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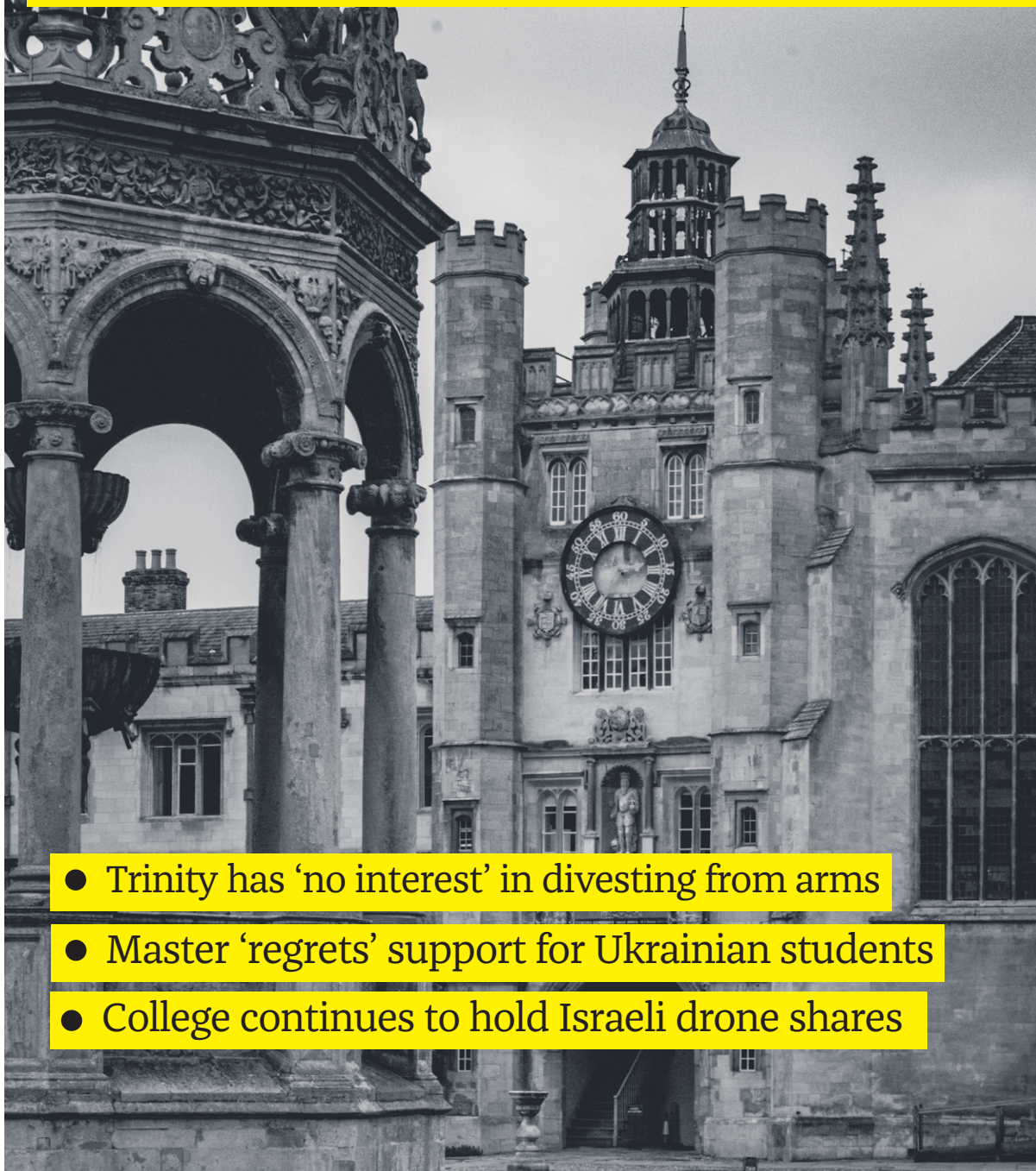
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No.928
Friday 15th November 2024
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The Independent
Student Newspaper since 1947

VARSITY

Trinity backtracks on divestment



- Trinity has 'no interest' in divesting from arms
- Master 'regrets' support for Ukrainian students
- College continues to hold Israeli drone shares

Wilf Vall
Senior News Editor

Trinity College has not cut ties from investment in any arms companies, despite previous reports that the College had decided to divest last term.

Senior members of the College allegedly told the Trinity College Student Union (TCSU) that "Trinity will be and is in the process of divesting" in Easter Term. However, in a recent meeting with the College's undergraduate (TCSU) and postgraduate (BA Society) students' unions, the Master stated that Trinity had "no interest in divesting from arms companies".

During the meeting, the Master of Trinity, Dame Sally Davies, stated that there was a "consensus" in the College against cutting ties from arms companies.

This came after the College's Council minutes stated that reports of divestment were "based on inaccurate statements made by the President of the TCSU," and that Council is currently in the process of "reviewing the College's investments".

Freedom of information requests seen by *Varsity* also show the College has maintained investments in multiple arms companies. This includes Elbit Systems which produces 85% of the drones and land-based equipment used by the Israeli army.

Trinity was issued a legal notice over potential "complicity" in "war crimes," over their investments in Elbit Systems in Lent term, due to their ties to "plausible genocide" in Gaza.

The College also holds shares in other arms companies that feature on the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) Movement list, which urges individuals to cut ties with companies associated with the war in Gaza.

Among these companies is BAE Systems, Europe's largest defence contractor. The centralised University has faced

repeated calls from students to cut its own ties with the company.

When asked whether Trinity would introduce a humanitarian response fund for the war in Gaza, similar to its response to Ukraine, Davies indicated that she "regretted" the support the College gave to Ukraine and the precedent this set for responses to war and humanitarian crises.

In 2022, the College established a £250,000 relief fund for Trinity and Cambridge students from Ukraine facing hardship following Russia's invasion. College Council minutes indicated that this action was "in accordance with its charitable objective". At this meeting the College also made the decision to divest from Russian companies.

This came as the University confirmed that they had no investments in Russian industries following the invasion of Ukraine, and indicated that they had taken steps to "ensure arrangements were in place" to ensure the safe return of any students and academics in Ukraine.

They also launched a University-wide response fund for those affected by the war in Ukraine, along with offering individual grants to support researchers from Ukraine.

In June the University also announced a hardship fund to support all students affected by conflict, with initial funds of £100,000 being set aside to offer emergency assistance.

When the College was asked to take a stance on the conflict in Gaza in 2024, they cited their "obligations as a registered charity" and declined the request.

Trinity is the richest of all Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, holding an endowment of over £2 billion. Some of the College's assets include the O2 Arena in London, and 400 acres of housing facilities at the Port of Felixstowe, Britain's busiest container port.

Continued on page 3 ►

V Michaelmas, Week 6

Editorial

As finalists, we are often at risk of forgetting how unusual and intimidating life in Cambridge seemed to us two years ago, back in our fresher years. The pace of life and study here encourages us to speed through the quirks and idiosyncrasies, donning gowns and standing at the sound of gongs, and never really pausing to notice ourselves.

Editing *Varsity* only complicates things. We take such pride, and find so much pleasure in being able to influence Cambridge discourses, and shape student media. Part of this great fortune is that we are constantly hearing from new perspectives, forever seeing news stories in our inboxes, and permanently working and reworking a newspaper for print.

With a fraught chancellorship at Oxford winding to a close, the media circus will soon be descending on Cambridge's own race. But, while we wait for that particular brouhaha, there's plenty to keep us busy.

Now that we're well over half way through term, we've been trying to slow the process down a little. News deadlines wait for no one, but it's important we take our time to appreciate the value of the testimonies that come into our inboxes, and to use the trust students place in us responsibly.

While we try to find moments for reflection in the busyness of Cambridge life, the hustle and bustle never waits. Find stories about JazzSoc (p.24), student theatre (p.27-8), and Kettle's Yard's exhibitions (p.22) inside as evidence of this.

A couple of years ago, two previous Editors wrote an editorial about "desperately trying to remain in the moment". "There's

strength found in taking each day as it comes, and each story as we read it", they continued. We might be biased, but we think they were right.

Some of the stories we have worked on here will stay with us forever, while others will become faint memories. But all are a record of life in Cambridge, as it happened and how it happened, and we hope you will find this issue a

constructive one.

It's a very fortunate position we hold, witnessing Cambridge life taking place in a blur, from our positions as students, and simultaneously as journalists.



Alice Mainwood & Grace Cobb
Editors-in-Chief

MICHAELMAS 2024

▼ JESSICA LEER

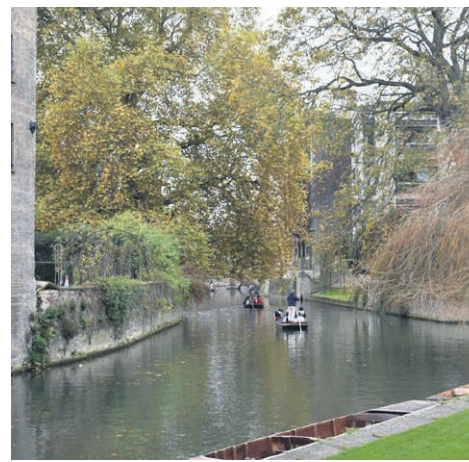
Week in Pictures



▲ Remembrance Service parade



▲ Pro-Palestinian marchers after Remembrance parade



▲ Autumnal punting



▲ The new Everyman cinema in the Grand Arcade



▲ Christmas has hit Cambridge



▲ Negotiating with the Dead



▲ Fireworks at Midsummer Common

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Trinity master ‘regrets’ financial support for Ukrainian students



▲ CHRISTOPHER LORDE

Continued from the front page

The College has also previously divested from other industries, having made a pledge to fully divest from fossil fuels by 2031. This came following pressure from student activists to cut ties with fossil fuels, including Extinction Rebellion activists digging up the College’s iconic front lawn in February 2020. Trinity has also faced significant pressure from students to cut ties from the arms companies, with protesters targeting the College’s Maths open days in Easter term.

The demonstrators urged prospective students not to apply to Trinity due to their “complicity in Israel’s genocide of the Palestinian people”. They also stated that they “will keep coming back and making noise” until the College divests from arms companies.

The claim that the College has a consensus opposing divestment has also been challenged by members of the Trinity fellowship, with one Fellow telling *Varsity* that “There is an appetite for divestment from armaments among fellows. As a point of principle, many people think it’s inappropriate for an educational institution to profit from investment in weapons.”

“Then, looking at the scale of death, destruction and suffering in Palestine and Lebanon it becomes unconscionable,” they continued.

This comes after the University pledged to review its arms investments in July, in reaction to ongoing pressure from students on the University to divest from arms companies. An encampment was set up on King’s Parade by Pro-Palestine students in May.

Following the University’s promise to review arms investments, the student group Cambridge for Palestine (C4P) agreed to dismantle the camp. Cambridge promised that student representatives would be involved in a “student-led task force” during this review.

During their meeting with the Trinity Master, students were also told that having a student advise the College on their investment policy would be “pointless”. A spokesperson for Trinity College told *Varsity*: “The College is committed to supporting students affected by conflict. In 2022 Trinity created a £250,000 fund, of which £150,000 went to the Rowan Williams Cambridge Studentship programme in support of future Trinity and Cambridge students affected by Russia’s war against Ukraine.”

“The College also worked with the Council for At-Risk Academics, through the University of Cambridge and its associated Trusts to provide support for scholars seeking refuge at Cambridge and other universities in the UK and EU.”

“In 2024 Trinity donated £150,000 to the Rowan Williams Cambridge Studentship programme. This increases the support available for those students from conflict zones and areas of instability, including in the Middle East, as well as those subjected to or at risk of discrimination, persecution, suffering, violence or other abuse of their human rights. Trinity has recently pledged a further sum in support of the University Humanitarian Response Fund. The College’s investments are subject to ongoing review.”

Dame Sally Davies was contacted for comment.

Oxbridge teaching is causing gender award gap, report finds

Grace Cobb
Editor-in-Chief

Women are less likely than men to achieve first-class degrees at Oxbridge than at other universities, a report has found. This is due to “combative and confrontational” teaching styles, examination-based assessments, and a lack of female representation.

The report, which was published by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), revealed that basing overall grades on final-year examination-based assessment methods rather than coursework disadvantages women because they are “less likely to take risks,” and “are impacted by Premenstrual Syndrome”.

The lack of female representation in many subjects’ student cohort and teaching staff, especially in STEM subjects, was also identified as a cause. A study of female students revealed that the supervision system contributed to female disadvantage as their efforts to contribute to discussions were undermined by male students.

At Cambridge, Theology had the highest gender awarding gap, at 43 percentage points in 2023/24, whereas Oxford’s

largest disparity was a 29 percentage point gap in Classics in 2021/22. This contrasts the higher education sector as a whole, in which social sciences are the only subject group where men outperform women at a first-class level by 0.9 percentage points.

Theology has had the largest gap on average at Cambridge over the last decade, with a 20.6 percentage point difference, followed by Mathematics (20.1) and Archaeology (15.7). The only degrees in which more women were awarded firsts than men were found to be Manufacturing Engineering, Classics, and Modern and Medieval Languages (MML).

The report recommends that Oxbridge should enact “bold reforms” and an “overhaul” of assessment methods. However, it states any changes should “refrain from scaling back the rigour of assessment methods” and not “dumb down” assessments.

This comes after Cambridge University came under fire for excluding the gender awarding gap from its Access and Participation Plan (APP) in May, contrary to promises made to the Students’ Union. Despite the University’s assurances that they had been carrying

out “extensive research” into the gap, the HEPI report states this “extensive research [...] remains to be seen publicly.”

Responding to the report, the pro-vice-chancellor for Education, Professor Bhaskar Vira, stated: “The University is investigating possible causes for the awarding gap in First Class degrees.”

Vira claimed “while there are examples of progress in some parts of the University, more remains to be done. We will make sure this research is visible and share the lessons we learn. This will contribute to an action plan being set up to address the issue.”

Famke Veenstra-Ashmore, the report’s author and previous Editor-in-Chief of *Varsity*, responded that “the pro-vice-chancellor has been very constructive in recognising that research should be shared. However, I would like to see the University fund such research more extensively, as the bulk of this work should not be done by external researchers like me.”

She stated the subjects in which progress has been made, like Geography, are where “female representation [...] is already good. The University needs to investigate the reasons for progress in certain subjects and see what they can learn from — and not rest on their laurels.”

Homerton slammed for ‘money pissing exercise’

Varsity News

Members of Homerton College’s JCR have expressed outrage over the College spending over £500k of College reserves on its “Changemakers” since 2019, with the treasurer labelling it a “money pissing exercise”.

The Changemakers programme, which refers to itself as “Cambridge... Plus” on its website, has spent £296,858 in 2022/23 alone. £283,285 of this funding came from College reserves, with only £13,573 from donations, despite the College originally claiming it would be predominantly funded by donations.

The College is currently in a £2 million deficit, which has been attributed to the College’s “education account” and a lack of income from student fees.

Changemakers advertises itself as a place where you can “learn the tools to make a profound difference for good”. As part of the programme, students of Homerton and other Cambridge colleges are welcomed to workshops, panel conversations and field trips which have amounted to a total cost of £83,270. Over £50,00 of this amount has been spent in the previous academic year.

In addition to college events, Changemakers offers an annual residential programme, a strong point of contention with members of Homerton’s JCR committee.

The residential, which lasts for six days, costs £37,314 to put on. As part of the residential, students of Homerton and other Cambridge colleges are offered free dining and accommodation. In return, they are requested to attend talks and events organised by Changemakers. However, students were able to skip these organised events, while still benefiting from free accommodation and dining.

A student who attended the Changemakers residential told *Varsity*: “I think the Changemakers residential was on balance a net positive experience. I met some interesting people that I never would have otherwise met. I was able to talk one-to-one with academics about pretty much anything.”

“My main motivation for going was the offer of a free week’s accommodation ahead of term which seemed quite appealing after three months more or less at home [...] This pointed to something bigger though - every day that we sat down for our inclusive breakfast/lunch/ dinner, I felt slightly uncomfortable with the amount of money being spent on the experience”, they later admitted.

Lauren Welsby-Riley, the JCR’s Vice President External stated: “The students of Homerton are constantly being told that the college is having to raise prices for everything (including formals, rent, hall meals, etc.) in order to pay off [the] amorphous £2m deficit”.

“Most recently, subject formals were cancelled presumably in another cost-cutting move. So to hear that Changemakers, which the accountant said in a HUS/Staff meeting was supposed to be entirely funded by donations, is spending half a million pounds of [the] college’s reserves is extremely disappointing”, she added.



▲ BRIAN CHAU

Jim Bridger, Treasurer of Homerton College JCR, said: “Changemakers is an absolute money pissing exercise, might as well burn the money in a bonfire.”

Elise Rich, the JCR’s Disabilities Officer said: “It’s frustrating to consider whether this money could be used to help fund disability related needs, filling in the gap that has been created by changes to the Cranes Fund.”

These frustrations were shared by another member of the JCR, who stated that: “The Changemakers residential is a prime example of the excessive and wasteful expenditure typical of Changemakers events [...] I know several students who attended the residential this year just for the free food and accommodation, skipping the programme entirely.”

“It seems hypocritical for Homerton to claim they are dedicated to students’ welfare and experience when JCR officers must fight for a few hundred pounds budget to cover an entire year’s worth of events, whereas the Changemakers yearly residential, lasting only a week, cost [over] £37,000”, they added.

A spokesperson from Homerton College commented: “We are extremely proud of Changemakers, an extra-curricular programme that gives our student body expertise, equipping them with even more than a world class degree, and encouraging them to go out and change the world for the better.”

In just five years we have seen a track record of success in social enterprise and more. We make no apology for investing in our students, being innovative and often trying new things. That is the Homerton Way.

Changemakers work with leading tech companies, and we are seeing our students getting quality work experience from this. We have the ambition to grow Changemakers with greater donor contributions. We have engagement than comparable ‘education plus’ programmes.”

News

Cambridge delays arms investment review

Felix Armstrong
Associate Editor

Cambridge has delayed its review of arms investments, which was sparked by pro-Palestine protests, provoking accusations of “back-peddalling” and “watering down” its commitments to students.

This comes as 165 academic and admin staff have formally called on the University to cut ties with the arms industry entirely.

The University published its terms of reference for an ongoing review of its ties to the defence industry on Wednesday (13/11), in which it said that its working group will have completed its work “by the end of the academic year”.

But, in a statement urging students to abandon the pro-Palestine encampment, published in July, the University pledged that this working group would operate “rapidly” in Michaelmas term 2024, and “reach initial positions by the end of term”.

One source close to the matter has accused the University of “backtracking” on its investigation of its ties with arms. *Varsity* understands that the first meeting of the working group has not yet taken place.

Announcing the working group’s targets, Cambridge said that it is “aware that many members of the University are deeply concerned about the tragic events unfolding in many parts of the world”.

When first announcing the review, University heads said: “We share the horror of our students at the loss of life, and the appalling destruction of education institutions and infrastructure in Gaza.”

Initially established in response to repeated pro-Palestine protests at the University over the year, the working group’s objectives have now been formalised, in response to a staff-submitted motion for Cambridge to cut ties with the arms industry.

This ‘grace’, submitted shortly after the Cambridge for Palestine (C4P) encampment was dismantled in July, has now been accepted by University Council, Cambridge’s executive decision-making body. It was signed by 165 members of Regent House, the University’s democratic body, of which admin and academic staff are members.

This means that the Council will be formally called upon to divest from arms by the beginning of next year, and produce a report detailing the costs and timetable for doing so.

This motion will pass unless it is put to a vote in Regent House before November 22. Cambridge’s statutes require 25 staff to call for a ballot, which a source close to the matter has described as “unlikely”.

The council has insisted that, if passed, the motion would not “be binding,” because the council “has sole responsibility for decisions about investments”.

The working group assessing Cam-



bridge’s ties to the arms industry will include two student representatives nominated by Cambridge for Palestine (C4P), and a further student member of the Council. Some of the academics behind the divestment motion will also be part of the group, *Varsity* understands.

Jason Scott-Warren, an English academic and member of University Council, told *Varsity*: “I am pleased that the University is reconsidering its arms industry investments and research ties, but I’m concerned that, in its approach to the grace, it may be watering down undertakings made to students at the encampment.”

“The working group needs to move swiftly and to register the strength of the case for radical change,” he added.

The terms of reference for the working group reveal that Cambridge will consider its ties to arms in relation to “national security,” and the University’s position as a “civic institution in the UK”.

The University has faced frequent pro-Palestine protests in recent months, with some activists targeting its Manufacturing Institute’s alleged links to companies which feature on Israel boycott lists, including BAE Systems, Siemens, and Rolls Royce, referred to by activists as “institutes of death”.

The review will also consider Cambridge’s “commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech”. In its request for students to dismantle the pro-Palestine encampment, Cambridge revealed that the Office for Students had written to the University, and others, to remind it of its “legal duty to protect freedom of speech”.

Earlier this term, former Home Secretary Suella Braverman accused pro-Palestine activists at the University of “mob rule,” though this claim was fiercely rejected by campaigners.

