on your grave-stone?

"I told you so"

Where was your last kiss?

Now that *would* be telling.

Varsity or the T*b?

TCS

If that Tiktokker asked you what song you're listening to on King's Parade, what would you have pre-prepared?

A Lady of a Certain Age by the Divine Comedy

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

Jarvis Cocker, Jane Austen, and Mary Louise, Duchess of Parma.

Forget 'Revs or Lolas'. Mash or Vinyl?

Vinyl

Biggest difference between Lara Brown the Union President and Lara Brown the friend?

About 215 votes

What's the key to happiness?

Battenberg Cake.

What's the working title of your spill-all memoir?

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Interview

The undergrad with kids

Mother-of-two and Hughes Hall student tells **Chris Patel** how she balances a degree and two toddlers

A degree at Cambridge University can feel all-consuming: the University even tells its students not to have a job alongside their studies. Yet, in 2019, 5.8% of Cambridge students were raising children at the same time. I spoke with Laryssa, – a married 35-year-old mum to two daughters, aged 5 and 3, and a 2nd year law undergraduate at Hughes Hall – about her experience of being a student mother at Cambridge, a perspective that is not only rarely talked about, but which seems anathema to the University's very culture.

Although Laryssa describes her situation to me with a smile, being a Cambridge student parent is relentlessly intense. She tells me she knows of only one other student parent at Hughes, and says that people generally don't know what her life is like. Those who do know about Laryssa's situation sometimes doubt her. One relative advised "you'd be better off just doing an easier degree at Anglia Ruskin, and properly taking care of your kids". Some supervisors are very understanding. But on one occasion, Laryssa handed in an essay 5 minutes late, and was told that if it happened again, they wouldn't take her essay. "It was this week that we were all sick in my household. Every parent knows if you have a kid in nursery, you get sick *all the time*," Laryssa says that while support from staff is readily verbalised, in reality "they are less willing to give support and more willing to be like 'it's okay to get a lower grade', or 'we all understand if you don't do as well'".

Finding childcare provision for when Laryssa is studying and her husband is at work is another huge challenge. However, the University's childcare service is oversubscribed, and students struggle to deal with the cost: "Nursery costs £1,400 a month [for one daughter] – who can afford that? Not many people if you're a one-income household now that you're a student." Laryssa adds that the University offers little financial support for student parents: "A lot of the people I know that maybe would like to go back to uni wouldn't be able to afford it, particularly because of childcare costs".



Studying and parenting leave Laryssa with very little free time. Rowing is one of the only times she can destress and socialise, with the added benefit of allowing her to avoid the school run. She tells me that her schedule is only possible because of her supportive husband, but that even though he does most of the childcare during term time, her daily routine still revolves around her daughters – "I just do the degree in between". The holidays, when her children take up even more of her time, are busier still. Any time that Laryssa makes for herself is therefore hard-won; sometimes weeks pass when she only says 'hi' and 'bye' to her husband. As Laryssa met her husband on the 29th of the month and they also got married on the 29th, they keep that date in each month free in order to spend quality time with each other. One day a month is the bare minimum, but sometimes it is all Laryssa can manage. Without it, Laryssa's routine becomes robotic: "you'd be surprised at how long you could go if you don't have those [days]; you can just go through the motions."

Laryssa's daughters also find her long hours



spent studying difficult to cope with, although she tells me that they love it when she takes them to visit Hughes. Laryssa recalls one conversation with her 5-year-old: "One day she was like, 'Why do you have to study?' and I was like 'Well, because mummy's studying to be a lawyer' and then she started crying, and said 'I don't want you to be a lawyer, I want you to be my mum.'" With so much pressure, self-doubt can creep in, worst of all during exam season. Laryssa recalls her brother-in-law's wedding in May, when she had all-over rashes from the stress: "I was doing my makeup for the wedding while I was in a constitutional law supervision... I was like 'What am I doing?' 'Why have I done this to myself?'... But I've learned to look ahead and keep an eye on the prize." Smilingly, Laryssa also admits that whenever she second-guesses her decision to do a degree, she Googles 'newly qualified lawyer salaries'.

For all its challenges, being a student mother has given Laryssa a unique perspective. She remembers laughing to herself at a Camfess user who worriedly asked how she could know if she were 'hot or not'. With two young daughters in her life, Laryssa has a constant reminder that there are at least two more important things than that. The skills Laryssa has gained from motherhood have also helped her studies, and vice versa. "Being a mum, you have to be a time management pro, otherwise nothing gets done. Kids... pull you back to the present". Her children also put her studies into perspective: "It's not just my career anymore, it's their lives".

The next year promises even more intense studies, and, in the summer, internships. Laryssa made the decision this summer not to do an internship, instead taking her daughters to Brazil, where Laryssa is originally from, to spend time with relatives they hadn't seen since before the pandemic. Family has come first in this decision, but with aspirations of becoming an international commercial solicitor, Laryssa is proof that having a family and a career don't have to be mutually exclusive. As we wrap up, I ask what advice she has for other parents who are considering a degree. "You're never too old, it is possible, it is hard, but it's nothing that we can't do." And as for everyone else? "Employ mums, talk to mums, ask mums for advice because we can do so much, because we have to", and most importantly ... "help mums".

▲ **Students strut their clubbing fits before they head out** (LARYSSA MARIANO VIANA ALMEIDA)

'Being a mum, you have to be a time management pro, otherwise nothing gets done'

Edinburgh Fringe's top shows

As students slaved away at internships, Cambridge's thesps descended on Edinburgh. **Sophie Macdonald** picks her top five plays

And just like that, the Edinburgh Fringe wraps up once again (Sophie Macdonald writes). Cambridge talent soared; the audience laughed; and *Varsity* had opinions. We also had a top five—here they are:

Real Mad World: original, daring and leaves the audience ruminating

Madeleine Anderson, enjoyed how the production shifts between scenes of quiet domesticity and energised enagement. This show focuses on the relationship between Laura and Lindsay, which is intensified by Lindsay's insistence on trans-revolutionary action and Laura's desire to carry and raise children. It draws upon ideas of love, sex and empathy and the barriers that

complicate queer love.

Cicada's Children: the moment you walk into the theatre you are complicit

Tom Howlett expressed that this chilling tale about the revival of the cult of Cicada's Children was "quite exceptional". The cult's respected leader, Stanley Cicada, has been arrested but one member remains keen to rejuvenate its power; all she needs is one unsuspecting idiot. It is dark, discomfoting and original.

Horrible Herstories: a clever look at comedic women of the past

Sheamol Obeda, believes "every history supervisor needs to see [Horrible Herstories]". It follows a group of 'Phil's' as they tackle the mistruths that history has cemented about women. While it can't promise historical accuracy, it'll certainly provide enough fast-paced humour to leave you satisfied for the evening.

Girlboss: funny, flirty and one-hundred per cent Fringe-worthy

Reviewing at the Fringe, Lotte Brundle thought Girlboss' "dry delivery of witty one-liners was exceptional." Girlboss is simultaneously a refreshing take on the struggles of womanhood

and a guide for overcoming them. This production encourages women to run with the expectations society places on women and put their spin on them—something the writers did remarkably.

Life Before the Line: astute commentary on growing up in politically charged times

Life Before the Line was the stand out show of the Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club, and was seen as its best by Anna Gardener when it "juxtaposed the mundane and shocking." The play is framed by a terrorist alarm going off in a revision lesson and how it dramatically impacts the lives of its four main characters.



▲ Life Before the Line

(Benjamin Nicholson)

Five must-watch films to get you in the mood for university

It's everyone's favourite time of year again (Sarah Abbas writes). No, not Christmas. The bells are ringing, but these are school bells. Here are our top movie picks for the back-to-university season in anticipation of the academic rigour that follows.

Legally Blonde (2001)

It's been a long summer and it can be hard to get back into the swing of things when term starts. Legally Blonde is essential viewing for some (temporary) motivation. If you're a law student, even better. As Elle Woods enters the intense world of Harvard Law School in order to prove she is serious about her recent 'I dumped you because you are a dumb blonde' ex, we watch her grow in the academic hothouse. If you are a theatre kid, there is also a musical version. If Emmett's words of wisdom in 'Chip On Your Shoulder' don't inspire you to get your act together, I'm not sure what will.

Good Will Hunting (1997)

The ultimate diamond in the rough tale. Mathmos, this one goes out to you. My sixth form further maths

lessons consisted of me and my friend lusting over Matt Damon as our teacher looked at us with disappointment. Hey - at least we got A*s. Good Will Hunting follows self-taught genius Will Hunting as he solves difficult mathematical proofs left on the MIT blackboards during his shifts as a janitor. We see Will reach his potential and fight his inner demons.

The Social Network (2010)

Cambridge's favourite platform? Facebook of course. Want to know the blurry origins of the company? This is definitely the most 'factually accurate' depiction of Mark Zuckerberg's rise to success. Yet another Harvard story, we follow his time in the prestigious institution as he uses his IQ to good use: rating the attractiveness of female students. This then melds into a social network exclusively for Harvard students and before we know it, the company has expanded to the rest of the Ivy League and then the world. With flawless cinematography and a stellar cast, this film is effortlessly charming.

Mona Lisa Smile (2003)

If Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst and Julia Stiles making up the cast aren't enough to convince you to watch this classic, let me give it a try. As their new professor gives them an unexpected introduction to modern art, she challenges her students' beliefs that life is merely a means to marriage and encourages the women of Wellesley College to embrace their youth and independence. This heartwarming film is the perfect alternative if you've watched Dead Poets Society one too many times.

Gilmore Girls (2000-2007)

If you need something to binge before Michaelmas creeps upon us, Gilmore Girls is guaranteed success. Following Rory Gilmore in small-town Stars Hollow, Gilmore Girls is your classic comfort show. The series starts when she's in high school, but by season 4 she is in the ivy-coloured walls of Yale. The plot lines are short and sweet, each episode leaving you with peaceful closure. To all the student journalists reading this: this is the only show about us. So treasure it.

VIEW FROM THE STALLS

My advice to freshers? It's only a bunch of students having fun

Greg Miller



Are you looking to get into theatre as an actor at Cambridge? If so, why? Well, if you insist on it, you'll need some advice to help you get into the "scene" (if, indeed, that farrago can be called a "scene"), which I am here to provide in slow and careful steps. Are you ready? Let's start.

Firstly, abandon all moral scruples. Some find this the easiest step and others the hardest, depending on how few scruples they have to begin with. Some don't even need this step, since they have never had any. If you are one of these, you can stop reading this now and continue doing whatever evil thing it is you were doing. I wish you the best of luck with it.

Secondly, have a nice accent. I cannot stress how important this is. If you don't have a nice accent, then get a hold of yourself, for God's sake!

Thirdly, make friends. They're great for personal gain. But please do remember to cast them off as soon as possible, and perhaps even earlier than that if you can. Remember, lasting friendships get you nothing in this world. Well, it does get you happiness, but who wants that? If you're wondering what can be done to help you make these trendy and influential friends, see the step above and peruse it as you would the ancient texts.

(A quick addendum to the step above. You may well be saying to yourself at this point something like "but what if I'm introverted, and don't like insincerity and naked ambition, or cruelty hiding within flattery?". If so, don't get into acting, Nerd.)

Fourthly, be insufferable. Hopefully this has been implicit in the prior steps, but it is important that I state it clearly, just in case. Remember, theatre is not a vehicle for expression, but rather one for your own insecurity. Sincerity and health are death.

Lastly, remember that it's all good fun! Just a bit of relaxation and recreation by a bunch of amateur students, not in any way pressurised or intimidating. It's a place for you to really grow and flourish as a person, really. In short, just be you and the rest will follow!

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'We came up with the name while staring at some geese'

From Phoebe Bridges to Pink Floyd, Just Me and the Geese tell Immy Rowe and Tommy Gilhooly about what inspires them

Listening to "Silent Film", you're immediately sent into an ethereal realm of twangy chords and anguished vocals.

Sitting before me were Cambridge students who, despite racking up over 15,000 streams on "Silent Film" and having been featured on BBC Music Introducing, still have to transport their instruments from college to college by using an abandoned wagon found late one night outside King's.

Maggie, George, Liv, and Archie were all first-year music students. Yet, they were relative strangers until a group-chat message banded them together for a practice session. Gathering in the Music Faculty, they found little equipment — prompting them to buy their own. Within this DIY process lies the fun, and recording from the comfort of their own rooms lends to a laid back vibe, which flows through to the Geese's final product.

The origin story for their peculiar name is certainly hazy. Supposedly, King's Senior Organ Scholar Paul Greally deserves the credit for the name — coined whilst gazing upon the geese at King's. There was also talk of Marina and the Diamonds. If her fans are the diamonds, logically: "we are the geese". The final name was revealed to be the result of an agonising three-month process. And while Maggie was never a fan of the name at first, she finally relented. Just Me and the Geese were born. Archie finalised this diplomatically: "love it or hate it, you do remember it."

Song writing for The Geese is a collaborative process. Someone might start with the chords and the rest of the band dives in to transform it into a fully-formed song. Liv revealed how songs she had written years ago have now been adapted to George's and Maggie's guitar styles.