Sarah Anderson and Sumouli Bhattacharjee, Students’ Union undergraduate and postgraduate presidents, told *Varsity*: “It is SU policy to campaign for the demilitarisation of the University.”

“We are therefore pleased to finally see the establishment of this working group and hope that it is able to make swift recommendations which are taken seriously by the University going forward,” they said.

In an online statement, Cambridge University mentioned its “constructive dialogue” with Cambridge for Palestine and the working group that followed.

“Whilst these steps were criticised by some, the University Council has supported this significant step forward. Plainly, work of this complexity and scale takes time, and earlier timescales were optimistic. The working group will now begin its activities and report in due course,” they said.



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Catz hit by slew of kitchen burglaries

Lucy Newton-Ingham
News Correspondent

St Catharine's College has warned students about frequent thefts over the past weeks, after multiple students had their kitchens raided.

In an email circulated to the undergraduate student body on Monday morning (11/11) Dr Edward Wickham, the College's Dean, has acknowledged the "number of thefts" that have occurred this term, and the "inconvenience and financial loss" incurred by these incidents.

Dr Wickham also pointed to a breakdown in "trust in a community that lives in such close proximity".

The email drew attention to a "very significant theft from a kitchen on the Island Site over the weekend". The victim of the theft, Hayden, said: "Almost the entirety of the fridge had been taken [...] not only things like yogurts, ready meals, chilled soup and vegetables, but a full unopened pack of raw chicken breasts and three Tupperware containers holding about a weeks worth of food in them."

Hayden emphasised the escalation of the problem: "They've gone from stealing one or two items at a time to a week's

worth of food for three people."

"It is so violating that someone has repeatedly committed these transgressions against the college community, and it's only escalating," she continued. "I can't afford to keep replacing food and containers; I'm in full receipt of the Cambridge Bursary," she said.

"I matriculated in 2021 and I have never seen anything as disgraceful as this here," she added.

Another recent victim reportedly lost a whole bag of shopping over the weekend, also bemoaning their food becoming the target of thefts.

Many older students claimed that they have never seen thievery of this scale during their previous years at the College, leading to speculation over the possible culprit, with one pointing blame towards this year's new student intake.

The Dean revealed in his recent email that "it seems evident that the thefts are mostly perpetrated by students who do not live in the same corridors," while other students have speculated whether it may not be one person due to the sheer quantity of goods being stolen at a time.

The thievery has not stopped at gyms, either. In a post to the St Catharine's College JCR Facebook page, an ENTS Officer

outlined a change from dropping club tickets in individual pidges, to in-person collection; this change was attributed to "Revs/Lola's tickets being stolen from pidges on two different occasions".

In his recent email, the Dean emphasised that "the college takes these incidents very seriously" and mentioned new measures to combat the issue. "On most of the Island site, gym rooms are now lockable, with access only to students on the corridor," Dr Wickham said.

As to why the thievery has recently escalated, Hayden said: "The culprit knows they're not going to face any consequences". "The only response that the college has given... has been 'college takes these incidents seriously' - clearly they don't."

A spokesperson from St Catharine's told *Varsity*: "The Dean's message this week was the first time this term that he had cause to write to all St Catherine's undergraduates, which shows how seriously we are taking these reports but also how out of character they are for our community. The Dean has asked students who might have information to get in touch so it is possible for us to investigate further and deter any future incidents."

Uni ups security after racist abuse on Sidgwick Site

Hannah Gillott
Associate Editor

Cambridge has pledged to increase security presence on Sidgwick Site after students of colour on site were "subjected to racist remarks".

On Monday 21 October, students of colour were approached by a passer-by near the Alison Richards Building on the University's humanities campus. This person "made a series of racist remarks," according to the University. Students were "shocked" and "deeply distressed".

The Department of History has pledged to do "everything they can" to support students, including by increasing security on site.

"Nobody should have to face abuse of this nature and everybody who works and studies on the Sidgwick Site will be appalled at this incident," they said.

"Please be assured that the University security team will be stepping up their presence on the site to prevent any repetition," they added.

Cambridgeshire police are currently investigating the incident, which is being treated as racially motivated.

This comes amid reports of students facing racial discrimination within the University, and follows calls for Cambridge to crack down on "race-realist" research fellow Nathan Cofnas, who still works at the University's Philosophy department.

In March, *Varsity* spoke to students from ethnic minority backgrounds about their experiences being subjected to "racial profiling" by their college porters. Students claimed to have experienced being treated with suspicion, feeling unsafe in their own colleges, and being stopped upon entry far more frequently than their white friends.

In February, *Varsity* also revealed that Black students at Cambridge are nearly four times less likely to be awarded a First than their peers.

A spokesperson for the University of Cambridge told *Varsity*: "The University abhors racism in any form". They confirmed that the police have been investigating the incident on 21 October and encouraged students to report any further incidents or emergencies to them on 01223 331818."



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News

Supervision system ‘nepotistic’, says UCU

Felix Armstrong
Associate Editor

Cambridge’s Justice for College Supervisors (J4CS) campaign has claimed that the University’s trademark supervision system is “nepotistic”. The campaign, run by the Cambridge branch of the University College Union (UCU), has accused faculties of relying on “connections and favouritism” to allocate teaching hours.

J4CS is discussing its concerns of nepotism with the Office of Intercollegiate Services (OIS) during discussions over reforming the supervision system. Last year, J4CS called off a supervision boycott after accepting a pay deal from the University.

Cambridge’s small-group teaching system, which often relies on the work of early-career researchers, falls foul of “nepotism” due to the “informality of the system” by which teaching hours are allocated, J4CS has told members.

The supervision system is unique to Oxbridge in the UK higher education system. Cambridge claims that supervisions allow students to form connections with “world-leading specialists” and are “respected around the world”.

A J4CS spokesperson told *Varsity* that “connections and favouritism” play a “significant role in deciding who gets the opportunity to teach, controlling access to vital experience for further academic progression”.

“This is why it is important to formalise the working and hiring conditions for supervisors. We continue to meet with the colleges and work together towards the campaign aims of contracts for supervisors and to collaboratively establish better ways of organising this teaching,” they said.



▲ FELIX ARMSTRONG

One supervisor told *Varsity* that they had resorted to “begging” their Director of Studies (DoS) for teaching hours for months, while their peers were being given more supervisions than they could manage.

Sarah Anderson, the undergraduate president of the Students’ Union (SU), which supports the J4CS campaign, told *Varsity* that “staff working conditions directly impact student learning conditions”.

“The ongoing teaching review is looking into the sustainability of the supervision system and hopes to make recommendations which will enhance both staff and student experience of supervisions,” she said.

Anderson added: “As the student representatives on that, we will always advocate for the rights of workers in line with our policy, as well as for the interests of students.”

In an initial report as part of an ongoing review of teaching, University heads found that the teaching system needs “structural changes” to tackle a “culture of overwork” at Cambridge.

In a recent council meeting, the SU called on the University to commit to “greater structural reform” to tackle the workload crisis, to avoid threatening student mental health.

During ongoing negotiations with the University, the J4CS campaign is pushing for Cambridge to “standardise best

practice” across supervisions through published expectations for teaching.

The campaign is also demanding formalised contracts for all supervisors, and will present the University with “examples of good practice in teaching contracts” at Sheffield, Bristol, and Kent universities.

A spokesperson for the University of Cambridge told *Varsity*: “College representatives are continuing to meet regularly with J4CS campaigners, the main topic of those discussions currently is the employment of supervisors. It is expected that new guidance for Faculties and Departments, on how to best support undergraduate supervisors, will soon be published.”

SU CEO resigns

Wilf Vall
Senior News Editor

The Cambridge Students’ Union’s (SU) Chief Executive Officer has resigned their post, following a six-month tenure which saw the SU drawn into multiple scandals.

The CEO’s job forms part of the SU’s Senior Management Team (SMT) and plays a role in the strategic and operational management of the institution.

Last term the SMT faced allegations of racism, nepotism, and bullying from multiple members of the SU staff. Some SU members witnessed colleagues of minority ethnic backgrounds experiencing harassment by the SMT.

The CEO’s tenure also saw a string of resignations from their sabbatical team, with both the women’s and welfare officers resigning in Easter term. During this term, former postgraduate president Varesh Pratap also started a hunger strike over the institution’s alleged “corruption” and “bullying”.

The new CEO will come in at a time of significant change within the SU, with a recent governance review reforming its sabbatical team, cutting the women’s, BME, welfare, disabilities, and access officer roles. These roles will be replaced by three vice-president roles, along with independent “liberation” campaigns.

A spokesperson for the SU told *Varsity*: “Our CEO has moved on from Cambridge SU to take up a new opportunity that is better aligned for her family. We wish her all the best with her new job, and all future endeavours.”

Chancellor life tenure scrapped to encourage diversity

Kezia Douglass
News Correspondent

The Regent House, the governing body of the University, has voted to limit the term of the chancellor to ten years in order to “help to encourage equality, di-

versity and inclusion” – despite concerns from some members that the change could be “disruptive”.

Last month, the Regent House voted in favour of a proposal to revise the terms of the chancellor and high steward so that those appointed to the roles serve

a maximum of ten years instead of life.

This means Cambridge University will re-elect its chancellor, who holds a largely ceremonial position, at least once a decade.

In a July report recommending its introduction, the Council said that the term limit will advance “the aim of securing a more diverse field of high-calibre candidates” and that its length of ten years will “still encourage long-term commitment to the office”.

Supporting the report, one group of Regent House members suggested that the faster turnover of chancellors will “help to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion”.

Those elected to the office are “expected to represent, and advance the interests of the University”, they said. The group called for fellow members to back the Council’s recommendation, suggesting it would make the position of chancellor accessible to a wider range of candidates, bringing a wider range of experiences to the role.

Members who voted against the introduction of the new term limit have concerns about the change. One group rejected the Council’s claim that fixed

terms will attract more diverse and highly qualified candidates. They argued that “in an increasingly politicised higher education sector, we should be cautious of more frequent and possibly more acrimonious elections” as these could “put off as many potential candidates as they attract”.

The change follows the current chancellor, Lord Sainsbury of Turville’s, announcement in February that he would be stepping down at the end of the academic year. The University Council has taken his resignation as an opportunity to reform the role.

Sainsbury, who took up the role of chancellor in 2011, was elected in a four-way race against local shopkeeper Abdul Arain, actor Brian Blessed, and socialist barrister Michael Mansfield.

He previously served as chairman of supermarket chain Sainsbury’s from 1992 to 1997, before being granted a life peerage as a member of the Labour Party, and later served as Science Minister.

During his time as a Minister, Sainsbury was questioned by police during the Cash-for-Honours scandal, having admitted to failing to disclose a £2 million loan to the party.

He has donated over £5 million to the Labour Party since 2022, making him the Party’s biggest current donor.

The University of Oxford has also introduced a ten-year term limit for its chancellor ahead of its own election this year. Of the 38 candidates who applied to the position, several are high-profile politicians, like William Hague and Peter Mandelson.

They have been accused of politicising the race, with senior academics at Oxford accusing Mandelson of “appealing to tribal loyalties,” in the race.

The chancellorship is a largely ceremonial role, but Lord Mandelson has said he would draw on his “political links with the new Government to advocate for Oxford and the university sector”.

Members of the Regent House who opposed the fixed term worry the upcoming election in Cambridge could see the same disruption.

A spokesperson for the University of Cambridge said “Regent House members voted decisively in favour of this proposal. We look forward to the election of a new Chancellor next year and welcoming them to Cambridge.”



▲ LOUIS ASHWORTH

Sidney may silence the disco

Varsity News

Sidney Sussex College has bought both Vinyl and Waterstones, in a purchase which the College Master called “exciting”.

Vinyl and Waterstones, which both

occupy the same building on Sidney Street, will continue to occupy the space for the “foreseeable future,” but may eventually be used for “new and improved accommodation, maybe a new Library, Study and Archives Centre, a lecture theatre/concert venue/performance space”

for the College.

Professor Martin Burton, the College Master, said that he was “looking forward to this new acquisition becoming a tool to allow us to further our vision” of “academic excellence”.

Waterstones and Vinyl occupy the only building directly next to the College site. According to emails seen by *Varsity*, Sidney Sussex has been offered the opportunity to buy the building multiple times, before agreeing to the purchase last year.

Vinyl has been a staple of Cambridge nightlife since the club opened in 2018. Its light-up dance floor is hidden under Waterstones, making the dual purchase possible.

The club, which once hosted Cambridge’s most popular queer club night, Glitterbomb, has had a difficult history, including allegations of discrimination and a University-wide boycott.

Sidney Sussex has also been the subject of scandals in recent years – largely relating to access for disabled students. In 2023, *Varsity* revealed that the college was in breach of The Equality Act on several counts regarding its treatment of disabled students.

Earlier this year, a disabled student at Sidney Sussex claimed the College failed to provide housing suitable to their needs, and was forced into private accommodation.

Sidney Sussex College was contacted for comment.



LAUREN HERD

Law students upset over dissertations

Sophie Denny
Senior News Editor

Law students have expressed frustration with the rules surrounding optional third year dissertations, saying that “the diss chucks you in the deep end”.

According to the Faculty of Law Tripos Handbook, supervisors can “only read and comment on up to 3,000 words of your dissertation,” amounting to 25% of the work’s length of 12,000 words. Students can also have feedback on tables of contents and bibliographies.

Students receive two hours of direct supervision alongside “regular ‘seminars’” for their dissertations. This differs from other subjects such as English, where students receive four hours of supervisions for a 7,500 word dissertation.

This comes after the University’s watchdog called for “greater structural reform” in Cambridge’s workload, leading to the Cambridge Students’ Union (SU) lobbying reforms to address impacts on students’ mental health.

One third year lawyer told *Varsity*: “It just seems like the entire structure of how the diss is done is to make it as independent a project as possible, but I think they’ve gone too far to get that. It just leaves a degree of uncertainty throughout the process, both in terms of writing style and the substance.”

They also explained that because the rest of the degree is exam-based, with “no other piece of writing beyond 1,250 words,” the minimal guidance exacerbates uncertainty surrounding dissertations.

This was echoed by a second student, who stated: “There’s not too much direction and help being given,” and that they “would rather at least more than half of it get marked in order to give us a real sense of where our dissertation is at considering the work we’re putting in”.

However, other students have said that they’re not too frustrated about the rules, with one student telling *Varsity*: “It’d be great if we got a bit more marked but as far as I’m concerned, as far as it’s standardised across the Faculty, I’m not too bothered.”

The University has also recently rejected calls from students and the Office of Independent Adjudicators to introduce exam resits, meaning that Cambridge is now one of the only top universities not allowing students to retake exams.

An internal report suggested that introducing resits could damage the University’s reputation, stating that students might “exploit” them for “academic advantage”.

The University of Cambridge was contacted for comment.

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News

Sausage Scandal

An all-vegan formal at Trinity College last weekend took an unexpected turn when one student arrived prepared with an entire pack of cocktail sausages. While the dinner was strictly plant-based, this culinary rebel insisted on bringing his own meat to the feast. After pouring sausages into his vegan main, the student made a speech about “wokeness,” telling the other guests he was taking a stand for the right to eat what he pleases.

U-Bus to the future

Students haunted by the memory of standing at a freezing bus stop, waiting desperately for a bus that would never arrive have been offered the perfect outlet for their frustration. The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has opened a questionnaire as part of a public consultation on franchising Cambridge buses. Until 20 November, students can voice their loathing for the Cambridgeshire bus system on the CPCA website.

Cambridge comedy: the ‘Batman’ experience

Phil Wang has recently reflected on his experience at the University in an interview with *The Guardian*. The King’s College alum described how he found a community in the comedy scene with the Footlights group. He described the experience as “intoxicating” and was left feeling “like Batman” as he studied Engineering by day and delivered stand-up gigs at night. Wang was president of the Footlights before pursuing comedy in London.

I’m from Cambridge, get me out of here

GK Barry, a Cambridge-born influencer and internet personality, is set to appear on ITV’s 2024 *I’m a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here*. She rose to fame on the social media platform TikTok where she went viral for her lifestyle videos. In 2022, she also began hosting the *Saving Grace* podcast. She told the Press Association that ahead of the show she is “genuinely scared of everything” and hasn’t “slept in a month”. The latest series of *I’m a Celeb* will air next week.

Around town



Iris Rogers delivers the local Cambridge news

Lights out in city centre

Midnight thefts of Cambridge’s iconic streetlamps have caused a stir in the centre of the city. The lamps, known as Richardson Candles, are Grade II listed and well known for their idiosyncratic 50s design. Unique to the city, these lamps make Cambridge the only UK location with custom post-war street lighting. After three of these street lamps were stolen in recent months, experts described the act as a potential “heritage crime.” The stolen lamps were located on Trumpington Street, John’s Street and Jesus Lane, according to Cambridge Constabulary. Historian Simon Cornwell told *The Times* that the “dangerous” theft would have required a cherry picker, huge strength, and knowledge of electrical wiring.

Alcohol and handbag thief jailed

A prolific Cambridge shoplifter has been sentenced to 18 months in prison after pleading guilty to a series of offences, including 21 counts of shop theft. The thief, Ralph Allgood, stole a number of items between May and July, including alcohol, handbags and laundry products. Businesses affected include Co-Op, Sainsbury’s, Hollister and TK Maxx. Allgood has previously been imprisoned for shoplifting and in 2023 was given a five-year Criminal Behaviour Order not to enter a number of supermarkets.

Central Post Office could shut up shop

The City Centre Post Office is at risk of closing following plans to “offload” over 100 branches, according to *Cambridge News*. The Cambridge branch has been listed as one which will potentially be affected. Commenting on the potential closing of the store, Lib Dem City Centre councillor Tim Bick said: “It’d be another nail in the coffin of high street public services, which the council itself is currently threatening to reinforce by cutting back public toilets. There is today no hint of the existing post office dying.”



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Illustration by Richard Briggs



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Nearly half of students don't feel comfortable talking to their tutor about mental health

Nick James
Deputy Editor

Almost half of students don't feel comfortable talking to their college tutor about their mental wellbeing, with more people feeling comfortable talking to their Director of Studies (DoS), a *Varsity* survey revealed.

The survey found that college nurses and mental health officers are the source of support most students feel comfortable going to at 68% of students, while 45% feel able to talk to their college tutor and 59% to their DoS.

45%

Of students don't feel comfortable talking to their college tutor about their mental wellbeing

Only 41% feel at ease seeking support from the University Counselling Service (UCS) and one in ten surveyed said they don't feel comfortable talking to any of the main sources of wellbeing support offered by the University or colleges.

The survey also found that only 18% of students saw tutors as their preferred member of staff to talk to about their mental wellbeing. 31% agreed they'd feel more comfortable speaking to their college nurses and mental health officers, while 21% said they would go to their DoS.

The role of the college tutor is to be "a helpful first point of call for students" according to a guide to college tutoring distributed by the University, and should "provide support, encouragement and constructive feedback" to students. The guide also states that "Tutors should normally be proactive in arranging meetings with students" and "have a valuable role to play in listening actively to students," but testimony collected by the survey revealed this is not always the case.

One student told *Varsity*: "My tutor has never once asked how I'm doing, he just asks what I'm up to and what lectures I've been to [...] There's never room to comment and in Lent term, he didn't

show up to my meeting, nor did he reply to my email afterwards to re-arrange."

The student continued: "When my tutor went on sabbatical, the College assigned me my DoS as a temporary tutor [...] and he was less helpful, sending us all an email saying 'reply YES if you've got a serious wellbeing concern and NO if you don't'. If you replied NO, he wouldn't arrange a meeting, and I don't think any of us felt comfortable enough to reply YES."

Another student said: "I have been very lucky with the tutorial system, but it is so clearly flawed in the way it attempts to get full time academics who are overworked and busy to try and deal [with] stressed students' welfare concerns. It is an outdated system that would not exist anywhere but Cambridge."

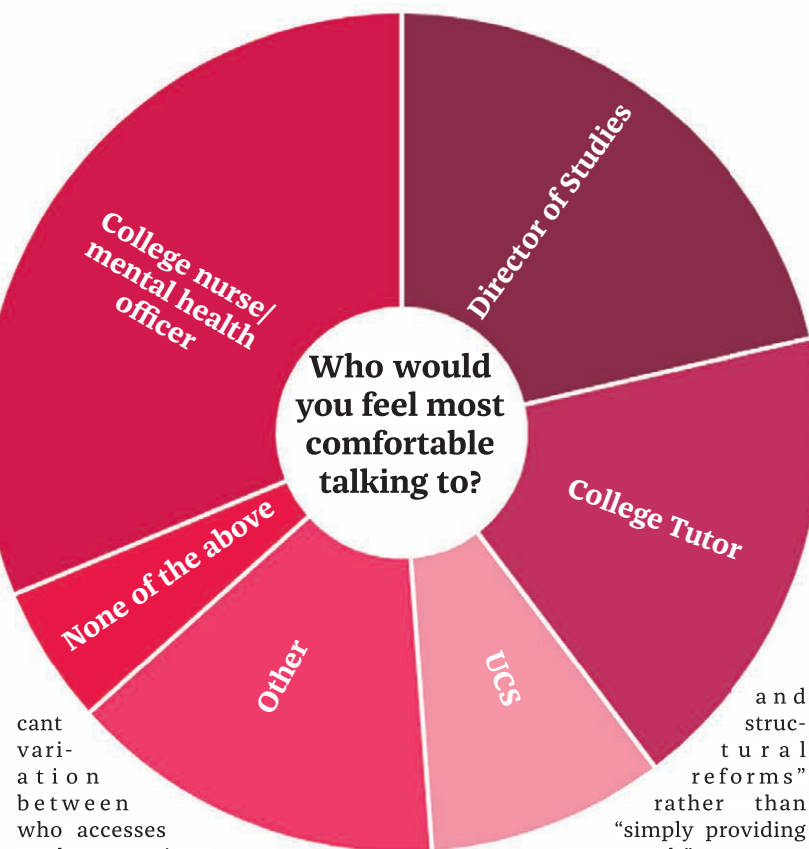
A third student commented: "I think the notion that your tutor is there for wellbeing concerns is more superficial than practicable. My tutor is not someone I feel would understand any mental health issues I might be facing, and was assigned to me on a random basis."