Collectively, their influences range from the shoe gazing of My Bloody Valentine to the melancholic folk of Nick Drake. Liv reels off Thea Gilmore, Phoebe Bridgers and Wolf Alice as significant. Archie's influences seemed encyclopaedic. The likes of The Beatles, Radiohead and Pink Floyd were mentioned. "You have a lot — Archie listens to everything", Maggie laughs. My Bloody Valentine and Sonic Youth came first to George's mind. Maggie then comes in reminding us that Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell are yet to be mentioned. Not to forget Nick Drake.

Whenever The Geese start a new song it's met with the joke: "oh, this is just a cover of that one Radiohead song". Yet, George suggests "that's the sort of sound you have in your head when you are writing ... as soon as you start writing it becomes your own thing." Even when using the same chords, The Geese always put their spin on it. Ultimately, The Geese have the best of both worlds, Archie argues. "It's cool that we have the influence of traditional rock and pop as well as the singer-songwriter vibe and the more chill acoustic stuff."

The Geese have since been releasing multiple eclectic singles and are currently focused on producing an album. It will be patchwork in nature — a collection of singles. They say it allows them to play to "different establishments, like a more clashy vibe, or something more acoustic — depending on the nature of the event."

Despite their eclecticism, The Geese manage to masterfully blend all their influences to create some of the best music coming out of Cambridge right now. And their unrelenting work ethic certainly means that they're here to stay.





▲ George Smith, the band's lead guitarist
(JUST ME THE GEESE)



EXHIBITIONS

Robert Bell

11 October - 8 January 2023
Defaced! Money, Conflict, Protest at the Fitzwilliam Museum

In what the Fitzwilliam says is the first exhibit of its kind, Defaced! explores the intersection of money, power, and protest over the last two and a half centuries.

16 September - 12 February 2023
Life is Still Life at Murray Edwards College

Still-life works from 15 contemporary female artists are brought together at Murray Edwards in mediums ranging from painting and photography to video and ceramics. It is intended to comment on current global issues, especially the legacy of colonialism; Covid-19; and global warming.

12 November - 19 February 2023
Paint Like the Swallow Sings Calypso at Kettle's Yard

This exhibition is a presentation of the history and themes of carnival. It includes a collection of works by Paul Dash, Errol Lloyd, and John Lyons - as well as artwork from the collections of Kettle's Yard and the Fitzwilliam Museum. Its curators are all first-generation diaspora Caribbean painters, whose works have been exhibited at Tate Britain; the Royal Academy of Arts; and the Huddersfield Art Gallery, amongst others.

26 July - 9 April 2023
COLOUR: Art, Science & Power at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Separated into five themes, each exploring a different facet of colour's impact on art, this exhibit brings together objects from collections across the University of Cambridge. Unsurprisingly, given the exhibition's location in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the objects presented in 'COLOUR' include medieval manuscripts, African sculptures, Amazonian head-dresses, scientific instruments and a royal Hawaiian cape. This free exhibition is an interactive affair. A mixture of creative activities, sensory engagement, and "perception quizzes" push visitors to reconsider their interactions with colour in fashion, art and society.

Find more on varsity.co.uk/arts

CLUB NIGHTS

Sophie McDonald & Sarah Abbas

1st October
Hybrid Minds & Tempza (Junction)

Worried About Henry present the energetic duo Hybrid Minds at Cambridge, Junction. The duo will reunite, and the night will also feature music from Krakota, Lens Kara and much more. Tickets are limited so get your hands on them fast!

2nd October
La Vida Lola's (Lola Lo)
Living la freshers loca? Get yourself to Lola's! With two whole dance floors and an array cheap shots to choose from, Lola's is a great way to kick-start your fresher's week.

5th October
Rumboogie: Freshers week (Revolution)

The noxious fumes that emanate from the Revs smoking area will never quite leave you, but its ambience is unmissable. Your first Revs is almost equal to your matriculation, you can't consider yourself a true Cambridge student without it.

9th October
La Vida Lola's (Lola Lo)
Try it one more time. We promise it gets better - it'll be week two, you'll be used to the cheesy tunes.

10th October
The Queer Get Down: Freshers Special (MASH)
Are you queer and want to get down? The name says it all. It's a fun and welcoming environment, and, despite the sweat dripping from MASH's walls, it'll be a great night out.

12th October
Rumboogie (Revolution)
Round two? Impressive. If fresher's flu hasn't entirely obliterated you, what better way to celebrate your lack of a runny nose than venturing into the Revs crowd and possibly catching something worse?

13th October
Taylor Swift Club Night by CUTSAS (MASH)
Not liking Taylor Swift is unacceptable at Cambridge - there are too many Swiftie club nights, and a new album this month, for you to escape. If you are a Swiftie, what better way of finding your people than on the first Swiftie night of the year?

THEATRE

Sophie Macdonald & Sarah Abbas

4th - 8th October
All's Well That Ends Well (ADC)

No, this isn't another Taylor Swift event. Come on guys, it's a Shakespeare play. CAST tours visit numerous schools, universities and theatres across the USA. And this October, they'll be coming to Cambridge too. They provide educational workshops on Shakespearean English, acting techniques and stagecraft.

4th - 8th October
The Cambridge Footlights International Tour Show 2022: Are we there yet? (ADC)

An age-old question, are the Footlights funny? See for yourself. This Footlights sketch show features five curious tourists who are hoping for a holiday of laughs. The first Footlights show is a great opportunity for Freshers to test the Cambridge theatre waters - who knows, the next Hugh Laurie may rise from its ashes.

11th - 15th October
Wuthering Heights (ADC)
Emily Brontë's classic with a promised modern edge. Whatever your souls are made of, yours and the ADC's may be the same. So don't miss one of the first student plays of the term.

11th - 15th October
A New Brain (Corpus Playroom)
Terminal illness and the healing power of art - what better way to spend your study break? This show is William Finn's autobiographical account of his own battle for life when afflicted with a brain injury, but with a Cambridge spin!

11th - 15th October
Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons (Corpus Playroom)
When life gives you lemons ... write a play. This play follows a lawyer and musician whose budding relationship is tested by a new law: citizens are now only permitted to speak 140 words a day - a law, I'm sure you freshers will soon come to learn, that should be enforced for some of Cambridge's Twitter fiends.



▲ Murky Sonics (ROB OLIFFE)

JACK WEBB

Think jazz is pretentious? You couldn't be more wrong



Jazz. A music that quite possibly stumbles into your life every once in a while in some obscure May Ball tent that you only intended on passing through to find the source of those suspect cocktails that everyone else seems to be drinking. As you find your body being inexplicably compelled to move to the funky rhythms, you realise that a groove this wicked could only be the work of a clandestine group of shamelessly beret-clad, polo shirt worshippers; a cult who dream of J. K. Simmons hurling a chair at them mid-rehearsal, almost as frequently as they dream of their next heroin dose.

Fortunately for the general well-being of those of us who do play, this is far from the reality of jazz in Cambridge. The scene is expansive and welcoming: it is a handy by product of the collegiate system that a vast number of colleges have their own auditioned jazz bands that draw on talent from across the University and perform at a very high standard. Outfits such as Homerton Jazz Orchestra (affectionately known as HoJO), Caius Big Band and St. John's College Jazz Band can be found performing regularly at balls, bops and ents. A staple event for any big band connoisseur is the yearly Battle of the Big Bands, which relocated last year from the consecrated Clare Cellars to bring the combined noise of Churchill Jazz Band, Fitz Swing and Selwyn Jazz to Hidden Rooms on Jesus Lane.

Whilst this is certainly a night to keep an eye out for in 2023, if you are looking to develop a taste for a more intimate jazz experience where your radically comprehensive cultural knowledge will be more audible whenever you shout "yeah man" at a particularly impressive solo, there are a number of regular jazz nights that run in various colleges too. Clare Jazz host upwards of four nights a term in the atmospheric Cellars, and Homerton have historically run a jam session every Tuesday evening for any musicians with a burning desire to shred during the week.

With so many available options to hear jazz within the University, the repertoire on offer is consequently diverse too. Many of the big bands cover everything from swing classics to funk and fusion. One recent addition to the Cambridge jazz world - Cambridge University Jazz Society - has swiftly established itself as a cornerstone of the swing calendar. Their bi-weekly events have consistently brought a range of incredible musicians to sell-out audiences, featuring both homegrown groups such as Temor or The Joseph Septet, alongside emerging professional artists such as Emma Rawicz, who blessed the ears of Cambridge this May for a steal of a ticket price. A Jazz Soc night out comes highly recommended for musicians too, as every event ends with one of their now infamous open jam sessions, which have proved a major success in creating a positive and inclusive space for local jazz musicians to meet and enjoy adding more stains to their real books.

Fashion

A student wardrobe on a shoestring budget

Lily Kemp's step-by-step guide for how to look good even if you're skint

So you're packing for uni and thinking about the year ahead. You're probably excited to wear something exciting to a formal, or a cool top on a night out. Maybe you're a bit nervous; you feel you don't know what to expect. For some, it may be the first time you're fully in charge of your own finances. The temptation to splash the cash on new clothes is strong. After all, it's hard to feel confident about uni when you feel your clothes don't reflect who you are. Rather, they reflect who you were last year, or the year before. With all these wardrobe worries, and limited funds to fix them, Here is a *Varsity* guide to adapting your wardrobe to uni, on a shoestring budget.

Step 1- Make a list of everything you own, and write where there are gaps in your wardrobe. Gaps include things you don't wear or like anymore. For instance, if you have three long sleeve tops but you never wear one, sell that one and start looking for another. There is no point in holding onto clothes you don't wear. Your wardrobe will start to thrive when every item becomes useful and loved.

Step 2- This leads me to my Mum's favourite mantra: only buy exactly what you need. Revisiting the metaphorical top scenario; if you are buying a new top, you don't need to buy it in every colour and end up with six new tops. Buy enough to fill that singular gap within your wardrobe. This benefits your pocket, wardrobe space, and the environment. With all these benefits, it's clear that sometimes less really is more.

Step 3- Now that you've replaced an item you don't like in your wardrobe, you don't want to repeat this process every time you fall out of love with your clothes. Solution: aim to buy enduring pieces. Often, I opt for less patterns or pieces I can adapt into more than three outfits. For instance, if you only have two pairs of jeans and sell one pair, don't then buy a pink pair to replace them. They'll go out of style and you'll be lumped with the bill and a useless item. Instead, go wild on accessories. They're often cheaper and you can change the tone of an outfit entirely with them.

Step 4- I've mentioned buying enduring pieces. I often find these are less loud than statement pieces. You may worry that your wardrobe, thus, will lack originality, or vibrancy. My answer to that is buy second hand. Vintage shopping has so many benefits, not just eco ones. You can flirt with colour and pattern at a fraction of the cost. If you buy on Vinted, (rather than Depop), the prices aren't as eye watering high. Also, your items are usually one of a kind, making your style more individual. There's little chance of Jenny, at the college next door, having the same top as you. You part with less cash, you're being eco friendly and if you don't like it you can always resell it easily.

Bonus step- The most important step to me is patience. It takes time to develop a whole new look. As we all know, Rome wasn't built in a day; your perfect wardrobe will take months, even years to build. Don't be tempted to panic drop hundreds of pounds in freshers week on your new look. You'll regret it in week six when you can only afford pesto pasta for tea. Enjoy the slow and exciting accumulation of individual pieces you love. That evolution creates a truly beautiful and unique student wardrobe.



▲ (LILY KEMP)



Help! What do I wear out on a night out?

Kasia Truscott's tips for looking glam at your first Revs

We've all been there: running late for pres, clothes sprawled out across the floor, desperately scouring Ticketbridge to find a last-minute club ticket, not sure where your Cam card is, and the overwhelming panic of not knowing what to wear kicks in. It's a feeling that can ruin any night out, and with Fresher's Week just around the corner, you now might be more determined than ever to avoid it. Whether it's your first or final Fresher's Week at Cambridge this year, *Varsity* has you covered with a fool-proof guide to fresher's fashion, helping you keep your nights out stylish and stress-free. (Disclaimer: we won't be responsible for any lost Cam cards...)

First, we'll start with the freshers. If you're new to clubbing at Cambridge, there's pretty much one rule you ought to know: anything goes. So if you're looking to test the waters and blend style and comfort to the max, try opting for a pair of low-rise jeans – relaxed, fitted, or flared – and a statement top. From effortlessly

cool off-the-shoulder tops to bejewelled graphic tees, you can never go wrong with this versatile and timeless combination.

But, of course, what would a guide to fresher's fashion be without recommending a pair of cargos? A growing staple for any uni student's wardrobe, cargo trousers make the perfect transition from day to night. Dressed up with anything from an oversized tee to a neutral-toned tube top, and polished off with a slicked back bun and a pair of bold earrings, there are a million and one different ways to style this cool and classy staple.