1 in 10

Students don't feel comfortable talking to any of the main sources of wellbeing support offered

In response to the results of the investigation, a spokesperson for Student Minds Cambridge, a branch of the student mental health charity, said: "The figures provided sadly do not come as a surprise. I think that in a competitive academic environment such as Cambridge, conversations around mental health are yet to be fully normalised, due to a perceived sense of 'failure' surrounding not being able to keep up with work, socialising, and so on. This may explain why people are more comfortable opening up to a designated college wellbeing officer or nurse as opposed to an academic authoritative figure such as a DoS."

A separate report completed by student services found that there is significant



variation between who accesses student services, finding that male, international and postgraduate students were the least likely to access services. It also found that almost 60% of students did not attend the UCS one-at-a-time therapy more than once.

Commenting on this data and *Varsity*'s survey, the Students' Union's (SU) welfare officer, Elleni Eshete, said: "This data suggests further research and action is urgently needed to understand how to best support student mental health in a way that is effective and reaches our most vulnerable members. Especially as numbers of students presenting with mental health problems are expected to rise in the upcoming years."

The results of the survey come after the SU is urging for more support with student workload to improve mental wellbeing after a University board of scrutiny concluded the University's review of teaching should make "concrete actions

and structural reforms" rather than "simply providing warm words".

A spokesperson for the University told *Varsity* that they could not fully learn from the survey, as they did not know how many students took part in it. "Many students seek support through the University Counselling Service each year, however we understand that barriers can exist. We work to ensure our services are student-focused, inclusive, and accessible – through student focus groups and large-scale surveys, and by making sure messages shared via the collegiate University's 'Reach Out' campaign are shaped with student feedback and voices", they continued. "Continuous improvement is key, and significant investment through the new Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan has led to swifter access to counselling, increased capacity in our support services, and the growth of a network of College wellbeing services and programmes."

University watch



Iris Rogers rounds up student news from around the country

Student smuggles weed to pay tuition fees

A British university student caught smuggling 33kg of cannabis to Thailand told judges he was "trying to pay university tuition fees". The student was caught during a stopover in Vienna, while on his way to deliver the drugs in Amsterdam. The 29-year-old student said: "I met a guy in a pub in London. I wanted to use this money for my tuition fees." He was offered 10,000 euros to smuggle over £300,000 of cannabis. The student only had to serve six months in jail and is on track to be home by Christmas, according to *NationalWorld*.

GreenWitch University celebrates *Wicked* film

Greenwich University has been renamed 'GreenWitch University' in a new campaign for the release of the film *Wicked*. The whole London borough of Greenwich has been renamed in a marketing campaign, and is part of a witchy trail around the borough. The University has set up 'University of GreenWitch' signs and a waterfall installation, and changed its Instagram profile picture to suit the rebrand. The long-anticipated remake, starring Ariana Grande as Glinda and Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, is released next week.

'Don't be snobs,' Edinburgh tells students

Edinburgh University has warned students not to be "snobs" towards Scottish and working class students, reports the BBC. The University admitted that students from these backgrounds were being "inadvertently or deliberately shamed by more privileged students". Private schools make up 40% of the University's intake, and the Scottish Social Mobility Society has reported comments focusing on "clothing and lack of knowledge or regional accents". Lecturers and students are regularly mocked and mimicked by privileged students, the campaign has claimed.

Comment: 'Cambridge's safety nets are often superficial'

Grace Cobb

Among the hoards of information thrown at me in Freshers' week I remember hearing a long list of 'ports of call': tutor, DoS, college nurse, wellbeing officer, student welfare officer, college chaplain. It seemed like the moment meeting my deadlines went from manageable, to unsustainable, to impossible, there would be a queue of people lining up to hand me a warm cup of tea and a biscuit and help me figure it all out.

Clearly, this system doesn't work as well as it should, and it's incredibly alarming that one in ten students

don't know where to turn when they hit crisis point. The issue seems not to be that there are not enough people to talk to, but that many of these people are not genuine mental health professionals. The first welfare point of contact for most of us is a randomly-assigned academic, whose primary input is a five-minute chat at the end of term. This is clearly not enough, and having this interaction sometimes reduced to an online form exposes its harsh superficiality.

When we're struggling, taking the first step to tell someone can require an incredible amount of courage. If our

tutor doesn't feel accessible, it doesn't matter that there are several systems further down the line. The reality is that academics and professors are chronically busy, and our mental health is not always their priority. The 'workload crisis' lingers following the rejection of calls for a reading week, despite the University's acknowledgement of a "culture of overwork". Perhaps our reliance on equally overworked academics is contributing to the spiralling mental health crisis we face.

Reeling off this list of 'ports-of-calls' to convince incoming freshers, or even

applicants, that Cambridge is a place where layers of safety nets are ready to catch you, is misleading. It alarmingly contrasts the hopelessness many students feel about where to turn when they feel overwhelmed, overworked and isolated. Change is needed to turn this superficial structure into a real support network, otherwise the state of students' wellbeing will simply keep spiralling. While having someone 'to go to' when things go wrong is useful, having the right person to go to in a crisis is essential for ensuring long-term support is actually provided.

Features

Moneybag masters: Cambridge's most generous colleges

Lowenna Biscoe uncovers how financial support varies from college to college

It is September of Year 13, and I am sat desperately scrolling through The Student Room, scouring endless posts for any hint as to which college I should apply to. The UCAS deadline for Cambridge is fast approaching and my last-minute decision to submit an application has left me frantically scrabbling to figure out to which college I am best suited for. Anonymous commenters recommend Emma for its ducks, Girton for its orchard and St John's for its bridge, none of which I deemed particularly vital to my university experience. Nowhere does anyone advise me to consider the financial support each college offers.

While many applicants are under the impression that it makes little difference which college you apply to, there are stark differences between colleges in terms of the grants and bursaries available. Although the central University provides commendable financial assistance to almost a third of its UK undergraduates, extra college-level support varies.

Cambridge offers one of the most generous bursaries of all UK universities. According to the University, the Cambridge Bursary Scheme grants over £10 million a year to over 3,300 students who have an annual household income under £62,215, as calculated by Student Finance England (SFE). The means-based system grants eligible students up to £3,500 annually.

I spoke to five students receiving the Cambridge bursary, who expressed how privileged they felt to be accessing such support. Emily, a student at John's,

admitted: "I wouldn't be able to cover the high John's rent without the bursary and still have money for other things". The bursary "means that I don't have to ask my parents to pay the difference, [...] they would find this very difficult to afford."

“Cambridge offers one of the most generous bursaries of all UK universities

Harry, a student at Trinity, was also grateful that his parents didn't have to stump up the bill. He highlighted that at any other university, he would have found a job to help cover his living costs. "Considering that Cambridge forbids students from working during term time, receiving the bursary is a relief." Even those who felt that they could live without the bursary recognised that at a university where

many students are extremely wealthy, the bursary helps close gaps between students, when it comes to going out, playing sport and attending formals or May Balls.

This presumably explains why so many students are eligible. There is an attempt to level the playing field, to enable all to enjoy the often expensive, opportunities Cambridge has on offer. Tabitha, initially unaware that she fitted the bursary criteria, was informed by email of this policy, after attempting to reject the £300 that had materialised in her bank account: "I assumed others were more deserving, but College emphasised that the system was designed to support participation in extra-curriculars as well as living costs". Charissa at Peterhouse shared similar concerns about eligibility. Receiving £400 annually, she explained, "I only get the bursary because my dad was going to retire and took a lower-income job, just for something to do [...] perhaps there should be another specification to check whether students are in need." However, this concern appears to stem from the calculation criteria of SFE on which the bursary is based, rather than the bursary itself.

Some students instead directed criticisms towards disparities between college-level assistance, which they felt undermined the Cambridge Bursary's attempt to 'level the playing field'. Support offered by Lucy Cavendish, where in 2021/22, 1/3 of undergraduates received the

Cambridge Bursary, falls significantly short of the financial opportunities available at Trinity. Harry explained that "Trinity grants all students in receipt of the Cambridge bursary a separate maintenance grant. Last academic year I got £4,455, and this year it's £3,000."

Whilst the exact figure may have changed since the time of interview, it's clear that the support trumps that of poorer colleges. Lucy Cavendish, in comparison, has only this year introduced a £500 rent bursary for Cambridge bursary holders. All students that I spoke to, including those at Trinity, felt it was unfair that a chance selection of a college, likely arrived at after a desperate internet trawl, destined a student for a university career cushioned by fantastical amounts of financial provision.

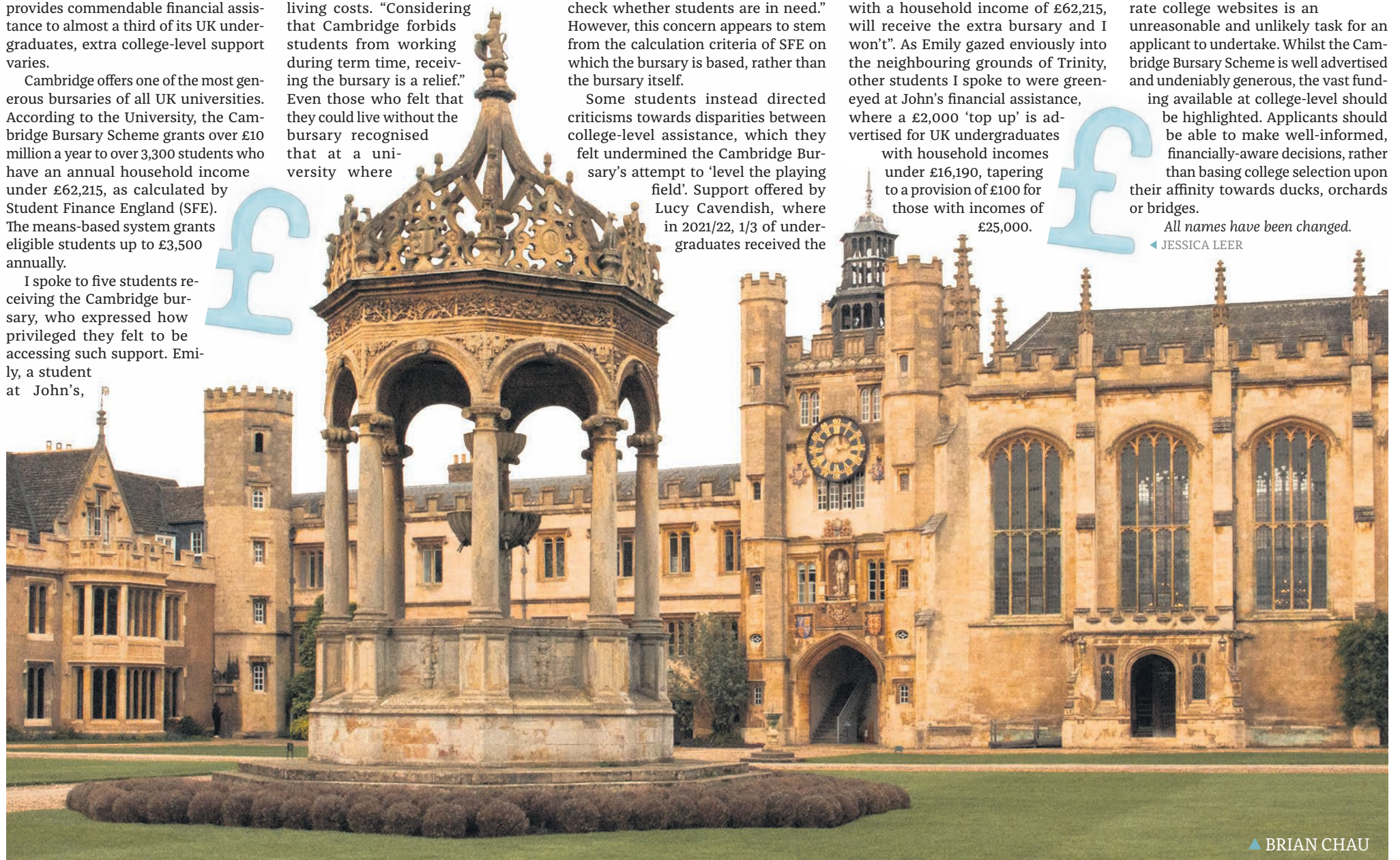
As Emily eloquently expressed, "why am I graduating with £9,000 less, because I chose John's over Trinity? People with more means than me, even those with a household income of £62,215, will receive the extra bursary and I won't". As Emily gazed enviously into the neighbouring grounds of Trinity, other students I spoke to were green-eyed at John's financial assistance, where a £2,000 'top up' is advertised for UK undergraduates with household incomes under £16,190, tapering to a provision of £100 for those with incomes of £25,000.

Discussing these disparities drove home just how naïve I had been during application. I wondered if others had been any the wiser. "No" was the consistent answer. Zaara, from Catz, explained, "when I applied, I tried to look for colleges that would provide me with financial support, but the Cambridge Bursary was all I found out about." Harry was also aware of the Cambridge Bursary but had no idea he could receive additional provision from his college. "To be honest, I didn't even consider Trinity as a college; I was pooled here. Had I known about the extra bursary, I would have applied directly."

Details of college-level financial support seem to be well hidden. It is difficult enough to uncover information, as a current student, utilising staff and JCR members. Navigating lists of potential funding across 31 separate college websites is an unreasonable and unlikely task for an applicant to undertake. Whilst the Cambridge Bursary Scheme is well advertised and undeniably generous, the vast funding available at college-level should be highlighted. Applicants should be able to make well-informed, financially-aware decisions, rather than basing college selection upon their affinity towards ducks, orchards or bridges.

All names have been changed.

◀ JESSICA LEER





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Cambridge has not been infantilised, it has grown up

Cambridge is facing an attack from a deadly foe, according to a piece by former Queens' Fellow David Butterfield in *The Spectator* last month. The soldiers of wokeness are tearing down its hallowed halls and ivory towers, and "infantilising" it with accessibility measures. It is a laughable argument to anyone who has actually studied Cambridge's meagre accessibility schemes. Nonetheless, it remains a reliable weapon in the armoury of the anti-woke brigade, something which is all the more absurd given that the aims of these measures largely overlap with what Butterfield feels Cambridge has lost. His furious resignation in protest over the institution's decline ignores the reality that its intellectual elitism needs diversity to survive.

The first target in his crosshairs is support for students with learning difficulties. In Butterfield's declining Cambridge, extra time and special considerations are doled out to any student wishing to "take the easiest path proffered". This assertion is downright wrong – those who have experienced the multi-month waiting lists of the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC) or the draconian criteria of the Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) know they're practically allergic to handing out exam allowances. On top of that, though, his judgements are also at odds with Butterfield's own ideal of Cambridge's elite academic status. If he truly wants Cambridge to be a place for students to develop their understanding of, and to engage with, the "big ques-

“
I was under the impression that Cambridge was reserved for students who had to wear straw hats to school
”

tions" posed by their field, then surely helping students to make the most of their degrees by tackling learning difficulties is a good thing.

The same can be said of attacks on "widening participation" measures. I, like the vast majority of students from state-educated backgrounds, was under the impression that Cambridge was reserved for students who had to wear straw hats to school. It was only through a "demystifying Oxbridge" session run by our academy that I considered Cambridge as an option, and ended up securing a place. Rather than diluting the intellectual prowess of its students, the effects of this have elevated Cambridge's scope, both through bringing in pupils who are proven to perform better in exams, and shining new perspectives on intellectual debates which were reserved for boarding school boys until these changes were made.

The dizzying hypocrisy of tradition worship is best seen in Butterfield's own celebration of public class lists. He praises them for providing the nation with the precious knowledge that Agnata Ramsay, one of the first women allowed to study at Cambridge, topped the Classics tripos in 1887. According to Butterfield, this was news that "shocked and delighted the nation", and remains a perfect example of the need to maintain Cambridge's archaic traditions. What he fails to mention is that Ramsay received no degree (nor would any women until 60 years after she left Cambridge), got married straight out of university, and largely abandoned her scholarship. She,

like many of the brightest women of her time, became "one of the most notorious casualties of the university marriage market," as Mary Beard puts it. It was due to "elite" academic practices gatekeeping Cambridge's cornucopia of ideas for the enjoyment of rich men that one of the greatest classicists of a generation was lost to domestic servitude.

When Butterfield says he wants Cambridge to be an "elite" institution, he doesn't mean it in an academic or intellectual sense. He wants it to be a collection of people who look and think like him. But what he doesn't seem to acknowledge is that the Cambridge of old was at risk of becoming a stagnant echo chamber, and it was only by opening it up that its decline could be stopped.

There's no denying Cambridge has transformed from the institution a young Butterfield arrived at two decades ago – it has been brought into the present day. It remains a place where we're tested to our wits' ends on "the big questions", which we often do discuss "late into the night". The difference is that these discussions are now open to all, rather than just those who know how to play polo. If our aim is to push the limits of intellectual thought and produce the best thinkers academia has to offer, then trying to maintain the stranglehold boarding school boys had on this University is not the way forward. We should welcome measures that make sure the Agnata Ramsays of the future don't miss out on the opportunity for exploration that Cambridge offers.



▲ JESSICA LEER

Wilf Vall



Humanities students need ways into academia

Promoting 'the close inter-relationship between teaching, scholarship, and research' and 'education which enhances the ability of students to learn throughout life' are both phrases found in the core values of the University. Unfortunately, for those outside of STEM disciplines, they apparently don't apply. If you are a humanities or social sciences student, you are effectively destined to be gatekept from academia.

For the natural scientists and mathematicians of this institution, progression towards a Master's and into academia is relatively seamless. Those performing well enough in their third year can go on to do a fourth, and so get their integrated Master's. Where is this level of support for undergraduates in the humanities? Absolutely nowhere, it seems.

This is not to say that breaking into academia as a STEM student is easy. Getting the 2:1 required to get onto third year NatSci is not a trivial achievement, let alone getting on to a PhD programme after. These steps are all difficult and competitive, yet at least there are steps

“
It is no surprise that humanities students gravitate towards the corporate world
”

laid out for students to follow. In contrast, the lack of any integrated Master's courses across the humanities (no, Management tripos does not count) makes the transition far more difficult. Those looking to continue education must instead go through the costlier, less convenient process of doing an MPhil, with negligible institutional support for their academic development.

One could rightly point out that there are more opportunities and funds in academia for STEM disciplines, with 68% of doctoral admissions at Cambridge being in the sciences. From this perspective, it does make sense to offer more integrated Master's to STEM students, as significantly more of them will end up going deep into academia. However, there is a big difference between more opportunities and *infinitely* more opportunities. In comparison to the grand total of zero integrated Master's available for any of the many humanities undergraduate courses, the Natural Sciences tripos alone has nine different fourth-year pathways, in addition to those for Maths, Computer

Science, and Engineering. It does not take Part III mathematical knowledge to figure that having double the number of PhD admissions and infinitely more fourth year options is in fact bullshit.

This imbalance in opportunities extends beyond simply the availability of an integrated Master's. For instance, I have never come across a humanities student who has done a research internship over the vacations. On the other hand, it seems to me that every NatSci and their mother has done some kind of research trip, project or internship at some point during their degree. I am going to commit critical thinking crimes and assume that my anecdote speaks for everyone's experience, but genuinely – where are all the research opportunities for us humanities students? Given their elusivity, it is no surprise that students gravitate away from academia and towards the corporate world. STEM students also do this, but at least they're given a chance to experience academia before selling their souls.

All is not completely dire, as non-

STEM students may be required or given the opportunity to write a dissertation in their final year, providing ample experience of in-depth research in a chosen area. This in itself is probably a reasonable taster of postgraduate life, but it brings about its own set of issues. I vividly remember the warnings from my department towards those thinking of doing a dissertation, which went something along the lines of 'people doing well in dissertations sometimes end up flunking their exams'. This places humanities students who are open to continuing in education and going into academia in a perilous position: take on a dissertation and gain research experience from doing so – but at your own risk.

Having the chance to do an integrated Master's and go on placements over the vacations affords many STEM undergraduates the opportunity to take a dip into academia without bankrupting themselves or harming their current degree prospects. It is time to give humanities students these opportunities as well.

Alex Lee



Daisy Stewart Henderson

Cambridge's LinkedIn culture has changed the meaning of connection

LinkedIn culture is a unique beast. While comparison through poised portraits and holiday albums on Instagram may be a sadly universal experience among our generation, comparing your friends' exam results and their prestigious internships for this purpose is a more distinctly Cantabrigian phenomenon. Over the summer, my mum was somewhat perplexed by my nigh-on-encyclopaedic knowledge of the prestigious schools my peers attended.

"But do you even know them?" she asked, and a moment of cold realisation ensued. For the most part, I don't know them at all. Yet as statistics, as lists of grades and merits, as curated, corporate veneers honed for presentation to the vicious world of online recruitment, my knowledge is thorough. If only memorising the content of my degree was that easy! I know of people as a particularly impressive tripos ranking or some example of childhood precociousness whose digital footprint still haunts them, not as human beings with characters and complexities. And it seems that, for some in Cambridge, this is just right, as the cultivation of friendships becomes a full-time networking exercise to pursue the most impressive connections and discard those who are not up to scratch.

Anecdotes of stratified interpersonal relationships in action tend to sink right to the pit of my stomach. I have heard fables of people refusing to acknowledge long-standing friends in public due to a perception of them as unsuitable for association, Cambridge students taking a 'meritocratic approach' to dating, and unabashed proclamations of only having friends who are intelligent, successful and even attractive. I believe these tales wholeheartedly; they are all too feasible.

It is wholly unnatural that some of my peers revealed their Olympiad successes and outstanding A-Level results to me at our first meetings. At one stage, I was introduced to a 'genius' who greets new people with a personalised test of their intellect in order to assess whether they are worthy of further association. Thus, a trend of intellectual posturing and thinly-veiled insecurity emerges. Social engagements become calculations as potential friends are viewed through their utility as connections, an encroachment of LinkedIn culture on an aspect of life that should be wholly divorced from self-aggrandisement.

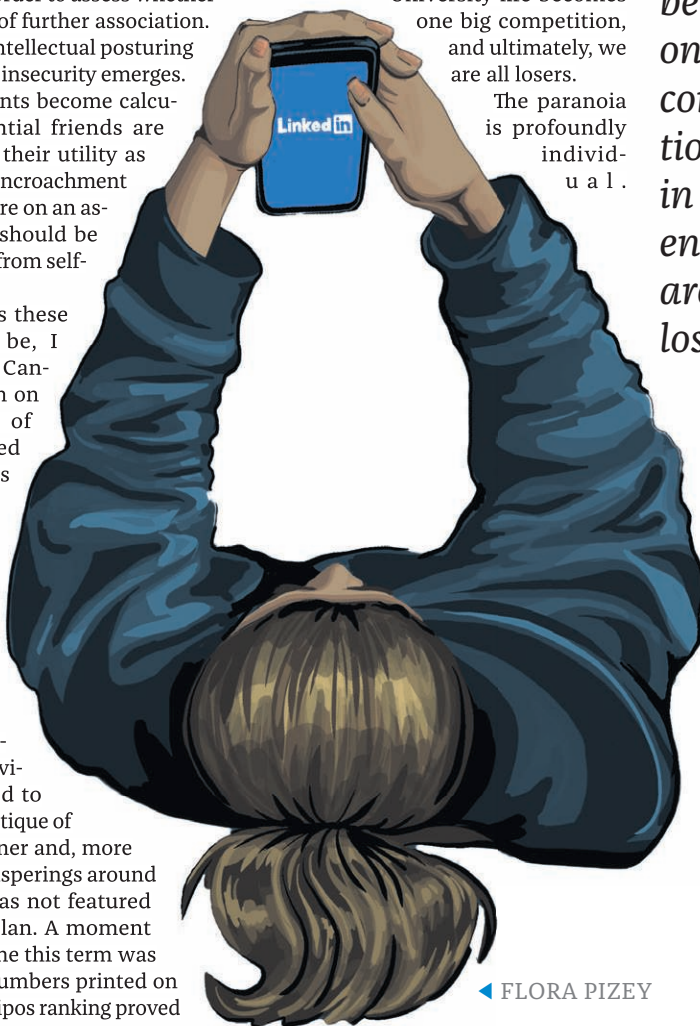
As extreme as these examples may be, I believe that the Cantabrigian fixation on an appearance of perfection (honed through mediums such as LinkedIn) manifests itself in a myriad of ways every day. We encounter 'candid' Instagram posts of friendship groups who appear to be uniformly pretty, privileged, and poised to the exclusive mystique of the scholars' dinner and, more crucially, the whisperings around who was and was not featured on the seating plan. A moment of epiphany for me this term was that the actual numbers printed on the long-feared tripos ranking proved

to be largely irrelevant. It was the often-baseless speculation and selective sharing of only the most impressive rankings, often on LinkedIn rather than in genuine conversation, that gave it a vicious edge quite divorced from its numerical reality.

University life becomes one big competition, and ultimately, we are all losers.

The paranoia is profoundly individual.

“University life becomes one big competition, and in the end, we are all losers”



FLORA PIZEY

We simply care far too much about how we are perceived, to a degree that this anxiety spills the banks of ourselves and floods those around us too. Friendships become appendages; individuals we are supposed to love and trust are reduced to designer handbags to be slung over one's shoulder and paraded around college before being immortalised in the hall of fame that is an excruciatingly 'aesthetic' Instagram feed. Perhaps by hunting the worthy with the fervency of starved beasts before adding them to a long roster of names deemed to be funny, popular, pretty, successful, we can claw back some of these qualities for ourselves to fill the void of insecurity and jealousy borne out of a culture of competition. The mirror held up by the messy and the meaningful may be too much of a reckoning, for it seems that in Cambridge's hypercompetitive LinkedIn culture, the meaning of 'connection' has been corrupted.

I, for one, am opting out. Easier said than done, but if there is one thing I can do, it is to embrace my inner humanities student and totally reject quantification. Tempting as LinkedIn 'ghost mode' may be, I no longer want to assess my own worth against carefully curated exhibitions of my peers' excellence. I just don't care how impressive my friends are. Radical stuff, I know, but their achievements are not a metric I stand to gain anything from measuring myself against. Accomplished as they are, they impress me far more through their moments of kindness, of funniness, and even, perhaps especially, of messiness. Because genuine friendship is defined by connection of a different kind.



Evie McMahon

An ode to Cambridge's welfare walks

Before starting at Cambridge, I had grand visions of the many activities my newfound friends and I would undertake. Of course, we did many things: the Regal saw us as regulars; we got into as many bops at other colleges as we could; and we weren't too averse to a night spent dancing at Revs. Yet, nothing came to excite me more than a 'welfare walk' now does. As much as my friends and I would like to think we coined the term, we know this is not the case – but we are loyal disciples of the concept. As Michaelmas turned into Lent, and the workload increased, we found ourselves taking welfare walks more often (although not to the neglect of our Revs nights). If I were to endorse any activity to others at Cambridge, it would be this.

The Cambridge workload is intense, and many myths float around about this hindering a thriving social life or close friendships. Most of us have had to cancel a plan here and there to finish an essay, but I have found that my friendships at Cambridge became stronger as we've tried to balance this life together. Even if it's just for a 20-minute walk, we still try to see each other, keeping things low-maintenance when necessary in this high-maintenance academic environment. Cambridge students are never too busy for friendships or a social life; when it comes to managing extra

“Welfare walks have made me appreciate the group of people I have around me even more”

commitments and exams, sometimes I found myself needing to enjoy the simpler things with my friends.

After the intensity of Michaelmas, which saw socialising trump working, the all-encompassing feeling of work and nearing exams gradually forced activities to dwindle into these spontaneous, often late-night, welfare walks. The middle of Easter term felt reminiscent of a type of limbo; societies, formals, and club nights were suspended as the library became the new Saturday night craze. Between sessions of revision, my friends and I would always take strolls through the city. Whether it was just around the centre of Cambridge, or one instance of walking to Girton and back at midnight (it is truly not as far as people seem to think!), it was the way we afforded ourselves a moment of peace at a time offering nothing but stress. At weekends, we endeavoured to do the same, going to Grantchester or Coton when we could. It's highly likely that I owe my sanity during Easter term to these welfare walks and the people that shared them with me.

Now, spending time walking (and incessantly chattering) with my friends has become not just a last-minute decision, but something I look forward to. Going on welfare walks is free to us and even if we don't want to talk (which admittedly is not a regular sentiment) we

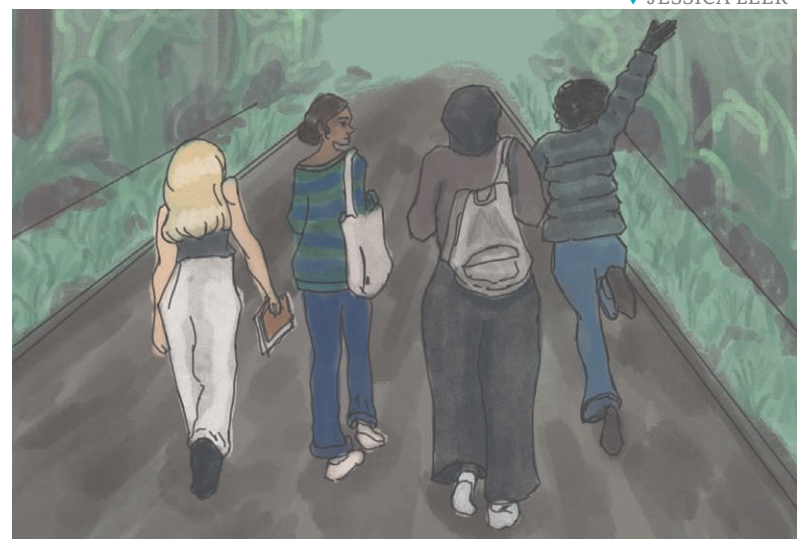
just share earphones and listen to music as we walk.

A new proclivity towards this simple activity – when we don't have time for much else – has taught me a lot about how my life and friendships have changed for the better since the beginning of my first Michaelmas. I no longer feel as though I must force myself to go to everything to ensure I stay close to my friends. Instead of constantly feeling the need to impress, I now feel more comfortable than ever with the friends I have made. If I need to, I can say 'no'

to things I would not have been able to miss last year, even if I wanted to. Welfare walks with friends have made me appreciate the group of people I have around me even more. We can comfortably walk together in silence when we need a break, and to me, it shows how strong our relationships are.

When I'm in a state of vacation boredom I look forward to the return of bops, formals and college bars, but I miss nothing as dearly as my friends and our welfare walks.

JESSICA LEER



Interviews

Sophie Winkleman: ‘the digitalisation of humanity is destroying what it means to be human’

The actor talks championing community, societal responsibility, and creating a screen-free future with **Seyan Dattani**

Interviewing a royal at Chelsea’s upmarket Bluebird Cafe is an intimidating prospect. But Sophie Winkleman has a knack for putting people at ease: refreshingly charming and down-to-earth, she orders a “boiling cappuccino, please!” (“I was up late fundraising for a paediatric hospital in Zimbabwe ... so I need coffee!”) and is worried about being inarticulate (spoiler alert – she isn’t!).

Sophie is, by her own admission, “not posh”. She grew up in “vegetarian, hippy” Primrose Hill, in the days when it was still “a bit shabby and cool – there was a shop called Sesame which I think only sold lentils.” Her neighbours included “lots of beautiful men” including Martin Amis and Jude Law. Although she hails from a “mega-intellectual” family (her father created *The Times Atlas of World History* and translates French poetry for fun while her mother was a successful advertising copywriter and “the cleverest person I know”), her home life was gentle and academically unpressurised.

Sadly, school at City of London School for Girls was less idyllic, and a nasty case of bullying left Sophie with a long-lasting fear of groups of women. Her teachers, however, were “inspired” – particularly in her favourite subjects, English and Latin. Under their guidance, she applied to read English at Trinity Hall – though she retains a love for Classics and is fascinated when I tell her *The Times* publishes Latin crosswords. Sophie still sees her old teachers and feels gratitude for their passion and charisma in the classroom. This makes her sceptical of “isolating” classroom iPads: “it’s novelty for novelty’s sake – Ed-Tech is just Big Tech in a school uniform. Nothing can replace teacher-pupil interaction.”

She praises Sweden for being “brave enough to admit failure and chuck tech out of the classroom,” and wonders why Britain lacks the courage to do the same. “We used to be a brave, pioneering country,” she says “but now we’re following quite shabby trends.”

Sophie’s time at Cambridge holds fonder memories: “I loved Trinity Hall and I loved the University’s thriving acting and comedy scene”. Her Footlights Revue was nominated for the prestigious Perrier Award at the Edinburgh Fringe. “If you act and you’re at Cambridge, it’s like Christmas every day,” she says, remembering her time as *Les Liaisons Dangereuses’* Madame de Merteuil at the ADC and touring Greek amphitheatres to perform Lorca’s *Blood Wedding* and Sophocles’ *Electra*.

Her own taste in film spans many of the classics, particularly Merchant Ivory masterpieces like *Howard’s End* and *The Remains of the Day*. “I also know every word of *The Commitments* and have an enduring love for *Peter’s Friends*... it’s the quintessence of the Footlights!”

Despite having a serious track record in theatre and TV, radio is Sophie’s favourite medium and she particularly enjoyed working on Martin Jarvis’ P.G. Wodehouse productions (“Wodehouse is music!”). More recently, she’s been involved in an ITV production of Jane Austen’s *Sanditon* and an upcoming BBC One series she describes as “a dark drama about mad mothers and daughters – I’m not having to method act much!” She’d still love to play a comedic Shakespearean role – preferably Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* or Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* – but laughs that she’s “too ancient now!”

In her twenties, Sophie was cast as “posh dimwite” – most famously as Big Suze in *Peep Show* – but more recent roles, including a tough single mother in *This is Going to Hurt*, have showcased her versatility

as an actress. Her co-star, Ben Whishaw, is singled out for being “the kind of actor so brilliant that he just dissolves into someone else’s skin.”

Sophie has long warned about the impact of technology on children and is campaigning to “make smartphones and social media unavailable to under 16s”. She praises MPs such as Rosie Duffield and Miriam Cates for having the courage to push for stricter regulation, but laments successive governments’ inaction (“I’m sure they’re scared of alienating Big Tech”) For Sophie, the Online Safety Bill is “not strong enough,” because it only deals with harmful material. She is equally alarmed by short-form apps like TikTok and Snapchat which have destroyed children’s abilities to focus. “I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say these platforms are causing brain damage,” she concludes, “I’m deeply concerned about the digitalisation of children both in and out of school.”

“I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say these platforms are causing brain damage”

She praises schools taking a stand – from Cambridge’s screen-free Heritage School (“it’s a magically perfect school”) to the inner-city comprehensive Michaela Community School, with its emphasis on fact-based knowledge, handwriting, spelling and grammar – “traditions [that] have worked for centuries.”

Acting is an industry (in)famous for its addiction to social media and Sophie’s career has occasionally suffered when producers have tired of her refusal to promote shows on social media. Unusually for an actress, Sophie regards Instagram as “the lowest of the low – it makes teen girls, in particular, feel very underconfident.” Showing off is “so pathetic,” she says. “People plonk themselves on yachts and post pictures for the entire world to see ... I mean, really?!” Sophie would hail a return to modesty, adding that “being understated is underrated – the late Queen was a perfect example of discretion.”

Sophie, of course, knew Queen Elizabeth personally – her husband, Lord Frederick Windsor, is the King’s second

cousin – and remembers her extremely fondly. King Charles is also a close friend of Sophie’s and she’s awed by his dedication: “His environmental work has been completely pioneering, as has the work of the Prince’s Trust. He writes letters for innumerable causes all through the night, every night”. She also believes that royal visits touch people and communities in ways that politicians and celebs never can. Was adjusting to royal life difficult? “Not remotely. Everyone was delightful – welcoming, fun and kind. They’re lovely people.”

The couple have two daughters at school in London. Freddie, who read Classics at Oxford, enjoys teaching the girls “basic geography” (“countries and rivers and mountain ranges”) and “proper, linear world history” – the sort of general knowledge that she says is “denigrated in the current curriculum.”

Sophie sees children as “sacred beings” and is passionate about small charities like School Home Support (which helps troubled children back into school), CURE.org (which funds operations for disabled children in Africa) and the Children’s Surgery Foundation. She’s also an ambassador for the *Big Issue* and sells the magazine with homeless people whenever she’s not working. She’s “baffled by” organisations like the NSPCC and Childline, who advocate leaving Big Tech to implement their own safety measures – “as if they’re ever going to do that!”

Also a patron of Age UK, Sophie deplores today’s “broken society” where the elderly are farmed out to care homes or left to wither away in isolation. Instead, she believes closer intergenerational bonds between teens and older people might mitigate loneliness and depression in both groups. “My friend Kate has set up a charity called TimeGivers, where teens go to visit lonely elderly people in their community,” she says, wishing this could become a “societal habit we all nurture.”

Sophie is aware about the dangers of parents sounding too evangelical: “the [anti-smartphone] revolution has to be led by very young people [...] not a group of mums.” She cites her friend, actress Sophie Thompson, whose son at Central St Martin’s doesn’t have a smartphone. “It sounds like he’s the coolest boy in the entire year because he’s not available, there’s a mystique about him. He’s clearly refused to be captured and destroyed by social media and it’s doing wonders for his social capital – I love that irony.”

Children don’t want to be addicted to screens, Sophie explains. She cites an interview in *The Times* where students yearned for the freedom that comes from not being on social media. “It’s peddled as this great connecting force but it’s in the main a huge isolator. You don’t have 900 friends,” she says, “you’ve got no friends because you’re scrolling in your room by yourself!”



▲BRYAN ADAMS

‘There’s something about Austen’: Cariad Lloyd on her hit improv show *Austentatious*

Priya Watkinson talks to the writer, podcaster, actor, and comedian

Cariad Lloyd seems to be constantly ahead of the curve in her career. She was improvising swoon-worthy Jane Austen stories set in the Regency era far before *Bridgerton* came out, and hosted an award-winning podcast on grief long before today’s influx of podcasts.

Interestingly, she did not study Drama at university, instead (like many a Cambridge thespian) doing English literature at Sussex. I wonder why, and there is a simple answer: Sussex didn’t have a drama course. (Ring any bells?)

She tells me over Zoom one afternoon that going to drama school just never seemed like an option for her. “I wanted to but I had no roadmap in my mind. I don’t have any family in the performing arts and I thought that was for other people.” But at Sussex, Cariad met fellow comedian Sara Pascoe and was convinced into a career in the performing arts.

Despite leaving English behind, it’s funny that Cariad’s hit show has such a link to her degree. *Austentatious*, which comes to Cambridge on 16th Novem-

ber, is an improv show prompted by a random Austen-themed title from the audience (see: *Everything Emma All At Once*, *North Banged Her Badly*), performed as if it is a lost Austen novel that has been rediscovered. It began in 2012 in Edinburgh when it took the Fringe by storm, and has since become a West End institution.

That success was doubted from the beginning, Cariad tells me, as the stereotype around improv was that it was hit-or-miss whether it could work. “We wanted to prove to people that it’s not hit-or-miss when you’ve got people this good. We started out in an uncool medium, this type of show didn’t exist when I started, and I’m inordinately proud of what we’ve achieved.”

When I first saw an ad for the show, I assumed it came in with the *Bridgerton* wave of Regency drama, not knowing it had been around for much longer. How does Cariad feel about the show? She loves it: “What *Bridgerton* has done is remind people that [Austen] is cool.”

I ask what is it about Austen that people are still interested in. “I don’t

think there’s many other authors that you could improv with because Jane is completely obsessed with characters, dynamics and dialogue, and those things transfer very easily to stage.”

Exploring these dynamics is the best thing about improv, Cariad tells me. It’s all about working together as a team, she says: “good improv should be ego-less”.

At the end of our conversation I ask her about Griefcast, her award-winning podcast where she speaks to people about their experiences with grief. Having been on a break since February, I ask whether she has any plans to restart it, but she says she is fully committed to taking a break after releasing her book on grief earlier this year, *You Are Not Alone*. After doing 200 interviews in eight years she is in need of a rest, she says. She now has a new podcast, *Weirdos Book Club*, with old University friend Pascoe.

I tell Cariad that I’ll see her on stage very soon at the Corn Exchange, which she is excited by. It’s a truth universally acknowledged that it is sure to be worth the trip.



▲ YELLOW BELLY PHOTOGRAPHY

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Science



Nicole Cappellazzo explains the scientific research you need to know about this week

Childhood sugar rationing prevents chronic disease

As we come down from the Halloween sugar rush, new research finds that a low-sugar diet in the first years of life can significantly reduce the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood. The study, published on October 31 in *Science*, cleverly uses historical conditions such as sugar rationing during World War II to explore how early-life exposure to low-sugar diets impacts long term health outcomes.

Children are often exposed to sugar in utero and through breast milk, formula, and baby food. War-time sugar restrictions, in place in the UK from 1940-1953, limited adult consumption to less than 40g per day and eliminated sugar entirely for children under two. When rationing ended in September 1953, the average sugar consumption in Britain doubled almost immediately. To see if these restrictions had any impacts on health outcomes, researchers turned to the UK Biobank, a database containing the genetic and medical information of half a million people. Combining this data with information from food surveys of the 1950s, the researchers compared health outcomes of over 60,000 individuals conceived before and after sugar rationing ended.