If, however, you're a Cambridge clubbing veteran, you're probably looking to spice things up a bit more. Let's start with a classic Sunday Lola's scenario. You're bound to run into pretty much everyone you know at a Sunday Lola's, which can either be a blessing or a curse, depending on how you look at it. Either way, it means you're going to want to put your best foot forwards. Knee-high boots are a great option for the oncoming winter; paired with a funky mini skirt and a printed baby-tee and you've nailed the art of casual coolness. Equally, the Queer Get Down has quickly become one of, if not the most stylish club nights in Cambridge, making it the perfect place to experiment with your wardrobe and think big. A trusty pair of cowboy boots, a satin slip skirt, a vintage corset top and plenty of oversized, funky jewellery in your arsenal will have you fit right in.

But if your ideal night out involves live music, jazz, funk, and plenty of Earth, Wind & Fire remixes, you're probably a keen Grandma Groove



▲ Students strut their clubbing fits before they head out (SARAH ABBAS/LEWIS ANDREWS)

Keeping warm, and practical, in the colder months

Rise and shine students, it's time to start another Michaelmas term. This is what we are most excited to wear this Autumn.

Lily Kemp

Of course I am excited about whipping out my black dresses for formals. Yet, in my heart of hearts I'm a simple soul; nothing beats keeping warm for me. Thus, I am most looking forward to a pair of knitted fingerless gloves I picked up in the summer from a small shop in Prague. They're blue, made of wool and I love them. Knitwear is a must for our cold winters, pick things up from charity shops, depop or even learn to knit. Staying warm never goes out of style. Over to my team who will have more interesting picks!

Neha Mano

Without doubt it's the blazer for me. As a somewhat avid collector of these structured pieces, I've found that the versatility of a well timed blazer cannot be trumped. Bad hair day? Bloated after two hours of snacking? My solution: the blazer. I rely on neutrals and whites and this

beige oversized piece always triumphs in my eyes. It is a total staple that is worth the investment! A clean, cute blazer outlives any micro trend that soon gets expensive, especially if you aim to dress to those Cambridge standards.

Nafisa Mahmood

Slip on a coat: it's the most wonderful time of the year. Brave the Michaelmas wind with your hands buried in the pockets of a coat that lets you float down King's Parade and it's sure to be a good, cold-free term. My personal favourites are ones of considerable length and fabric. Outerwear of leather, wool or corduroy that drape to your ankles makes for an outfit that always looks effortlessly put together, even if that isn't true for the inside. There's nothing quite like the ingenuity of a portable blanket, and when 9am lectures steal me away from the warmth of my bed, you'll be sure to find me tucked into my best coat.

Maya Stokes

Autumn is jacket season. Whether it's a Lo-relai Gilmore inspired leather trench or your grandma's vintage fur, it's time to splash your

statement outerwear up and down the aisles of Mainsbury's. The piece I am most excited to wear also happens to be my greatest charity shop find to date. A one hundred percent wool jacket that was hand knitted in the Faroe Islands. The best part? A huge, fluffy white collar that makes it look just like something Jadis the White Witch would wear. Speaking of Narnia, I'm confident I could survive an eternal winter wearing this jacket alone. Cruella de Vil, eat your heart out. On the little, but oh so important details

Paloma Shemirani

With autumn finally here, I am most excited about wearing my 1950s-style green skirt with maple leaves printed along the hem, from Collectif. After a summer of low-waisted cargo pants, a skirt makes a refreshing change to the wardrobe, and it goes great with all the leaves scattered across Sidgwick Avenue. While Collectif has many stores across the UK and online, I actually bought this skirt from the independent shop, Pocket Watch and Petticoats here in Cambridge, so be sure to check them out and support a local business this season.

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Jasmine, 21, studies Theology

What were you hoping for?
An ally in the Divinity Faculty.

First impressions?
Juliette's fact about herself, in our first lecture, was that she liked broccoli. I found this funny, but unfortunately no one else did – as it was met with a deafening silence.

What did you talk about?
For the first and only time in our friendship, Juliette and I dutifully discussed the questions set to us by our academic supervisor.

Any awkward moments?
Juliette spent a decent portion of the lecture noisily and conspicuously trying to tear paper out of a notebook, which was a bit off putting to both myself and our A7 lecturer, Jörg Haustein – but made for good entertainment.

Biggest ick about the other person?
After the lecture we reconvened at the Arc Cafe where Juliette purchased a falafel salad wrap; and proceeded to peel out most, if not all, of the salad items – eating only the damp wrap. I'll let this speak for itself.

Best thing about the other person?
I found it refreshing that Juliette was prepared to be honest about her moments of humiliation and despair in Freshers' Week. This was both entertaining and comforting in the face of the theatre of war that is the University of Cambridge.

Did you go on somewhere?
We reunited later that day at lecture room 2 for paper A1a, Elementary Hebrew.

What do you think the other person made of you?
I thought Juliette thought I was a damn fool – especially after my little collision with the Sidgwick Site bike racks; and my enduring incompetence in Biblical Hebrew.

And... did you kiss?
No, but we did find ourselves bonding over who we'd problematically got with in Freshers' Week – a sign of real trust, I'd say.

Would you meet again?
I suppose our friendship was written in the stars, being course mates in the hallowed Divinity Faculty. I can't wait to sit next to her again in Lecture Room 2 — the rest will be history.

Blind date

'She spent the lecture noisily tearing paper out of a notebook'



Juliette, 20, also won't get a job

What were you hoping for?
Someone to navigate the horrors of Tripos Part 1 with.

First impressions?
Jasmine remembered to bring her laptop to the lecture. I had forgotten to do this, so I was impressed with her organisational skills. She also had cool shoes on.

What did you talk about?
We discussed what constitutes a world religion, and how many world religions there are. Hot stuff.

Any awkward moments?
I felt a bit embarrassed when I told Jasmine that I was vegetarian; then promptly telling her my favourite sandwich was tuna mayo. That was pretty weird of me.

Biggest ick about the other person?
We parted ways outside the Div Fac. I was shocked to see Jasmine putting on a bike helmet — I thought she was cooler than this.

Best thing about the other person?
I thought Cambridge was going to be full of twerps. In meeting Jasmine on my first day, I was immediately comforted by knowing that this is not the case.

Did you go on somewhere?
We reunited later that day at lecture room 2 for paper A1a, Elementary Hebrew.

What do you think the other person made of you?
I thought Jasmine only put up with me to reap the benefits of my basic Hebrew skills. However, she soon found out that I was just as shit as her and still sat next to me in lecture room 2; so was forced to the conclusion that she must see something else in me, besides my capacity as a linguist.

And... did you kiss?
No, she has a girlfriend.

Would you meet again?
Yes. Her lecture notes speak for themselves. I will do anything to maintain this relationship. My essays need her. Also she's my friend so I guess we'll hang out....