They found that, as adults, babies conceived and born during the sugar rationing period had a 35% lower risk of type two diabetes and a 20% lower likelihood of hypertension than those born afterwards. The average age of onset of these chronic diseases was also delayed – by four years for diabetes and two years for high blood pressure. This protection was not limited to children whose sugar was restricted outside the womb, either. While children born during the rationing period showed a higher reduction in disease risk, adults still experienced this protection when they experienced sugar limitations exclusively in utero.

Deep sleep can heal a broken heart

Given how terrible it makes us feel, it seems intuitive that sleep deprivation should affect our health. Indeed, research has linked improved quality and duration of sleep to better blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and a decreased risk of strokes or heart attacks. But a recent study published last Wednesday in *Nature* suggests that sleep does more than preserve health – it can also help mend a hurting heart.

To investigate the link between sleep and cardiovascular recovery, scientists induced heart attacks in mice and used high-resolution imaging and cell analysis to examine the brain. They found that heart attacks led to a more than twofold increase in the number of monocytes: immune cells that are reprogrammed to release a protein called tumour necrosis factor (TNF) following a heart attack. This protein acts on sleep regulating neurons in the brain to induce 'slow-wave' sleep, a deep sleep phase characterized by slow brain waves, during which the body carries out crucial repair and restoration activities.

When the researchers disrupted this deep sleep in mice, inflammation in the brain and the heart increased. Excessive heart inflammation decreases cardiac function by disrupting the heart's normal rhythms. These results suggest that sleep works to regulate immune and neural pathways after a heart attack, supporting heart recovery.

To see if sleep plays a similar role in cardiovascular recovery in humans, the researchers monitored the brains and sleep quality of heart attack patients. Just as in mice, they found higher numbers of monocytes in the brains of patients who had experienced heart attacks. In addition, those who slept poorly in the weeks following a heart attack had double the risk of experiencing another cardiovascular event compared to those who slept well.

These findings reveal how we should prioritise quality sleep for better heart health and recovery.

Rooting for root vegetables!

Teymour Taj argues that you can't *beet* seasonal root vegetables

Turnips. Swedes. Cabbages. If you're anything like me, these words hark back memories of pale, bland school dinners dolloped unceremoniously onto a tray. Or perhaps they remind you of the diet of a Dark Age peasant. Either way, they are hardly foods that you would want to spend your top (or even bottom) dollar on. But let me try and convince you that it is high time to rehabilitate root veg.

“**Broccoli, cauliflower and Brussel sprouts also contain even more Vitamin C by weight than oranges**

In today's world, we are very lucky to have almost unfettered access to any fruit or vegetable at any time of year. When the harvest in our corner of the world ends, we can simply fly over

fresh pickings from sunnier shores. However, the impact of doing this on the environment is incredibly high. A study published in *Nature Food* revealed that 'food miles' make up almost 20% of food-system greenhouse gas emissions, which in turn represents about 30% of the human-produced total. High-income nations like the UK are the worst culprits – despite representing only 12% of the global population, they are responsible for 46% of food transport-related emissions. This is driven especially by our demand for exotic fruits such as pineapples – one pineapple generates the same emissions as driving 15 miles in a small car. The transport cost also makes imported foods much more expensive – strawberry prices double between summer and winter.

In addition, ironically, imported foods can be much less tasty than homegrown alternatives. The shipping process is complicated and lengthy, and often this means that some fruits get spoiled along the way. Fruits are often picked for export before they are ripe, making them less flavourful and nutritious. Supermarkets compensate for this by ripening them artificially with chemicals such as ethylene, which is produced from fossil fuels. Eating locally produced, seasonal foods eliminates this need, offering us a more appetising option.

Moreover, it's not just citrus fruits that are packed with vitamins to keep us healthy and energised – many humble vegetables have this property too.

Vitamin A is essential to keep us safe from winter bugs, and we need to eat

beta-carotene to produce it. Pumpkins are rich in beta-carotene, so it may be time to keep buying them well beyond Halloween. Other good sources include spinach, kale, and Christmas staples such as carrots and Brussel sprouts. Broccoli, cauliflower and Brussel sprouts also contain even more Vitamin C by weight than oranges!

“**One pineapple generates the same emissions as driving 15 miles in a small car**

These leafy green veg are also high in iron and folate, helping improve your energy levels to fend off the winter blues. And they are among the most fibre-rich foods, a nutrient which 90% of Brits are deficient in. Eating enough fibre can ward off bowel cancer and improve digestion and uptake of other nutrients.

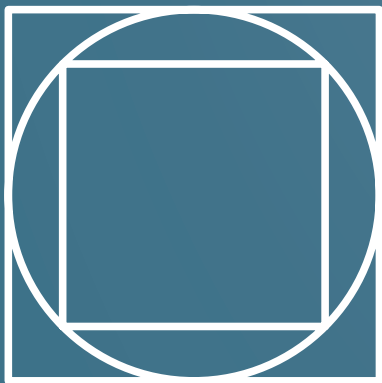
So next time, skip the tomatoes, strawberries and peppers for a warming bowl of pumpkin soup, roasted carrots or a kale smoothie. Your body, your wallet and the planet will thank you.



▲ PUBLIC DOMAIN

Optiver 

PREDICT TO WIN



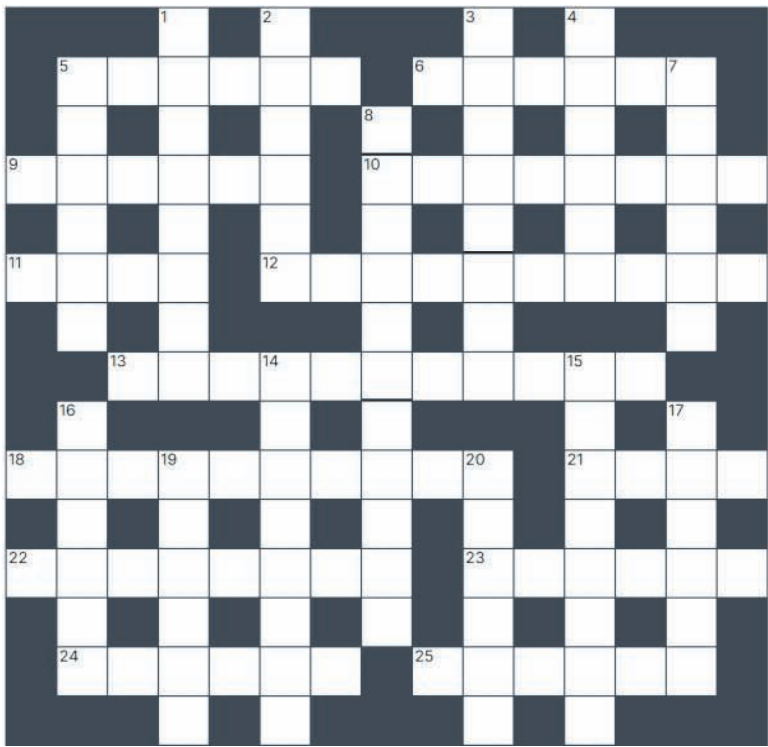
If the area of the outside square is 100cm^2 , what is the area of the inside square?

What percentage of respondents successfully solved this?



The Smoking Area

Crossword



Quick

ACROSS

- 5 Blow out (6)
- 6 Second child of Donald Trump (6)
- 9 Enter (2,4)
- 10 Dominic _____, director of Vote Leave (8)
- 11 43rd US president (4)
- 12 Easy (10)
- 13 Obsession with books (11)
- 18 Road which Murray Edwards is on (10)
- 21 T. S. Eliot, for example (4)
- 22 Reject, as of a result (8)
- 23 Kim Jong-nam's nationality (6)
- 24 Germanic language (6)
- 25 Crude oil refinery by-product (6)

DOWN

- 1 3rd largest city in the world (8)
- 2 Bill Clinton's vice president (2,4)

- 3 Hail Mary in Latin (3,5)
- 4 Block up (6)
- 5 Second book of the Bible (6)
- 7 Month which 'slips away like a bottle of wine' (6)
- 8 Outdoor frame of a building (11)
- 14 Student of MML (8)
- 15 Relating to an empire (8)
- 16 Arced (6)
- 17 Upper chamber of US Congress (6)
- 19 Pol Pot, or Ceausescu, for example (6)
- 20 _____ Khrushchev, leader of the Soviet Union (6)

Cryptic

ACROSS

- 5 Take a picture with new light particle (6)
- 6 French city declared bust (6)
- 9 Spin awful tragedy with no death (6)

Sudoku

1			9		7			
	7			2				1
5		6			1		7	
9	1					2		
2						4		3
	3	4			6		8	
	8		7	1			9	
				9	4			
6				8	2	3		

- 10 Hiding venereal diseases, pursue to lecture (8)
- 11 Southeast Asian dictator's union (4)
- 12 Accept less rum in glasses (10)
- 13 Manifestation of trendy flower (11)
- 18 Soviet leader begins in Khartoum – ruler sharing Churchill's evocativeness (10)
- 21 Brat, getting old, has no right to barge (4)
- 22 PE qualification reportedly leads to breeding (8)
- 23 Sis and I get messed up with Romeo and old god of the dead (6)
- 24 Denial tortured a man (6)
- 25 Go look it up? (6)

DOWN

- 1 Iran and Oman broadcast Romance language (8)
- 2 Replicas are seldom complex (6)
- 3 Bird has fantastic breast (5,3)

- 4 What broken clocks might do, sounding like acid (6)
- 5 Crazy Cupid's lover has a ring for Echo (6)
- 7 Experimenter needs to shave end off balls, right? (6)
- 8 A new page on Excel? (1,5,5)
- 14 Despised a committee vocally (8)
- 15 Cow crossing two universities (8)
- 16 Mole-like animal – dead clever! (6)
- 17 Lesbian, repelling boy, goes crazy for contact solution (6)
- 19 Putting university over sex results in marriages (6)
- 20 Apparently you French do witchcraft? (6)

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES ON
INSTAGRAM @VARSITYCAMBRIDGE
PUZZLES BY SOPHOCLES



Gowns all day?

Resident Varsity Archivist **Valli McComb** explores the mid-century shift in student gown-wearing

Following Varsity's most recent exploration of our University's unique clothing tradition, I investigated how Cambridge students' gown-wearing has changed over the generations. My findings are unlikely to surprise; students have consistently grumbled at the pomp of wearing gowns and questioned the purpose. However, there was a notable period in the mid-20th century where Cantabrigians' relationship with gowns was revolutionised.

With gowns nowadays relegated to matriculation, formals, and – to those fortunate enough – being Deaned, there once was a time where your gown would be tied to your hip (or shoulders, I guess?). Running late and rushing to a supervision in 1960? Don't forget your gown! If you didn't want to be tested on last night's hasty reading, forgetting your gown would be a sure way to get out of the supervision; you wouldn't be let in. Students were expected to wear their gowns whenever on the move and, to police this, proctors and their 'bulldogs' (the University police) would patrol the city centre to catch non-conformists.

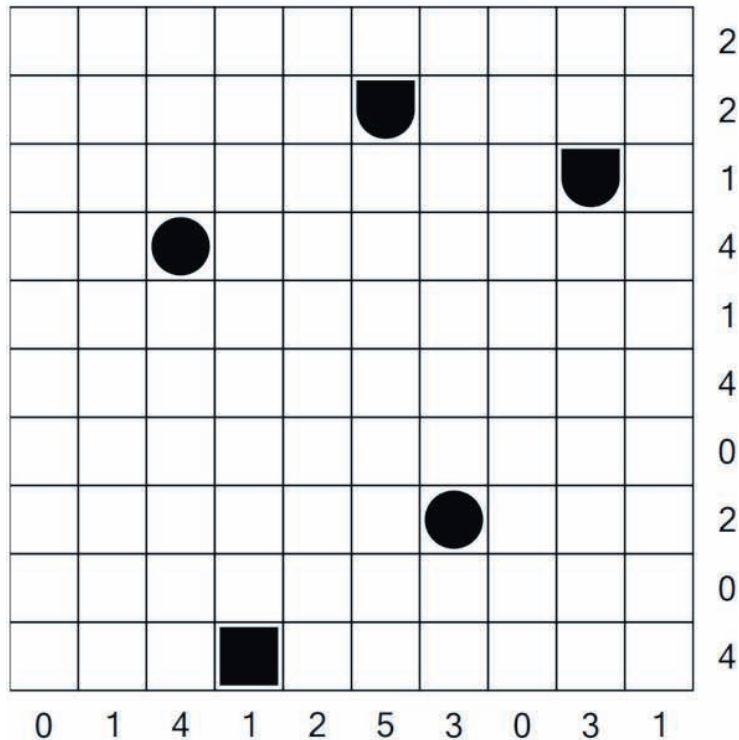
As if it wasn't bad enough, students hoping to crack on with some serious study in the UL were made to borrow a gown on the occasions that they forgot their own (probably inaccurate, but I imagine a smelly lost property box that one would have to fish through). Perhaps even stricter than the proctors, Varsity reported that UL "gown-spotters" were so overzealous in their application of the University's statutes that they tried to deny entry to the Chancellor; clemency was granted upon their realisation of the "unknown don" before them.

These oppressive conditions were not tolerated by the entire student population. In 1961, some brave boys marched down King's Parade in protest of the perpetual gown-wearing that plagued student life. Such an attitude towards gowns makes one wonder if the Veterinary students that threw their gowns over a puddle for Queen Elizabeth's visit in 1955 were more looking for an excuse to not wear one rather than being chivalrous...

Some view the gown as a symbol of Cambridge's unnecessarily elitist clinging to tradition and privilege. Others like the gown – seeing it as a signal of academic achievement, or a Hogwartsian fantasy played out. Whatever your view, I am fairly confident of one thing: wearing it everywhere would be a nightmare.

Battleships

Find all the battleships in the grid. There is one battleship (4x1 squares), two cruisers (3x1), three destroyers (2x1), and four submarines (1 square each). The ships do not touch, not even diagonally, and the numbers indicate how many squares in each row and column are occupied by ship parts.



Cambridge: The Umarell's Dream City



vulture.



Lifestyle

Varsity blind dates

Welcome to **Varsity Blind Dates**, where hopeful singles put their trust in our matchmakers to set them up with a mystery partner – you could be next, sign up now!

Date number one: Oliver & Andrew

Oliver

What were your pre-date expectations?

I guess I was sort of expectation-less. It was more curiosity that drove me to do it. So I was like, I'm just kind of curious how it will go, who I'm going to meet. I've never done a blind date before, so...

So, you met at The Pickerel Inn. Did you stay there for the whole date?

Yeah. We stayed there right until it closed.

What were the vibes like?

Yeah ... it's funny because my blind date was actually my ex-boyfriend.

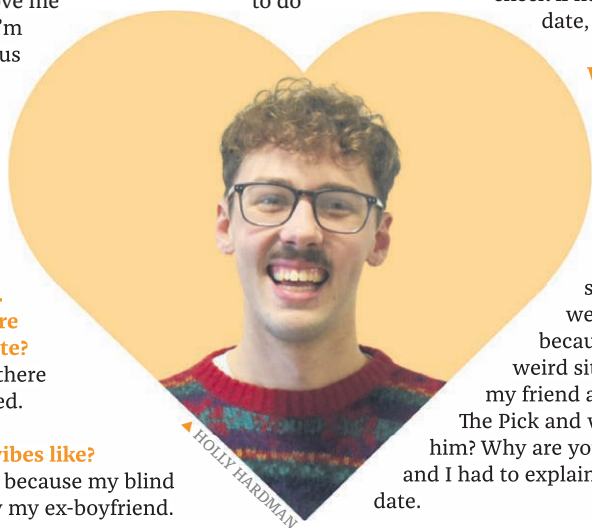
Oh my god, I'm so sorry. We thought you guys were meant to be...

I mean, we are each other's type on paper, so it makes sense. I was lowkey unsurprised when I found out it was him. When I received his description I was like 'No, surely not,' and then, because we're still friends, I texted him to check if he was going on a blind date, and he said yes.

Were there any awkward moments or did the conversation flow well?

It was really nice to catch up with him. The vibes were good. I guess it was sort of awkward when we first saw each other, because it was obviously a weird situation. At one point my friend actually walked into The Pick and was like 'Is that really him? Why are you guys hanging out?' and I had to explain that it was a blind date.

What would you rate the date out of 10? Probably a 7, maybe 8. We do get on.



HOLLY HARDMAN

Andrew

What were your pre-date expectations?

I guess it was interesting to meet someone in a completely new way. I feel like with dating apps and stuff, trying to chat with people online is always the worst bit, so it's nice to just skip straight to meeting someone in person.

And were your expectations met?

Well, Oliver is actually my ex, but we did end up staying on the date for quite a while. As much as it would have been nice to have met someone I didn't know before, it was nice to see him again. I don't know ... we might be getting back together. We don't know.

Oh shit, okay!

It's okay. The breakup was very amicable. But it's like an interesting continuation of that.

And there weren't any awkward moments between you?

I actually got a message earlier that day from Oliver, right after I got your message describing who I was meeting, asking if I was going on a blind date for Varsity. So I kind of knew it was going to happen before I showed up.

Is there anything you would have changed about the date?

Maybe it would have been funnier if we'd both shown up without realising. It would have been a moment.

Really awful question that everyone hates: what would you rate the date out of 10?

That's a particularly hard question. I don't know ... I feel like an 8 out of 10? Yeah, 7 or 8 out of 10.



Date number two: Elise & George

George

What were your pre-date expectations?

I mean, I was hoping for a fun evening to be honest. That was my main goal. I didn't have any huge expectations; my expectations were that I didn't know what to expect, really. I was hoping to meet someone who I could have a laugh and a fun evening with over a few drinks.

What was your first impression of Elise?

She seemed nice, seemed really approachable. She laughed at my jokes and I laughed at hers so that was really good. She seemed lovely ... a very chatty person.

What did you talk about?

We did the basic 'name, college' stuff, but then we spoke about movies for a bit. She actually does a lot of FemSoc stuff and she knows my college wife through that, so we had that in common. We spoke about other mutuals we had, and our families.

Any awkward moments?

No massive ones. There were some bits when it was quieter but the conversation flowed quite well.

Describe Elise in three words

Chatty, funny and interesting.

What do you think she thought of you?

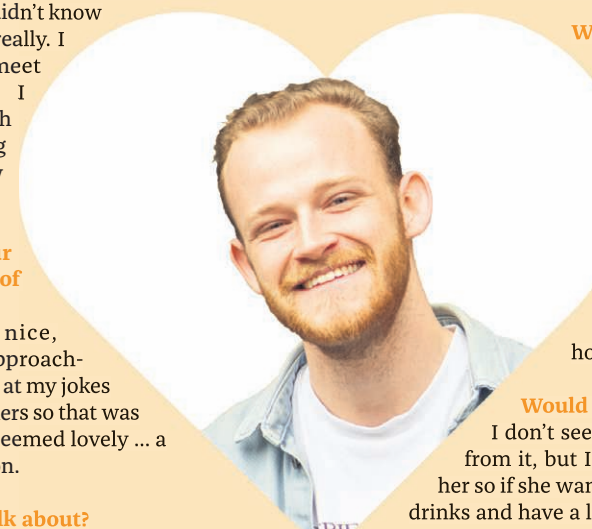
I think we're quite different people. I don't think our interests overlapped too much, but I think the conversation was good so maybe she thinks similarly to what I think of her. I hope something nice!

Would you see her again?

I don't see a relationship coming from it, but I did really get on with her so if she wants to meet up again for drinks and have a laugh again then yes.

What would you rate the date out of 10?

Let's go for a 7.



CHRISTOPHER LORDE

Elise

What were your pre-date expectations?

I didn't really have expectations. I haven't really been on a date in a year and a bit.

So, you met at The Mitre. What were the vibes like?

I hadn't been there before but it's really nice. He paid for the first round and then we moved to The Pickerel and I paid for the second round. We saw a bunch of my friends and I think he saw some of his friends, which was funny.

What did you think of his friends?

He met someone who he had been on a Civil Service internship with, and I was like 'okay, he's a third year economist and a Civil Service intern,' and I think the only employable features about me are ... I dunno. I'm a pink-haired feminist, so do with that what you will.

What did you guys talk about? Were there any awkward moments?

No. I'm a yapper, though! So I tend to fill every silence. One of the first things we talked about was a horrible story about this man I dated, and I got about five minutes in and thought 'why am I telling this story right now?' He was the first economist I'd probably ever spoken to.

Describe George in three words.

Very pink shirt.

What do you think he thought of you?

I think he found me funny. Sometimes I made him laugh so much he'd cough, but maybe he was just struggling with something. I don't know.

Would you see him again?

I'd see him again, just not in a romantic setting.

What would you rate the date out of 10?

5. But that feels mean! If he puts anything higher than 5, put a 7.



CHRISTOPHER LORDE

Seasonal stews to warm your heart

Leo Kang talks us through his four favourite ways to make the perfect autumn dish: the humble stew

This autumn, like every autumn, I am thinking about stews. As temperatures plunge, you will find me hunched over heavy pans, rubbing my hands together in goblinesque glee.