Jasmine and Juliette met at a Theology lecture in Sidgwick site. Photo taken by Tobia Nava. Fancy dating? Email lifestyle@varsity.co.uk or scan the QR code

Ask Mrs Sanderson

I've blocked my staircase toilet. How do I get my flatmates back on my side?

Have a question for our agony aunt? Email it to lifestyle@varsity.co.uk or scan the QR code



Dear Mrs Sanderson, I wrote an embarrassing entry to the Cambridge 2022 freshers' Instagram. I massively regret what I did! Is my reputation ruined before freshers' week has even begun?

Silly, silly fresher. I pity you. In the span of one summer, you've gone from being a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in a massive fuck-off tank swarming with soul-crushing academic piranhas. And in that case, who could blame you for wanting to make a good impression? The system seems flawless — you introduce yourself and your vast array of interests (fascinating and totally refined, I'm sure) in an attempt to out-individual your counterparts and prove you're not like other freshers: you're edgy, unique, and most

importantly, a good time. You'll be drowning in potential playmates, before you've even spent a portion of your student loan on buying them rounds of shots in the desperate hopes that somebody, anybody (!), will think you're cool.

But there's good news. I'll tell you a secret — there isn't a single post on the Cambridge freshers' Instagram that isn't embarrassing. Moreover, I can't think of a single freshers' week interaction that didn't make me want to crawl into a hole and hide from my humiliating mistakes for eternity. You were going to embarrass yourself at some point, so good on you for getting it done whilst it's still early days. You're a braver soul than most.

Dear Mrs Sanderson - nightmare! I've acci-

dentally blocked my staircase toilet! How do I get my flatmates back on my side? So humiliating!

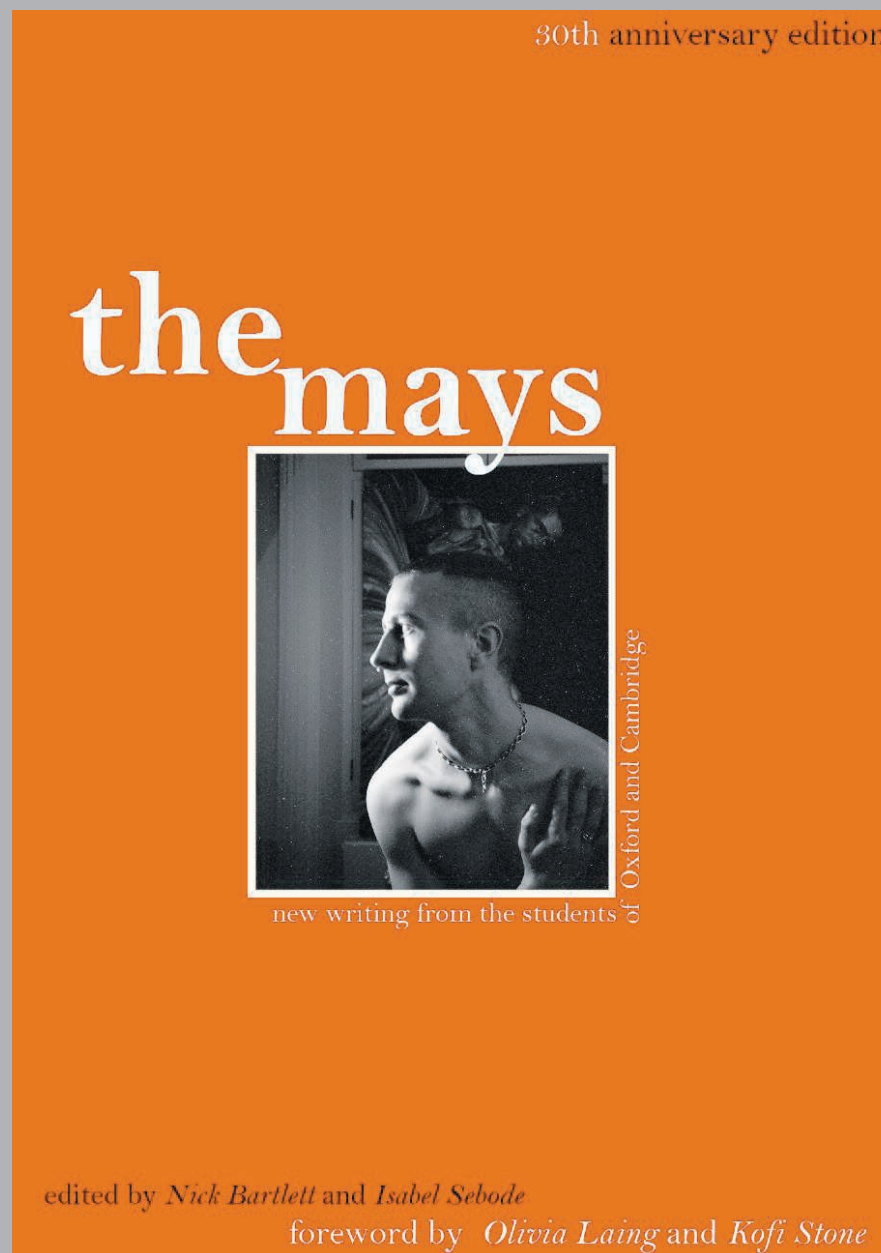
I have so many questions? How did this happen? How were you found out? And why have your flatmates abandoned you?

You're clearly working through some stuff, in every sense of the word. And to have been deserted in the dim light of the staircase bathroom is a fate that no one deserves. But hey, it's a cruel world.

All you can do now is retreat – mentally, or by dropping out – and hope for the best. Statistically, the time of reckoning will one day be upon them, and when it comes: be sure you're the one holding the plunger.

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Sport

'I live life at 100mph'

Abbie Hastie meets the medic and Olympian Imogen Grant competing in the Rowing World Championships

Imogen Grant is a special athlete. With her rowing partner Emily Craig she is the newly crowned World and European champion in the lightweight double sculls. In the single sculls, she holds the world's best time. She has won the Boat Race three times in the Blue Boat. She is also in the final year of a postgraduate medicine degree at Trinity College. I spoke to her about the World Championships, the Cambridge rowing scene, and her remarkable career so far.

Grant was, understandably, feeling excited and "very confident" about the World Championships. She said last summer's Olympics, where she came forth by a hundredth of a second, "stoked the fire" for this season's races, and it is clear that this motivation has improved her performance. Grant and Craig were five and a half seconds ahead of silver-medalists France and nine seconds ahead of bronze-medalists Italy at the European Championships in Munich last month, successfully avenging their defeat in Tokyo. The duo repeated this result at this week's world championships in Racice, beating an American double by three seconds to win in a time of 6.54.78.