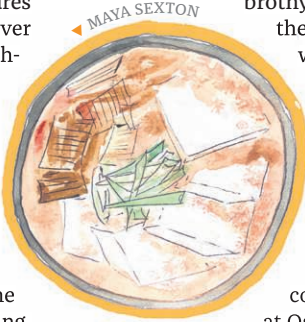
Everyone loves a stew. Everyone loves to stew. There's something magical about a meal that comes together out of sight - carrots and onions glistening deep under the lid, meat melting off its bones across the long stretches of the afternoon. In Cambridge, we may not always have the time (or the ovens, or even the stovetops) for slow cooking but that doesn't mean we should allow our stew

dreams to go stale. Here, I've rounded up four top brothly offerings to ease you into the autumn. They will, I hope, warm you from head to toe.

Doenjang-jjigae

Doenjang is fermented soybean paste - the funkier, more pungent cousin of miso. If you don't have any, you can grab it (and most other common Asian ingredients) at Oseyo in the centre of town.

This stew starts with a base of onions and garlic, and it's flavoured with dark, rich dollops of doenjang. What you pile up inside is up to you. My go-to is firm tofu and courgettes, cut into small cubes, but you could also use potatoes, napa cabbage, and mooli. For the broth, anchovy or dashi stock are common umami boosters, but I do think the soybean and vegetables sing for themselves. A good glug of soy sauce, though, would never go amiss, along with a dusting



MAYA SEXTON

of glittery gochugaru (Korean red pepper flakes) if you like it spicy. Really, *doenjang-jjigae* is the most satisfying stew I know how to make. It's brawny and pungent but with a crystal-clear taste.

Kimchi-jjigae

This is a heroic stew. It is the fire in my belly, the captain of my soul. It's also my miracle cure for even the cruellest of hangovers ... My favourite *kimchi-jjigae* has pork belly. That's how my mum makes it ("Jeolla-do-style"), and it's delicious. You can absolutely use vegetables or fish instead - mushrooms are a wonderful option, and there's a popular variation involving a can of tuna, brine and all.

If you're going for pork, though, start with the standard culprits: onions, garlic (lots of it, like a whole honking head), and ginger to cut through the richness. I always want it redder and spicier, so I shake in some gochugaru too. When selecting the pork belly, the fattiest cuts are best. I slice them super thin so they cook quicker, turning tender and jelly-like. Add your kimchi, along with any vegetables you like - earthy mooli is by far my favourite, simmered until just translucent. The kimchi does heavy lifting with the flavour, but you can also season with soy sauce, doenjang, and gochujang. Traditional toppings are sliced tofu



and spring onions, which are nice for a smack of freshness at the end.

You should be left with a brick-red, salty-sour stew, scalding hot and bubbling at the brim. Slather it over a bowl of freshly steamed rice. I promise you, you will never go back to Yori after this.

'Green' chorizo and butter bean stew

This is a winning combo. Fat, white butter beans are perfect for soaking up smoky chorizo. I make two versions, which I've called "green" and "red" (because, uh, why not?). Both taste best, of course, when sopped up with a slice of sourdough.

The "green stew" is a hearty, herby affair. For vegetables, I go with broccolini, kale (or cavolo nero, if you want to get mental with it), and courgettes cut on the diagonal into large, satisfying chunks. Brown them all in your pan, then add the butter beans and let them simmer away in vegetable stock. I like the chorizo as a crispy topping, so I slice it and fry it separately. Finish with a huge handful of freshly chopped dill and a fierce squeeze of lemon, and you're done.

'Red' Chorizo and butter bean stew

This version feels thicker and more indulgent. The chorizo I tear into pieces and sauté with onions and tonnes of garlic. Bell peppers, sliced into thin strips, go in next, along with a glossy dash of Worcestershire sauce. To build the broth itself, any type of tomato will do: fresh, canned, puree, passata. After a few minutes simmering, you can finish with whatever herbs you like - parsley and coriander are both lovely. You might also want to consider adding a glob of yoghurt or sour cream, depending on how rich you like it.

Ella Ducker teaches you the best ways to keep your gyp clean - 1950s-style!

It seems that every university kitchen is prone, once in a while, to falling into a state of disarray and uncleanness. Pressed for time and often lacking the appropriate equipment, the average student has a tendency to abandon their arduous cleaning responsibilities. But, when practised consistently and thoroughly, the student soon finds that kitchen-keeping need not be such a chore!

Dish-washing

The most commonly neglected kitchen task is dish-washing. Though ostensibly common knowledge, many students might be reminded that this is easily accomplished with the simple application of a sponge, washing-up liquid and a freshly-run basin of hot water. The student does well to wash-up their dirty dishes as they go - either after each meal, or while they are waiting for the next meal to cook. Begin with the least soiled dishes and end with greasy saucepans and charred pots - these are best scraped prior to water-submersion. End by cleaning the sink, sensibly removing any small pieces of food or soap suds. For both comfort and vanity, the washer is advised to purchase themselves a pair of durable rubber gloves.

Dish-drying

The student may then dry their dishes with a tea-towel and stack them away neatly (see cupboard-organising, below). Dishes could, of course, be left to dry on a drying rack; however, the decent thing is to leave every surface clear for other occupants' ease of use. Wash tea-towels regularly: ideally every three days, with every seven as a maximum.

Cleaning surfaces and the hob

Good cleaning equipment saves work. Every cleaner benefits from the acquisition of an anti-



bacterial spray and microfibre cloth which are far superior to the thin paper towels and lukewarm water that are often selected by ill-equipped students to clean grimy surfaces. Before and after preparing food, the hygiene-conscious cook wipes down the countertops. Not to clean the hobs after cooking is to make unnecessary work for the next user, not to mention long-suffering housekeeping staff. Fine steel wool removes tough stains.

The floor

Crumbs soon build up if left unswept: many a slipper has been known to suffer from forsaken mushy peas or tomato passata stains. Most college lodgings provide a broom and dustpan and brush for student use. A mop is desirable for spillages.

Rubbish bins and recycling

All waste food and empty packaging should be placed in the rubbish bin immediately and not left out on surfaces. Again, hygiene is of critical concern. Recyclable food packaging may be rinsed and then put in the blue bin; unwashed milk bottles and greasy packaging render the entire contents of the bin unrecyclable. Should the bins show signs of becoming full, it is prudent to empty them promptly. Adherence to these simple practices aids pest prevention.

Fridges and freezers

Having learned the ideal fridge arrangement in their Home Economics classes, it is likely that the student will be dismayed to discover that this fine model is difficult to implement in a small, shared kitchen. As a general system, store food by type, and neatly and compactly. The most important rule is to keep raw and cooked meats separate. The considerate fridge-user checks regularly for out of date

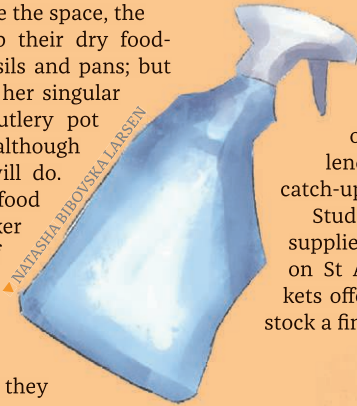
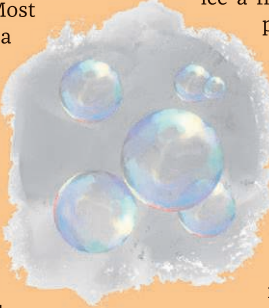
food-stuffs, dispensing of such items immediately upon discovery. The same may be said of best freezer-practice.

Freezers are prone to frosting over. To de-ice a freezer: unplug the appliance, temporarily place food in the fridge or another freezer, and place bowls of boiling water on the shelves; the freezer will defrost; leave open to dry, mopping the floor, then plug back in and re-stock. This process may be repeated less frequently if the student remembers to keep the time the freezer door is open to a minimum.

Cupboard organising

All kitchen matters are made easier by a well-organised cupboard. If they have the space, the cupboard-arranger should keep their dry food-stuffs separate from their utensils and pans; but this may often be inhibited by her singular assigned poky cupboard. A cutlery pot makes a sensible purchase - although an empty, sterilised jam jar will do. The wary student may label food items with a permanent marker and place an identifying dot of acrylic paint/nail polish on their pots and pans.

Fragile items of sentimental value should not be kept in communal spaces where they



MATASHA BIBOVSKA LARSEN

are vulnerable to breakage or theft; crystal glasses, china tea cups and vintage cake stands are best stored in the collector's bedroom.

Even the most well-meaning, housewifery-inclined student will, more often than they like to admit, find themselves at least somewhat responsible for the state of their dirty-pot-littered, pesto-smeared shared kitchen. But, by following this simple guide, no student ever need be at a loss at the demands of kitchen-keeping again! And, if ever they are particularly uninspired, the proactive student calls upon a close friend for company; attending to a messy kitchen is the perfect opportunity for bosom friends to lend each other a helping hand ... and catch-up on college gossip!

Students looking to purchase cleaning supplies at a low price should visit Savers on St Andrew's Street. Most supermarkets offer a good range of products; M&S stock a fine selection for sensitive skin.

Alice Mainwood talks 'breathing, thinking and creating' at the gallery's 'Paint What Matters!' scheme

“Our aim is to give a high quality platform, and to engage in different forms of dialogue”. As the project administrator for Kettle's Yard's upcoming 'Paint What Matters!' exhibition, Letty Pilgrim simply exudes passion and excitement about displaying the work of young people, giving them the chance to be heard and seen. The gallery is currently advertising their open call for submissions for any 2D art from children and young people who live or study in Cambridge, to be displayed to the public in early 2025. Letty wants Cambridge's youth to use this exhibition as an opportunity to “build their creative confidence and experiment with new skills”.

'Project administrator' feels a strangely clinical title for Letty's role; she is bubbling over with enthusiasm, rather than quietly handling emails from behind a desk. 'Curator' wouldn't be accurate though, she tells me. The project has absolutely no curatorial process, but is rather functioning on a first-come, first-served basis.

The all-accepting nature of the exhibition is key to its impact, though. Letty describes it as “non-hierarchical”, emphasising how important to her it is that everyone has the opportunity to have their work on the gallery walls. “I think it's really cool you could have your artwork on the very same walls as

the leading contemporary artists,” she continues. Anyone from the ages of 4 to 21, living or studying in Cambridge, can take her up on that very opportunity. “Everyone will be included,” she summarises simply.

As we begin to chat about the submissions that she has already received, Letty's responses are fuelled by children and young adults' ambitions for a changing world. Through their work, submitters are exploring and problematising issues of climate crisis, political worries, and much more, on global, local, and personal scales. “It's always a bit of a surprise ... a positive surprise!” Letty muses. I gather that the scope of work she has already seen has been an insight into the fire fuelling young people to get involved – there's potential for everyone to make a difference, even if the difference is a small or slight one.

Letty was keen to stress that this is an exhibition for everyone to be involved in, not just those in the younger half of the specified age bracket. University students in Cambridge are more than welcome to join in. With no fine art degrees or the like on offer, this is one of very few opportunities students have to get their work properly celebrated. The hectic nature of a term at Cambridge can get even the most upbeat of us down sometimes, so taking time out of the chaos to create something visual will

“I want the walls of Kettle's Yard to be flooded with art, hope, and ambition**”**

surely be a welcome respite for all. As I sat on the phone in the soundproof cubicle of the Seeley and gazed out at a library full of students hard at work, I couldn't help but wish that some of them would take Letty up on her offer to do something fun and free for once.

The open call will provide “an element of space to breathe” for those who are bogged down with work, giving them the “space to think and create” beyond their academics. As students here, we are almost constantly surrounded by voices of protest and activism, but Letty explains how this exhibition will “open up conversations in a new kind of way, allowing young people to express their voice” individually, without competition or judgement.

Letty summarises her experience on the project so far simply as a “real joy”. Finding voices for young people, entirely beyond academia, judgement, or hierarchy is an important concept, and one that Letty is keenly aware of. We wrap up by talking about how the art will be displayed in the gallery, and while she isn't entirely sure, she does know that she wants the walls of Kettle's Yard to be “flooded with art, hope, and ambition”. This quite neatly summarises my understanding of the exhibition: an opportunity to do something joyful, meaningful, and creative, for all of Cambridge's youth.

Anything goes at the Kettle's Yard picture loan scheme, finds **Ronan McAuliffe**

Jim and Helen Ede had more pictures than they had wall space. Students would visit, and on leaving might take one with them, to brighten up a gloomy set. Nowadays, Kettle's Yard's 'Art for Students' scheme has about 100 pieces, which staff lay out on long tables in groups of about 40, with the remainder lying against the walls, coming to fill in the gaps later on.

If you're Jim Ede, you think art transforms lives, but it can only do so when people are looking at it, so a standing collection provides no value. Past exhibitions, old wall stock, and even some promotional material from shows gone by make it into the student loan scheme.

You can't always get what you want. The structure of the scheme imposes a harsher and truer sentence than that: you don't even know what you want. This was the continual lesson learned on the day. At the door I met a man who wanted, in clear terms, something big, bright, “pleasurable,” free, joyous and optimistic. He came out of the hall grinning, and so I asked to see what he had taken that had satisfied him so greatly. Two monochrome black and white woodcuts. One titled ‘The Burning Tree (Hell)’, the other even more miserable.

Another student said he wanted two contrasting paintings for his set. Not just looking for wall-hangings, either – both paintings should say something to their owner. “Pleasant in the lounge, despairing in the bedroom,” he said. On second thoughts, perhaps it was so that the paintings would “speak to their owner”... In either case, he certainly succeeded, coming out brandishing two big pieces, one horrible, ghoulish, dark and lumpen, and the other airy and colourful, bright straight lines on white in the manner of Kandinsky.

Another student told me that she wanted something bleak, a little provocative and distressing, yet came out with a grass-green abstract expressionist piece resembling an unfinished jigsaw puzzle of a sunny lawn, almost jumping with enthusiasm. It is therefore clear: while the scheme might not give you what you want, it is very good at reminding

“Somebody liked it enough to buy it once upon a time, so trust that your taste is not fixed**”**

you that you don't have a clue what you want, and that there is more in the world than is contained in your preference.

At risk of generalising to the point of incoherence (a fear one should never allow to become an obstacle to good hack sociology) this model is at odds with the way most art is experienced these days. Taste is a rarefaction (a rarefaction often taught and encouraged on the courses in this very university), and the mark of good taste is an incapacity to engage with that which falls below the mark, and those

people with the very best taste can hardly endure anything. Think of the ideal of ‘Proper so rarified stand to be in Whistler, or of the

Ruskin. the English Taste’, he couldn't a room with a Wittgenstein, put champion Cambridge's Cleverest Ever Boy

Contest, so tasteful that he shuddered at the vulgarity of music you or I might call a masterpiece – is there anything more brilliantly haughty?

Kettle's Yard declares that every piece in their collection deserves to be hung on a wall, and that your haughtiness isn't worth a damn. Somebody liked it enough to buy it once upon a time, so trust that your taste is not fixed or true, accept something strange or obscure into your life, enjoy a peculiar piece, or learn to wake up looking at it anyway. Less choice forces a more direct involvement with each piece, since the punter is unable to write anything off for its school, subject, or style out of the gate.

This unforgiving approach to taste has its drawbacks, though, and while nobody is perfectly catered to by the process, some people aren't catered to at all. It's a first-come-first-served system, and when the klaxon sounded for last pictures,

a line of around a hundred still stretched around the building and up Castle Street, left to shuffle sadly back down the hill to their bare, miserable rooms. In a testament to

the voracious and multifarious appetites of Cambridge's viewing

public, when the paintings ran out, only three stood by untaken: a purple cross on a black background, and two of red block patterns on white, like pixelated candy-canes. After five minutes, these had gone too. At Kettle's Yard, anything goes.



Tate's chief on a 'great British brand that resonates throughout the world'

Ben Birch speaks to Roland Rudd, chair of the trustees at the Tate, asking: what gets put on the walls, and why?



▲ JESSICA LEER

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must belong. For the National Gallery this is from the mid thirteenth century to 1900; for Tate Britain it is 1500 to the present day, and for Tate Modern it is 1900 onwards. However, these are totally arbitrary dates – even the National Gallery's director Gabriele Finaldi has expressed politely worded frustration at these restrictions. Smiling, Rudd acknowledged that the Tate was keener on keeping the restrictions in place. There are conversations between the galleries about what the other should and shouldn't put on. He tells me that the boards of both galleries have a dedicated liaison trustee who communicates with the other. This image reminded me of the Moscow-Washington hotline – two executives sweating down the red telephone as they discuss a Titian exhibition.

My favourite room at Tate Britain is towards the end of the Clore Gallery. It is full of Turner's unfinished late works when his style became more impressionistic and less defined. At the far end of the room hangs an untitled Rothko, painted in the same smog yellow colours of the late Turner pieces in the room. The resemblance is so similar that you'd be forgiven for thinking it is Turner's. It makes me wonder, again, if galleries have ever really changed.

Despite the flux that exists behind the scenes of these galleries, my conversation with Rudd made it clear that Tate's galleries will always be home to art that people must see. All art has a price. From the first lot at a Sotheby's auction to a painted shell resting on the quayside, it is a reality of art. Nonetheless, the price is rarely our first thought. Often, there is nothing to be thought, but rather simply felt. The institutions that still allow us to experience these feelings for free should be applauded.

Walking through the Clore Gallery at Tate Britain can sometimes make me think that galleries never change. The frames are old, the paintings are old, and I begin to wonder if they have simply calcified into the wall on which they've been hung. This is, of course, not true. Art is an ever-changing thing and museums must match this. The people who keep apace with this change are not just the artistic directors, but also the board of trustees. The chair of Tate's board of trustees is Roland Rudd. We met over video call – behind him was not the dark red of gallery wallpaper or the gold of ornately framed paintings, but rather the glass of a sleek, modern office.

When he is not busy with Tate, Rudd is the chair of FGS Global, a strategic communications firm that advises businesses. He describes the role of Tate's board of trustees as offering a 'positive critique' of ideas

brought to them by the group's artistic directors, like Maria Balshaw, the director of Tate. Art begins with a vision but is refracted through the prism of business literacy before it becomes an exhibition.

The Tate receives £40 million a year from the government. Around £20 million more comes from Tate members, but this is still not enough for the group to stay financially sound. And I'm told, as well, that the Tate's profitability is

not evenly spread between each of its museums. Tate Modern is the most popular gallery, with an annual footfall of 6 million; Tate Britain is only 1 million; and Tate Liverpool and Tate St. Ives both hover at around half a million. In St. Ives, the footfall is seasonal, as holidaymakers are more likely to visit while the sun still shines. Holding the balance of these galleries is a delicate task.

This is why, when I asked Rudd if he looks at art differently these days since becoming a trustee in 2017, he told me he asks two questions when he goes to an exhibition:

“I ask of every exhibition: is it artistically good? Is it going to make money?”

is it artistically good? Is it going to make money?

Gauguin was a stockbroker, Rousseau was a customs officer, and Samuel Johnson supposedly said only a fool writes for anything but money. The art world might not conceive of itself as driven by money, but that is the reality. Despite this, Rudd said that some exhibitions need to be put on even if the executives know it is unlikely to turn a profit. There is art that is important and there is art which is profitable – these are not always the same things. Clearly, these galleries see themselves as ambassadors for British artists and their art. Rudd called the Tate a “great British brand that resonates throughout the world,” likening it to the BBC or Oxford and Cambridge.

But they are certainly not the only gallery fighting to claim the name of Britain's great art brand. There are longstanding tensions between the Tate and the National Gallery. Both galleries have historical periods to which their permanent exhibitions

“The art world might not conceive itself as driven by money, but it is the reality”

Music

Jazz for beginners?

Think jazz isn't for you? **Lauren Welsby-Riley** believes an open jam might change your mind...

Picture the scene: it's Wednesday night, you've had a busy day of lectures, of trying to decode what your supervisor means by "okay, and?" in your essay feedback, and you're looking for a way to unwind. Where do you turn? Perhaps to Netflix, so you can get invested in a zany TV show which is sure to be hugely popular, before inevitably being cancelled after its first season? Or maybe you head to your local for a "quiet one" (or ten) with your friends? Whatever your usual preference, might I be so bold as to suggest a new pastime? One by the name of ... jazz.

If you had told me five years ago that my idea of a Wednesday night well-spent was getting my friends together, taking the treacherous bus journey from Homerton into town, and going to see students play jazz, I would have laughed in your face. Back then, jazz was only good for one thing: 'lo-fi radio for study' videos on YouTube, with an animated cafe and soft instrumentals playing on a loop for hours. But now, as a student who is arguably no more musically literate than when I was 15, I have a new-found appreciation for the genre, and for what it means to my friends and I.

If you are unfamiliar, JazzSoc holds regular (usually fortnightly) gig nights at Hidden Rooms, a low-ceilinged bar with couches upholstered with the type of leather you only get at venues that hold jazz events. The night is usually split in two, with an already-formed band playing a rehearsed set in the first half, and an 'open jam' in the second. And when JazzSoc say 'open jam', they really do mean open. Anyone in attendance, who had the forethought to bring their instrument, is invited to gather onstage to play a piece that they haven't prepared, and the results are often astounding. There is no obligation

to sign up beforehand, and most people just go to listen, but it is perfect for those who want to step out of their musical comfort zone.