That Grant is an Olympian and world champion is remarkable, given she only began rowing at Cambridge as a fresher at Trinity in 2014. She looks back on college rowing with extremely fond memories, describing the experience of learning to row as "incredible" and providing her with a great start in the sport. She also argues that her rapid ascent to elite performance is more common than you might think, especially on the women's side, where the increased maturity of the athletes allows for the required commitment needed to perform at such an elite level. If becoming an elite athlete within two years of starting rowing (Grant rowed in both the lightweight and reserve boat races in 2016) is not impressive enough, she is also in the final year of a postgraduate medicine degree. How does she combine training for international competitions with the most intense year of Cambridge's most intense degree? Unsurprisingly, she gets this question a lot.

Her life is spent at "100 miles per hour," hurrying between shifts in the hospital and training sessions on the erg or on the water. She told me that a commitment to early nights and sheer

stubbornness, as well as great support from the clinical school at Addenbrookes allows her to do it. This year she is focused on two goals: passing the last year of her degree and preparing herself for the Paris Olympics in 2024. The Paris games will be the final one to include lightweight rowing on the programme. In order to pursue her last chance at an Olympic medal, she won't be rowing in the boat race. There have been plenty of other sacrifices as well: missed weddings and funerals; a sold May Ball ticket; countless early nights. She shifted her hospital placement to the summer, to leave space free to train for and compete in the European and World Championships.

Nevertheless, Grant insists that the sacrifice is worth it, and that the payoff

from winning races and that the camaraderie among teammates helps her to push through early morning training sessions. Ultimately for Grant "what makes [rowing] so enjoyable" are these relationships.

Her advice to anyone thinking of taking up rowing is "if you enjoy it, do it" and that it's impossible to be too short to row. Rowing is also open to those who don't consider themselves sporty, like Grant before coming to Cambridge.

Whilst her definition of sporty is clearly very narrow (she did gymnastics, diving, swimming and martial arts as a child), there is hope yet for all those who were picked last during PE. You might even become world champion.



▲ IMOGEN GRANT (IMOGEN GRANT)

What on earth is Aussie Rules?

Thomas Woolley

Australian Rules Football, to give it its full name, is kind of like rugby. It's a contact sport, often resembling a mass brawl, with the objective of kicking a ball through a set of goalposts either end of an oval-shaped pitch. Any of the 18 players on each side can kick or punch the ball to teammates along the way, but don't get caught holding the ball for too long!

Wow, those Australians are crazy. Well, Aussie Rules is actually largely influenced by the English — and dare I say, Cambridge — rules of football. Tom Wills, one of the founders of the sport, was a Cambridge alumnus and even played in the Varsity cricket match in the 1850s.

And they're still playing it in the 21st century? Yes! Most people in the Cambridge University Australian Rules Football Club (CUARFC) don't know the rules when they join, but they learn fast!

Sounds like a sport only England and Australia play. Wrong!

Cambridge often plays tournaments across Europe. Last March, Cambridge played in Paris, and in February the squad will be travelling to Belfast. Just a couple of weeks ago, the CUARFC Ladies beat Malmo 41-28 in Stockholm.

Best thing about Aussie Rules? It's a very fast sport, end-to-end and high-scoring. And the Cambridge club is a lot of fun!

Ok, I might be interested. Are we better than Oxford? Cambridge narrowly lost to Oxford in the Varsity match last year, but with a big new managerial appointment, things are looking bright for this year!

I'm sold. How do I get involved? The link to the WhatsApp group can be found on the Cambridge Aussie Rules Facebook or Instagram (@camaussierules)



Get involved in sport in Cambridge

30th September-1st October: Preseason Rugby League

29th September-2nd October: Preseason for Mixed Lacrosse Club

3rd October: University of Cambridge Sports Fair

3rd-5th October: Amateur Boxing Taster

4th, 6th and 7th October: Trials Ladies Netball Club

5th, 7th October: Taster Table Tennis

6th October: Taster Women's Basketball

6th, 7th October: Swimming Trials

8th October: Cambridge University Badminton Club

8th October: Trials Men and Women's Football Club

8th, 9th October: Trails Lawn Tennis Club

8th, 9th October: Auditions for Dance Competition Team

9th October: Cambridge University Athletics Club Taster Day

9th October: Cheerleading Try-Outs

9th October: Water Polo Welcome Session

12th October: Women Beginner Rugby

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Fran Steele

Women's football Blues' captain



Sporting idol?

Any of the players in the England Women's Euro 2022 squad.

Best moment?

My first call up for Youth National Team when I was 14 years old.

Worst moment?

Missing a penalty in Varsity 2022. It still hurts.

Most embarrassing moment?

Getting smashed in the head by the ball, it wiping me out, getting concussed and it all being on video.

Best victory?

Against Worcester away to secure our spot in the league.

Worst defeat?

Against Oxford in Varsity 2022. We deserved to win, I promise, which is why it hurt so much.

Best thing about being a captain?

The honour to captain such a great club with the best team I could ask for.

Worst thing about being a captain?

ADMIN ADMIN ADMIN.

Why is football the best?

Every game is completely different, every player is completely unique and chasing a ball around for 90 minutes is pretty fun, I guess.

Why is the women's football club the best?

We have such a close-knit team on and off the pitch with the best socials. We even have a pre-season social schedule with activities organised most days.

Who has the best chat?

Belle Rostron. She will chew your ear off but she has great banter. Everyone gets a little ab workout at training from laughing.

Who receives the most fines and why?

Belle Rostron, again. I might have to start telling her that training starts twenty minutes earlier than it does so she can leave Greggs on time to make the warm-up.

One to watch?

Neve Mayes is coming back from injury. She didn't get to play much in her first season due to Covid, and then unfortunately picked up a knee injury. She's an incredible player and I'm excited to see her back playing.

If only X went to Cambridge, we'd win every game...

Carla Humphrey!

Prediction for this year's Varsity match?

2-0 to Cambridge. Expect nothing less.

Where can we follow football in Cambridge?

@cuafc on Instagram.

Rowing world champs: Cambridge bag three golds and two bronzes

Jonny Coffey

Five Cambridge University Boat Club (CUBC) athletes were in action at the World Rowing Championships, held on 18th-25th of September in Racice, Czech Republic. The event marked the pinnacle of the competitive season for the world's top rowers.

Competing at the tournament were CUBC's Ollie Wynne-Griffith and Tom George (GB Men's Pair); Grace Prendergast (New Zealand Women's Pair); Imogen Grant (GB Lightweight Women's Double Sculls) and Freddie Davidson (GB Men's Four).