The beauty of jazz lies, of course, in its improvisational style. In a world where there are no rules, there can be no mistakes, only experiments. I have watched saxophonists communicate with drummers with nothing more than a wiggle of the eyebrows, and all of a sudden the two musicians are engaging in a duet section that sounds like it should have taken days of rehearsal. Even complete beginners to jazz, who might not possess such confidence yet, are encouraged to take part.

Take my friend Jim, for example. Jim, first and foremost, is a pretty silly guy. But apart from that, he loves jazz, and he adores JazzSoc open jams. So it is unsurprising that one gig night, after a few too many house cocktails, he found himself on stage with seasoned jazz musicians playing the keyboard. Crucially, though, Jim does not play piano. But as I watched him up there, in between fits of laughter, I finally got jazz. Another musician, far more experienced than Jim, and likely fully aware that Jim was – for lack of a better phrase – a bit crap, gave him a nod, a nod which said, "Over to you, mate." And there Jim was, playing the worst, but simultaneously the most ballsy, piano solo that Hidden Rooms had ever seen.

JazzSoc doesn't wait for you to become a dedicated enjoyer or player of jazz, they wrap jazz up in a neat package, with an easy to untie ribbon on top, and hand it to you with a warm smile. They give jazz to students in a way that says, "Oh, okay, maybe jazz is for me!" And as someone whose previous musical experience is pretty much limited to secondary school choir, that kind of hand-holding

approach is exactly what I need.

Of course, I'm not suggesting that everyone descend on open jam nights to take the mick simply for the sake of making their friends laugh, but if nothing else it simply shows how welcoming a community jazz in Cambridge is, and how important it is for a space which allows people to play or appreciate music without fear of judgement, humiliation, or ridicule (although my friends and I were admittedly guilty of a fair amount of all of these). They even asked him if he wanted to stay on and play some more with them! Mercifully, he said no, but it really is the thought that counts.

If your problem with jazz isn't that you don't get it, but is instead that you think you don't like it, I implore you to try it out. I have heard jazz renditions of Beyoncé at JazzSoc which have unironically outperformed the original, and you will be surprised by how many of the songs you recognise and love sound better when played in a jazzier style. Sometimes, though, the real selling point of JazzSoc is merely the student element. I am constantly so impressed by the talent on offer at this university, by students who often are not even studying music. Go for the "Can you believe they've never rehearsed this before?", stay for the music – trust me.

Jazz, like I have said, is all about improvisation and spontaneity. So, when JazzSoc open jams return next term, take a leaf out of Jim's book; play the proverbial keyboard. Listen to some jazz.



Spotify Unwrapped: is the algorithm running out of stream?

As December edges closer, Spotify users brace themselves for the usual fanfare of Spotify Wrapped – a splashy, hyperbolic reflection on their musical year. But in 2024, the annual recap feels curiously anachronistic. The rise of apps like Airbuds, Receiptify, and Stats.fm has given listeners the ability to track their habits on demand, making the once-exciting Wrapped less of an exclusive reveal and more a predictable finale to an ongoing self-monitoring ritual. For many listeners, who may feel inundated with surface-level trends and seek a deeper connection to their music, it's worth asking: is Spotify Wrapped still captivating, or has it become a relic in the age of relentless self-analysis?

These third-party analytics tools tap into the same impulse as Wrapped: the human need to look in the mirror, to find some coherence in what is often a cacophony of sound and influence. Airbuds, for instance, which we recently explored in greater depth, transforms music streaming into a communal experience, inviting friends into the act of curation itself. Receiptify presents a familiar interface, formatting top songs as a receipt, while Stats.fm breaks down data with a precision that might appeal to a scientific mind,

allowing users to review every artist, genre, and song in detail. With all these options, Spotify Wrapped – released only once a year – starts to feel like an outdated mechanism, far removed from the immediacy of these digital snapshots.

Yet the ubiquity of these data tools goes beyond mere convenience. They reflect a deep cultural shift, where our tastes, interests, and even selves are constantly measurable and quantifiable. Music, once something to lose oneself in, is now as much a part of our self-presentation as our CVs or social media profiles. Real-time music data turns listening into a performance for others and a barometer of self. But this proliferation of stats and recaps may also reveal the limits of our self-awareness. Wrapped was once special because it offered a singular moment to take stock; now, data on our listening habits is available year-round, and Wrapped's grand reveal feels diminished, lacking the charm of delayed gratification.

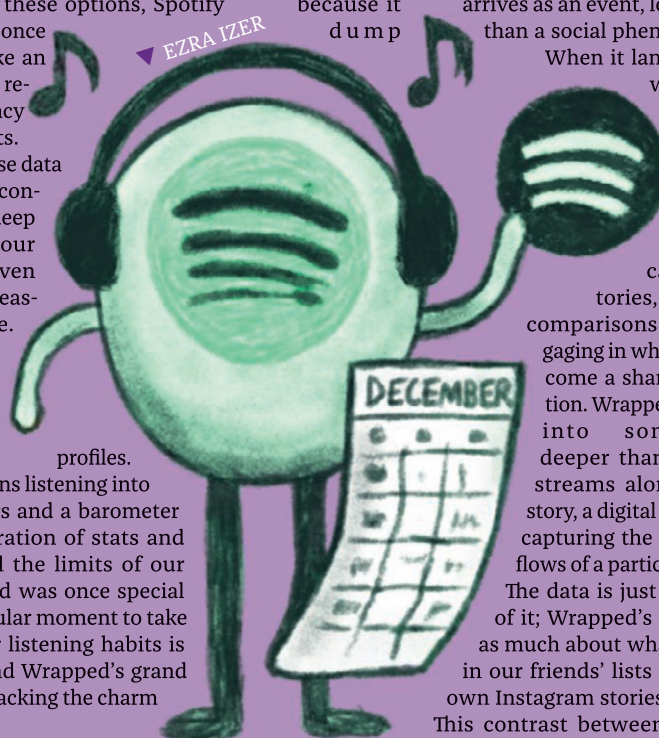
Even so, Wrapped remains culturally powerful because it arrives as an event, less a data dump than a social phenomenon.

When it lands, users pause to examine their musical trajectories, drawing comparisons and engaging in what has become a shared tradition. Wrapped pushes into something deeper than Spotify streams alone; it's a story, a digital yearbook capturing the ebbs and flows of a particular year. The data is just one part of it; Wrapped's appeal is as much about what we see in our friends' lists as in our own Instagram stories.

This contrast between Spotify

Wrapped and its continuous-access competitors might reflect a broader consumer shift. We're now trained to expect information instantly, to monitor our progress in real-time, from step counts to study hours. Wrapped, however, resists this trend, inviting us to view our music journey holistically, like a time capsule capturing the influences that have quietly shaped us over the past year. Perhaps that's the enduring appeal of Wrapped: in an age of instant data, it reminds us of the value in looking back, in the possibility that we, like our playlists, may have changed without noticing.

For many of us, this contemplation strikes a particular chord. In an era dominated by instant updates and perpetual sharing, Spotify Wrapped offers something increasingly rare: a moment of unhurried reflection. It encourages us to step back from the incessant stream of data and consider the broader narrative of our lives as told through music. By encapsulating a year's worth of listening into a cohesive story, Wrapped transcends mere metrics to become a personal anthology of experiences, emotions, and memories. Perhaps its true value lies not in the statistics it presents but in the space it creates for introspection – a gentle reminder that understanding ourselves is a journey best appreciated over time, not in constant real-time analysis.



An ode to the earring for every occasion

Annia Krzoska celebrates the oddly specific earring

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less you've spent the past five years living under a rock, you'll know that an earring exists for anything and everything. I've seen rubber duck earrings, Shrek earrings, and even earrings for different types of pasta. Given how easy they are to work into an outfit, earrings have become a great vehicle for self-expression.

While plenty has already been said about jewellery and its sentimental and aesthetic benefits for self-expression, jewellery is rarely spoken about as a conversation starter. I first discovered this perk when wearing my silver plane earrings aboard a Ryanair flight. It turned out that the person next to me worked in aviation, and we soon began talking about the airline in depth for the entire flight. This is possibly one of the nerdiest examples out there, but consider: if you're wearing earrings starring a niche interest, your favourite album, or your favourite DVD, it could be an opportunity to make connections in the strangest places.

Conversations can also start around how suitable your earrings are to the situation. I once found a pair of wheel earrings that I have worn to events at St Catharine's College ever since. They're a hit with the boat club! Although these earrings were entirely unrelated to Cambridge, they had meaning to my college community and acted as a sort of 'inside joke'. When attending formals at other colleges, I like to wear my wheel earrings and have a little laugh to myself about how, no matter what I'm wearing beyond my jewellery, I'm always representing my college.

My favourite – and possibly my silliest – earrings are my wine and cheese earrings. I purchased these the day before going to my friend's work at a dairy, where we enjoyed a nice lunch of (can you guess?) wine and cheese. We took a good few photos with my earrings in the frame, and I felt as though I was expressing my love for the meal in front of me!

Consider how fun it could be to go out for an Italian with pasta earrings, or to Gardies with cheesy chip earrings (I'm sure they exist). It seems silly, but

sometimes we have to search for joy in the smallest places. If suiting your earrings to the occasion brings you some small degree of happiness, why not embrace the opportunity for some subtle silliness?

Of course, you can also use earrings to display your affiliation with student societies. You might have a pair of CD earrings that represent your love for alternative music, playbill earrings to represent your love for the ADC, or maybe something sport-related – the possibilities are endless. Again, these earrings can then become conversation starters, or just a little inside joke for you to enjoy. Earrings rarely disrupt the rest of your outfit, and can add interest to an otherwise plain one.

Where dress codes are strict, suiting your earrings to the occasion elevates your outfit without disrupting your outfit. Maybe you're at an interview, where your colourful jumpers have been swapped out for white shirts, but your personality is still shining through in your rain earrings that reflect the weather outside. It's important to make sure your earrings are

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Go out for an Italian with pasta earrings, or go to Gardies with cheesy chip earrings

still subtle enough to look smart in this situation, but, if played right, you could use earrings to show your personality and connect with your interviewer.

Despite their small size and apparent ubiquity, earrings are often underrated as vehicles suited to every occasion in the literal sense. I'm sure many of us have a stash of earrings of different sizes and styles, but do you have beer earrings ('beer'ings) or vodka earrings for your next Wednesday Revs? Do you have train earrings for your next trip back home? Do you have earrings representing your favourite (or least favourite...) part of your degree to wear to lectures? It sounds a bit silly and a bit nerdy, but what's life without a bit of fun? If fun can be found in such a small place, why not go for it and start suiting your earrings for every occasion? The more niche, the better.

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Film & TV

Wuthering Heights' controversial cast

Daisy Simpson finds the casting choices to be polarising for no good reason

Helen Mirren once said “all you have to do is look like crap on film and everyone thinks you’re a brilliant actress. Actually, all you’ve done is look like crap”. It’s a bold statement, the kind you can only expect from a seasoned professional who’s been around the image-conscious Hollywood block a few times. But although Mirren is nearly 80, her proclamation is no less resonant nowadays than it was during her days as a young actress.

The *Gosford Park* star would probably catch significant flack for saying such things in the current climate – ‘pretty privilege’ and the perks it bestows have the Internet in a chokehold, and a new actress is nailed for perceived ‘ungratefulness’ seemingly every five minutes. But given the nature of social media, where nuance is a persecuted fugitive and no one who is rich or attractive can ever be a victim, few seem to have given much thought to the very real and persistent downsides of so-called ‘pretty privilege’. One of these, of course, is the assumption that certain actors are too glamorous for gritty, getting-down-in-the-dirt style roles, and the latest victims appear to be Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi, who are slated for Emerald Fennell’s upcoming adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*.

A BBC article hyperbolically entitled ‘Wuthering Heights: Hollywood’s worst casting decisions’ (surely that title belongs to James Corden in *Cats*?) begins with a summary of the novel that reads like a 13-year-old’s panicked last-minute copy-and-paste from Wikipedia: ‘Catherine is a teenager who lives on a farm in England in the late-1700s. Heathcliff is a dark-skinned foundling of the same age’. The treatment of Heathcliff’s race as his defining feature in the second sentence comes across as somewhat problematic, and what the rest of this article impeccably (if inadvertently) encapsulates is the problem with movie releases in the Internet epoch, when social media vultures seize on a singular piece of casting information like a freshly killed impala and tear it apart with frightening zeal – without actually having seen the film. The professed motivation

behind the freshest feast is that Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie are considered too polished and beautiful to play Emily Brontë’s tortured, gurning, windswept youths. The author expresses this by describing them as ‘impossibly good-looking’, but then fumbles around for something to back up this superficial argument, going on tangents about so-called ‘iPhone face’ (a phenomenon whereby certain actors’ faces look too modern or ‘Instagrammable’ for period dramas) and Heathcliff’s ethnicity (equating the absence of a black actor in the ambiguous role of a traveller to Laurence Olivier playing Othello in blackface). But the beauty argument is an empty critique, as it is patently untrue that glamorous actors cannot play dishevelled or unattractive characters. Were that the case, millions of hair and makeup artists would be out of work.

Fennell’s popular first film, *Promising Young Woman*, is a feminine inversion of the classic revenge thriller – everything is designed in delicate, girlish pastel shades, and sweet-faced 2000s darlings like Adam Brody play would-be rapists in order to subvert our expectations of ‘nice guys’.

This film has a

clear message – society cossets ‘promising young men’ who commit rape and sexual assault, not wanting to ‘ruin their lives’, but disregard the promising young women hurt by their actions. And despite the main theme of the film being sexual violence, it’s deliberately, profoundly unsexy; the scene in which Carey Mulligan dresses up in a stripper’s nurse outfit to get revenge at a bachelor party is just uncomfortable. But the follow-up film *Saltdust* has sparked much more debate (‘there’s actually nothing weird about him going down on Venetia while she’s menstruating...’)

Not only is it about the British upper-classes and directed by a rich Oxford graduate, it doesn’t roundly condemn the Catton family as monsters. Worse – *Saltdust* is unapologetically sensualist, revelling in bodily substances as much as possible in a post-pandemic world. The internet is brimming with violent and degrading pornography, yet a naked dance and bathtub fornication send cinemagoers hunting for pearls to clutch.

There is not a cookie-cutter, *For Dummies*-style message about the aristocracy to be taken from *Saltdust*, and this has been anathema to critics. Reviews label it “all style, no substance,” “vibes and empty provocations,” “a confusing, boring disaster,” “Highsmith without the wit” and “a car crash of a film” – and so much of the criticism seems to revolve around what it says or doesn’t say about social class, whether or not the director actually intended for that to be the point.

Lush cinematography, witty writing and excellent performances from gorgeous, charismatic actors are no longer enough for a film to be considered ‘good’ – and the Internet, on hearing of the *Wuthering Heights* casting choices, wants to make sure Fennell remembers it.



IRIS CHAPMAN

Global Frames: Argentina

TINÈS GOES-MARLIERE

The current World Cup champions have a lot to offer beyond their two holy ‘M’s (Messi and Maradona): Tango, succulent steaks, a wonderfully ‘Italianesque’ dialect of Spanish and one of the biggest film industries in Latin America. In late 2023, Javier Milei, Argentina’s incumbent president, announced his plans to defund the INCAA, the country’s national film and TV institute. This measure has already had catastrophic impacts on Argentina’s film industry. National film production is currently frozen due to a severe lack of funding. These cuts have been protested across the country and internationally, like at this year’s edition of the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain.

Here below are some contemporary Argentine films that will serve as an entry point into the country’s wonderfully resilient and politically engaged cinematic tradition that has managed to survive multiple economic crises through thematic and formal innovation. In Milei’s words, “no hay plata” (there is no money), but it seems as though Argentina’s film industry will not cry for us yet.

La ciénaga (2001) by Lucrecia Martel

Among the many useful things I learned during my MML-prescribed year abroad was the fact that Lucrecia Martel’s *La ciénaga* seems to be every cool Argentine girl’s favourite film. If you ever find yourself trying to impress a cool Argentine girl, I strongly recommend you bring this film up. De nada. Released the year of the fatal 2001 economic crash, Martel’s first full length feature film is cen-

tred around the everyday lives of two middle-class families from the Northern region of Salta. Think decadence of the middle-class, incest, racial tensions, repressed queer desire and bucket loads of humidity. I cannot guarantee this will be everyone’s cup of tea, but I promise that this film offers a transformational viewing experience. If anything, because Martel’s mastery of sound will leave your ears reeling from the anti-ASMR sounds of scraping chairs and shattered wine glasses the characters compulsively down.

Okupas (2000) by Bruno Stagnaro

A great one for this year’s finalists, Bruno Stagnaro’s cult classic drama series follows four young men that begin living together in an occupied house in Buenos Aires. The protagonist Ricardo, played by Rodrigo de la Serrá (whom *Money Heist* fans may recognise), is a med-school dropout that feels ambitionless and directionless. This leads him to embark on various side quests with his new friends, that include trying coke for the first time and almost killing a man. *Okupas*’ soundtrack is also legendary. From *Pescado Rabioso*, to *Almendra* and *Rafaga*, you will be initiated in Argentine musical history. I would recommend watching this one cuddled up with the boys on a rainy Wednesday night – it will prove a chill but poignant watch.

Medianeras (2011) by Gustavo Taretto

Possibly one of the cutest films ever. Gustavo Taretto’s romcom take on urban disillusionment and loneliness will be the perfect cure to your week five blues. The film follows Martín, a web designer

“This historical war seems to be yet another regrettably nationally obscured instance of British imperialism

and Mariana, an artist that mainly finds herself decorating shop window displays. We quickly observe how they are neurotically perfect for each other in every way, and they even live on the same street, in opposite buildings. But they keep mysteriously missing each other, until ... Taretto focuses greatly on Buenos Aires’ architecture and the film almost acts as a simultaneous love letter to the city. Overall, *Medianeras* should provide a warm comfort to any ArcSoc regulars or neurotic romantics that true love will (filmically at least) find you in the end.

Teatro de guerra (2018) by Lola Arias

Beyond footballistic mentions of the Hand of God, I have rarely witnessed a conversation about the Malvinas (or Falklands) War in the U.K. This is why I would like to recommend Lola Arias’ documentary that features the personal histories of a group of English and Argentine army men that fought in the devastating war. In the documentary, we listen to these stories and watch them interact. Arias’ approach is experimental and chooses to leave the political conclusion to the viewer. This viewing experience will leave you with more questions than answers, but this is precisely why this film is a worthwhile watch. Especially for the British viewer, as beyond a mention on the GCSE History syllabus, this historical war seems to be yet another regrettably nationally obscured instance of British imperialism.

Behind the audition panel

Zach Lonberg finds being on the other side of the casting table makes for an intense experience

Hosting auditions feels like entering a vacuum. You're holed up, for hours, in a kind of rift in the space-time continuum. If you aren't smart enough to schedule a gap (like a certain someone a few weeks back ...) then there's no toilet breaks. Want to eat? You better hope for a no-show, so that 15 minutes open up and deliver what I can only assume is the same effect as when noblewomen in Versailles tore off their corsets after a long day at court: you can *breeeeathe*. Then you go back to being strapped to the same table, same chair, repeating the same introductory phrases again and again – 30 times over. I find auditions put me in the same kind of hypnotic hyper-space as an all-nighter, or an exam; by the end, it's like I can *hear* the chemicals flowing in my head as they switch course to however which way my brain has been altered.

Yet despite the intensity, it all seems to go like *that*. Boom! The day is over. And you're disoriented by the overload of information – meeting new people, studying them forcefully in a space of ten minutes, then opening the door to the next one. Oddly, I find it

hard to remember people's faces if we haven't met before. I've got their names down, my comments – I remember the rough outline of their appearance. Then I walk past them in the street and wonder where I've seen that face, contorted for comic effect or sobbing inches from my face, and it clicks.

I don't audition much, but I know it's daunting; in fact, I don't audition much *because* it's daunting. You walk through that door to face people who are your peers – maybe even your friends – and invite their judgement in a way that just wouldn't come about otherwise. The nature of am-

dram means these sudden hierarchies are erected in the audition room; fellow students are considering your worth. The friendly stage manager from your last show is now telling you to read the excerpt again, but *louder*, while the people sitting either side stare you down like they're in a glaring contest. And afterwards, you wait for an outcome stewing in the knowledge that those people poured over you, pitted you against others, *ranked* you in a red-yellow-green system. In the case where they were your

friends, you have to contend with whether they preferred others – strangers – over you. No wonder

auditions ruin some friendships.

The audition room is a vulnerable space, but not for the panel. You become numbed by the entries. It's an intensely scrutinising, but oddly indifferent, process. The only comparison I can suggest is with antique collectors – pouring through items on display, all of them interesting, but trying to find that *one* special thing they're looking for amid dozens of brilliant contenders. To see printed extracts shaking in people's hands feels so at odds with your own mood, just metres away. Granted, you're both acutely focused in the vacuum of the moment, but to different effects. I feel like saying to people who are obviously nervous: don't get worked up! We all want you to do well. And god, please don't care about slipping up in front of us: we don't.