The tournament kicked-off with the heats. Making statement victories, all five Cambridge rowers led their heats through all four 500m intervals to claim first-place.

The semi-finals brought fiercer competition and nail-biting entertainment. Against tougher opposition, Cambridge's Olympic rowers, MPhil student Grace Prendergast and medic Imogen Grant, continued their dominance. They cruised to respective victories, leading their races through all four-quarters.

Alumnus Freddie Davidson came under early pressure in his semi-final, trailing Australia in the early stages. Remain-



▲(@BRITISHROWING)

ing unfazed, the crew delivered a strong second-half to edge a dramatic victory. Even finer margins decided the semi-final of business student Ollie Wynne-Griffith and alumnus Tom George. Despite GB's electric start, Romania led at halfway. Undeterred, Wynne-Griffith and George came back over the second-half to claim victory by just a half-second.

Flawless thus far, expectations were high for all five athletes as they entered the finals. Grant faced her toughest challenge yet, reckoning with four doubles who competed at the Tokyo Olympics. Alongside teammate Emily Craig, Grant was electric from the outset and quickly developed a commanding lead. Opponents' hopes of a comeback were left disappointed. Ruthless and unrelenting, the duo kept their feet on the gas (or hands on the oars) to power their way to gold.

Re-matched with Australia, Davidson and the men's four faced another trying test. Opting to conserve their energy, the crew trailed Romania and Australia through 500m. Then, as their opposition boats tired, GB pounced. By 1,000m they had left Romania in their wake and were baring down on Australia. GB ramped up the tempo once more, claiming the lead within 500m. Showing great composure, they weathered a final Australian sprint to secure world championship glory.

Prendergast, as yet relatively un-

challenged, came under early pressure in the final, trailing GB through 500m. However, whilst GB failed to maintain their pace, the New Zealand pair went from strength to strength. Finding their rhythm, they surged towards gold in an utterly dominant display.

Much to their disappointment, Wynne-Griffith and George were unable to repeat their semi-final triumph. Starting sluggishly, the duo struggled to gain a foothold in the race. As Romania and Spain consolidated the gold and silver positions respectively, GB were left to battle for bronze. Trailing Serbia at 1,500m, a determined sprint-finish earned the Brits a spot on the podium.

HIDDEN RIVALRIES

Lacrosse: Clare/Homerton vs. Emmanuel

Joshua Korber Hoffman
Sports editor

This is one of the most heated rivalries in Cambridge college sport. Clare/Homerton and Emma were both vying for promotion to division one last season, and were joint on points going into the final round of matches. Each had won four games and lost one, but Emma had the edge on points difference: Emma were in second place, and Clare/Homerton were third. A Clare/Homerton win would see them promoted; anything else would mean promotion for their bitter rivals.

The game ended 1-1, Emma's defence proving too stubborn for Clare/Homerton's desperate attack. Emma sealed promotion, and Clare/Homerton were left to rue their missed chances. They won't be facing each other in the league this coming season, but the scowls on the faces of Clare-ites and Homertonians when they see an Emmanuelite are unlikely to stop any time soon.

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GRANT ON PAGE 30

WHAT IS AUSSIE RULES?
THE FAST PACED SPORT
EXPLAINED ON PAGE 30



Close call as Oxbridge beats yanks in tennis final



OXBRIDGE 11

YALE/HAVARD 10

PHOTO: PRENTICE CUP

Joe Wherry

The Prentice and Seabright Cups are traditionally competed every two years, played alternately at Seabright Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club in New Jersey, and the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon. This time it was Oxbridge's turn to cross the pond. On the 100th anniversary of the Prentice cup, the teams arrived in America looking to do what had never been done before by winning both the men's and women's trophies.

After a month of travelling along the east coast, playing in various warm up fixtures and watching the pros in action from the presidential box at the US Open, the Oxbridge team was ready. Day one kicked off with a round of doubles. Oxbridge's Emily Arbuthnott (Wolfson

College), two-time national team tennis champion with Stanford University, and Izzy Marshall won 6-1 6-3 against Harvard/Yale's second pair, while Anna Chesca (Murray Edwards College) and Mandi Furaji triumphed 5-7 6-4 6-4 over their first pair. These two Oxbridge victories set the tone for the weekend, earning the team a lead that would never be relinquished.

On the men's side, an all-Cambridge, and all-Homerton, doubles pairing of Esah Hayat and Jack Wilson-Smith fell 6-2 6-3 to a strong opposition first pair. A tightly fought contest then saw Michal Kaminski (Fitzwilliam College) and Louis Manson bring the score level, prevailing 6-4 7-6. Another Oxbridge victory, this time for Ross Martin and Jack Molloy (6-1 6-1) then earned the visitors a slim

2-1 lead at the close of play on day one.

The singles matches began on day two. Oxbridge won three singles matches, but so did their opponents. A second round of doubles matches allowed Harvard/Yale to equalise overall, with the score at the close of play at 6-6.

Meanwhile, comprehensive wins for Arbuthnott (6-3 6-0) and Chesca (6-1 6-2) in their first singles matches of the weekend took the Oxbridge women to a 4-2 lead at the end of the penultimate day's tennis, needing three more wins to seal the Seabright cup.

In a series of dominant displays the next day, this target was rapidly chased. All four players dispatched their opposite numbers in straight sets in a morning of singles matches that confirmed that the Seabright cup would be travelling

back across the Atlantic. The rest of the matches were made up by wins for Arbuthnott/Marshall (4-6 6-1 6-1) and Chesca/Furaji (6-3 0-6 6-1) to take the overall tally to 10-2.

There was no such dominance in the battle for the Prentice cup. Despite Molloy besting Harvard/Yale's number one 6-4 6-1, three consecutive defeats saw Oxbridge trailing 7-9 overall, their dreams fading away. However, Wilson-Smith and Manson were both still playing, yet to finish their singles matches. Digging deep, both players won three-set matches in a tense atmosphere to bring the score level going into the final round of the doubles.

In a dramatic finish, diminishing light meant that the last matches would be decided by a championship tie-break in the event of a third set. After two more

matches, two championship tie-breaks, a controversial line call and an umpire's overruling, the teams were still yet to be separated with the scores at 10-10. It was up to the Molloy/Martin partnership to decide Oxbridge's fate. With a championship point at 7-5 5-3 up, Molloy, who had been imperious all weekend, double faulted. However, no such mistake would happen again and the Oxbridge pair closed out the set 6-3 to clinch the double for the visitors.

This was the first time in all nine instalments of the dual-cup competition that both the men's and women's Oxbridge teams have won their respective cups in the same year. It will be another two years until Harvard/Yale make the trip to England for the return event, seeking to win back both cups.