Understanding this means understanding, as I have, that there are countless people in Camdram who have been rejected, and rejected others, and have gotten on with their day. It's just not that deep. This is what made me get over myself: I'm no longer embarrassed by the times my own audi-

tions went bad. Instead, I'm embarrassed by how embarrassed I was.

I know the prospect of exposing yourself – and maybe messing up – in front of peers is daunting. But I know something else: as a finalist, a year from now, I won't see most of these people again – and wherever

I go, I won't have the opportunities I had here. If I'd understood how impersonal auditions are, maybe I'd have gone for more than about five during my degree. Because in the vacuum of the audition space, whatever happens fades the moment you leave. It's all fleeting.

My point to all this? I guess 'put yourself out there'. For one: it's uni – what's to lose? But also, it takes a surprising amount to stand out. I'd wager that the best way to stick around in people's minds is to do something different. Does everything work? No. But is that worth giving a damn about once the audition is over? Equally – *no*.

So shoot for the moon, I guess. You just might land among the stars. And if one panel, or several, don't appreciate what you're going for, don't deep it. Someday, someone will.

“If I'd understood how impersonal auditions are, maybe I'd have gone for more than about five during my degree”

“The nature of amdram means these sudden hierarchies are erected in the audition room; fellow students are considering your worth”

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Theatre

To judge or not to judge?

Josh Pritchard investigates the standards we apply to student theatre, and wonders if it is possible to meet them

Student theatre is cursed by its first name. The term 'student' is continuously plagued with associations of immaturity, inexperience, and limited resources: perceptions which, subsequently, have haunted student productions. If you were to mention the fact that *every* aspect of your show is student-led, you may find that your show abruptly becomes less appealing in the eyes of a standard theatre goer. Yet, as someone who's only been at Cambridge for the past month, I have found myself pleasantly surprised by its theatre scene. The drama of *Julius Caesar*, the charm of *The Footlights* and the quiet beauty of *Being Friends* have all cemented my assurance that the art form is being upheld by talented creatives. Yet, there have been others where I've felt that snide comment was perhaps appropriate. Without wishing to name and shame the plays I've seen that didn't reach the *highest* of expectations, it still feels like a mystery as to how, or even if, students should judge the theatrical work of their peers.

The University's reputation doesn't help in the slightest. A few quick clicks on Wikipedia will take you to the list of 162 alumni who have graced the stage and screen with their talent. For the aspiring dramatist, not only is there pressure to imitate the success of Tom Hiddleston, Stephen Fry and Olivia Colman, but to surpass all other theatrical efforts made by students across the UK. My first show in Cambridge – a jolly trip to see *The Footlights International Tour Show* – was also the first time where I became aware of this

pressure. The cast highlighted the fact that the last time the Footlights had won the Edinburgh Fringe Comedy Award was in 1981, and riffed on the idea that their Fringe venue had been provided to them as a result of the original cohort's success – not theirs. Despite the (very hearty) laughter that this joke generated, it still felt like a sad glimpse into the lofty expectations the group had created for themselves, and as a result, had created for everyone else in the venue. Even backstage at the ADC, where the signature of Ian McKellen resides among the changing rooms, it seems that the ghosts of Cambridge's theatrical past still haunt its current creatives.

There are certainly plays which contain glimpses of the brilliance the University's alumni seems to promise – the *Varsity* theatre page is your best way to discover these – but there still exists a dichotomy. The Cambridge creative is bridled with the expectation of either pitiful amateurism or masterful artistry, and there does not seem to be a middle ground.

That shouldn't mean, however, that there is no room for criticism.

Fry, Laurie and Mitchell, and Webb did not come to Cambridge as finished products, and were certainly subject to the same pressures of the theatre scene as their successors. Upholding student theatre to high standards has certainly proved successful in the past, and as such, there is little reason why it should not continue to do so. Cambridge productions are also more blessed than some. The larger ADC shows can hold a budget of up to £6,000, and have even exceeded £10,000. In other words, a student show may not be as deprived of resources as stereotypes suggest, and there is no reason why we should not reward those pieces of student theatre which do exceed our expectations in the same way we would those which label themselves as 'professional'. I've seen plenty of bad professional plays, just as I've seen plenty of good student ones, but the ones which stand out are the pieces which overcome their practical limitations to make the audience believe in the authenticity of what they are seeing. The value of theatre, like all live

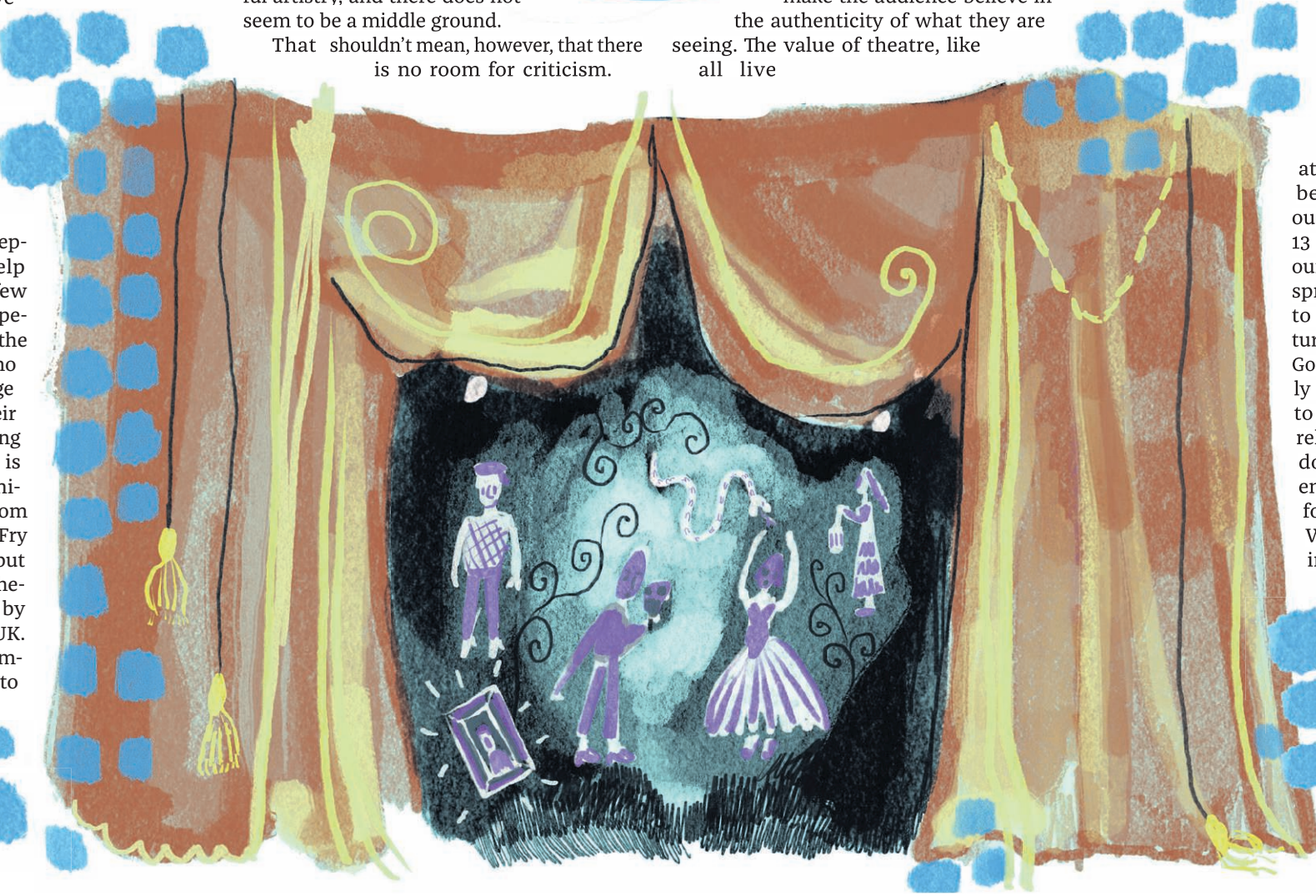
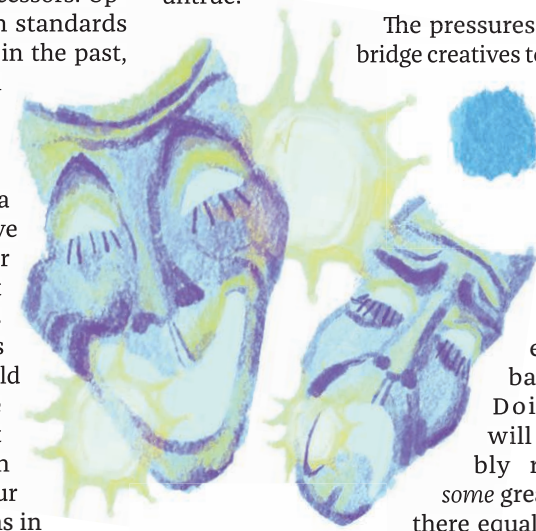
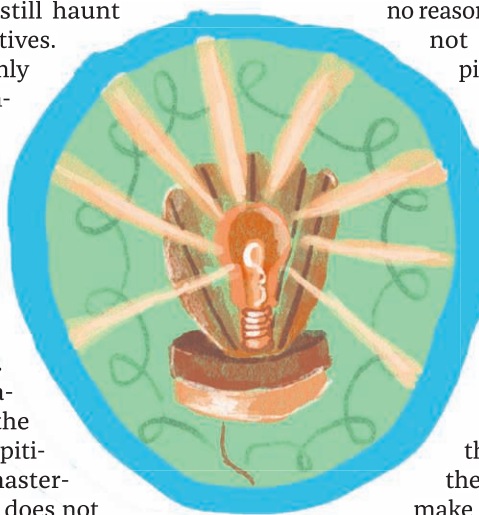
entertainment, is subjective, but to presume that either student or professional theatre entails a certain level of quality is entirely untrue.

The pressures for Cambridge creatives to compete with professionals will likely never cease, but this is not entirely a bad thing. Doing so will inevitably result in some great art, but there equally should be room for *all* artists to make mistakes and to grow. It is *amdram*, after all.

Some parting advice for student creatives: the first few minutes of your play are *everything*. Within those minutes, the audience has judged everything: your set, your script, your quality of performance, and whether they will need an extra drink to make it through the night.

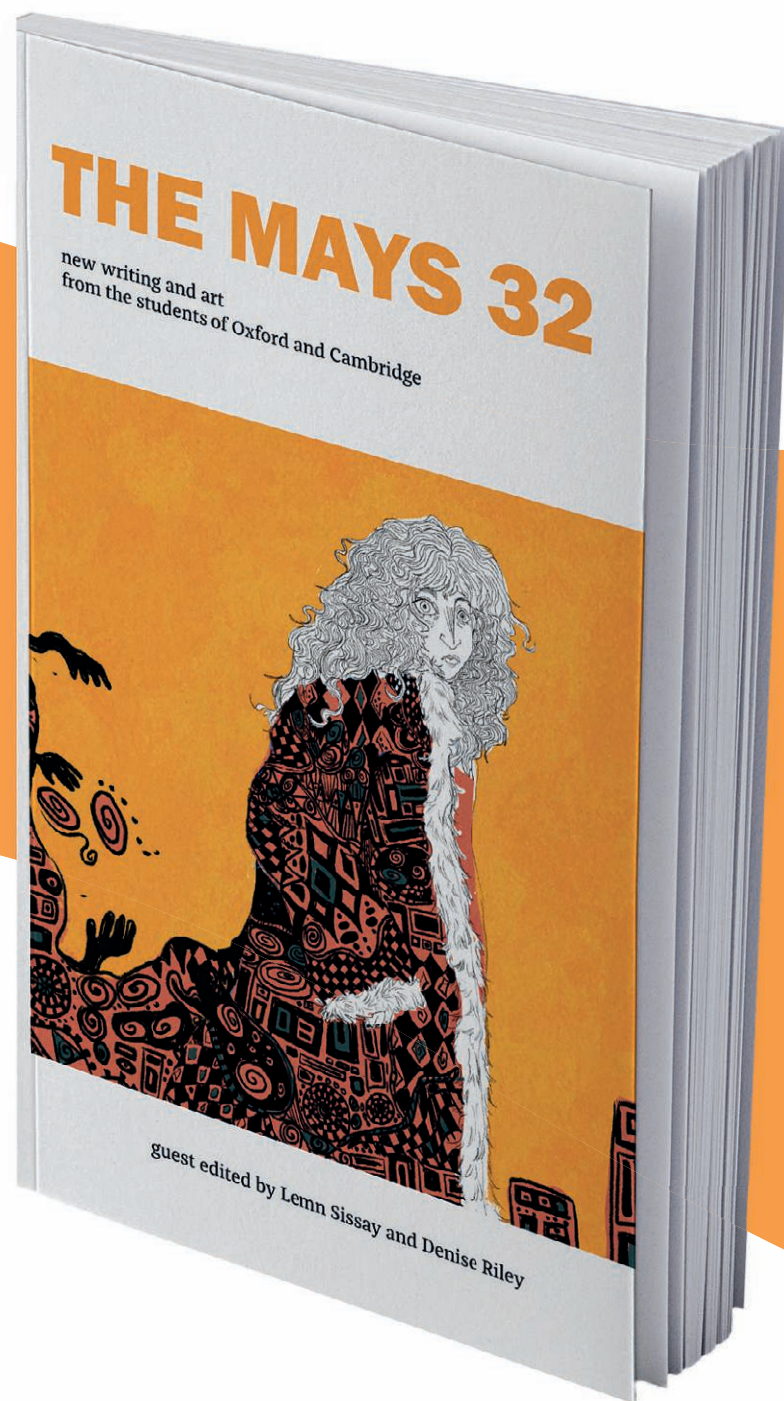
That is not to say the audiences in Cambridge are hostile. In fact, I would argue student audiences are among the best audiences you can have. We will laugh at anything. We have been sweating over our books for the past 13 hours, crying over our bank balances and sprinting from lecture to supervision to lecture – we need a break. God bless you, you lovely creatives, for having to throw in weeks of rehearsals on top. But don't trust the audience if you're looking for critical feedback. We're probably not in a good state. But also, don't worry about the people who say your new script 'isn't Shakespeare'. Obviously. Shakespeare didn't have a degree to do.

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WHAT'S ON?

Film & TV

16 November

Totto-Chan screening and Q&A with director Frankopan Hall, Jesus, 11:30am

19 November

Watersprite student launch party La Raza, 8:30pm

21 November

CUFA: Joan of Arc and Christine de Pizan: Hope, Myth, Legacy Murray Edwards, 6:30pm

23 November

Glinda wand decorating The Light Cinema, 2-4pm

Various dates

Everyman Beyond Independent film screenings

Lifestyle

16 November

Cambridge Calais Refugee Action Group's Christmas Ceilidh St Giles' Church, 7:30pm

23 & 24 November

Christmas pottery exhibition and sale Kiln Cambridge, 10am

29 November - 21 December

Cambridge Botanic Lights trail CU Botanic Garden, various times

7 December

Mill Road Winter Fair 10:30am - 4:30pm

Various dates

Candlelight concerts Fitzwilliam College

Arts

20 November

The Poetry Pharmacy: An Evening with William Seighart Waterstones, 6 - 7:30pm

20 November - 2nd March

Glenn Ligon: All Over The Place The Fitzwilliam Museum

22 November

Amelia Loulli reading and Q&A Harrod's Room, Emmanuel, 7:30pm

23-24 November

Cambridge Literary Festival Various venues, various times

27 November

LATE at Kettle's Yard Kettle's Yard, 6 - 9pm

Theatre

15-16 November

Venus and Adonis Clare College Chapel, 8pm

18 November

CUMTS Bar Night: Freshers ADC Theatre (Bar), 8pm

20-23 November

Ordinary Days Howard Theatre, Downing College, 7:30pm

21-23 November

Trial by Jury Robinson College Chapel, 8:30pm

27 November - 7 December

CUADC/Footlights Panto ADC Theatre, various times

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Cambridge's sporting track record

Barney Blackburn tracks through each college's sporting alumni

The University of Cambridge is, of course, predominantly known for its academic prestige. Yet, the University's equally exceptional sporting achievement should be recognised. From Paralympians to powerlifters, the 'Greatest British Sportsman', and of course, all of Cambridge's gold-medal-winning rowers, I took a deep dive into the history books to select the pre-eminent sportsperson from each of Cambridge's 31 colleges.

We begin with an immortalised Cambridge sportsman, **Immoville & Caius** alumnus Harold Abrahams. Abrahams is perhaps the most renowned of Cambridge's track athletes, with his 100m Gold Medal at the 1924 Olympics honoured in the classic British film, *Chariots of Fire*. Douglas Lowe, a MML graduate of **Pembroke** College, also claimed gold in Paris that same summer (in the 800m), yet was reluctant to endorse the historical sports drama, hence the fictional character Lindsay replacing his likeness in Hugh Hudson's movie. Exactly 100 years later, **Corpus Christi**'s Amy Hunt raced for glory in Paris in the 4x100m relay, securing a silver medal to follow in the footsteps of Cambridge's track excellence of years gone by.

Cambridge also boasts incredibly successful distance runners among its alumni. **Clare** College's William Seagrove found success in Paris one hundred years ago as well, securing his second Olympic silver medal in the 3000m team event. Track success continued with the triumphs of **St John's** Chris Brasher, who, despite claiming gold in the 3,000m steeplechase in 1956, is best remembered for helping to found the London Marathon. A 3,000m course would have been child's play for **Murray Edwards'** Lizzy Hawker, who has been World Champion in the 100km ultramarathon, as a phenomenally accomplished endurance runner.

Switching our attention to the water, no list of Cambridge sporting excellence is complete without appreciation for the quintessential Cambridge discipline, rowing. Olivia Coffey of **Homerton**, Tom Ransley of **Hughes Hall**, Anna Watkins of **Newnham**, and Ran Laurie of **Selwyn** share three Olympic Golds and seven World Championships between them, a testament to the world-beating coaching that Cambridge affords the sport. While Coffey, Ransley and Watkins have all experienced international success in the 21st century, Ran Laurie, father of actor Hugh, won his gold in 1948 in the coxless pair, adding to the trio of consecutive victories in the Boat Race he earned as an undergraduate.

Cambridge rugby follows hot on the heels of rowing in terms of its former students' international success. Mike Gibson, a former Law student of **Queens'** College, went on to be selected as one of the original inductees to the International Rugby Hall of Fame, after producing elite displays for Ireland throughout the 1960s and 70s. **Fitzwilliam** College's

Eddie Butler, Welsh forward and successful journalist, graduated from Cambridge with a degree in Spanish and French, having the honour of playing against both Oxford and New Zealand in his esteemed career. Possibly even more renowned is Gavin Hastings, who, after completing his studies at **Magdalene**,

went on to have a glittering career with Scotland, as well as having the privilege of captaining the British and Irish Lions on their 1993 tour of New Zealand. The talent conveyor belt soon produced more successful internationals, with **Wolfson** College's Mike Hall, a Welsh international, and **St Edmund's** alumnus Tony Underwood, of England, both starring in the 1995 Rugby World Cup amid their eventful interna-

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tional careers.

Cambridge's rugby tradition is clearly spectacular, but what about the University's prowess at other marquee British sports? No need to worry about cricket – **Downing** College produced Michael Atherton, who (at the time) set the record for the most Test matches played for England as captain. Cambridge also has hockey covered – **St Catharine's** College are proud to have Richard Dodds as an alumnus, captain of the gold-medal-winning GB hockey side in Seoul 1988. We can even turn the clock back to the days of Nevill 'Nuts' Cobbold, a **Jesus** College graduate remembered as one of the most electrifying international footballers of the late 19th century. Finally, I am going to cheat by naming two athletes who attended **Trinity Hall** – Reginald and Laurence Doherty. The two brothers combined for nine Wimbledon singles titles, as well as sharing a further staggering eight doubles triumphs at the tournament.

Moving away from the most popular sports, Cambridge students' success in more niche disciplines is a testament to the wide-ranging investment and coaching available to athletes. **Churchill** College boasts John Deanfield as an alumnus, a multi-time Olympian in fencing, while **Lucy Cavendish** should be honoured to have housed

international powerlifter, Krishnaa Mahbubani. Furthermore, Cambridge's penchant for lacrosse has helped to produce even more international-calibre athletes, with Erin Walters-Williams, formerly of **Clare Hall**, and Sophie Morrill, a **Sidney Sussex** alumna, proudly competing for Wales and England respectively on the global stage.

Recent results have continued Cambridge's Olympic presence, with Anna Kiesenhofer, formerly a Master's student at **Emmanuel** College, producing one of the shocks of the Tokyo games with her gold-medal winning performance in the women's individual road race. Cambridge may also technically lay claim to two more Olympic golds from the Rio and London triathlon events, due to Alistair Brownlee's winning efforts. However, despite matriculating at **Girton** College, Brownlee actually left after just one term to study at the University of Leeds, though he was a member of CU Hare & Hounds during his brief stint in the city.

Olympic success is also mirrored in the Paralympics, where **King's** College was home to one of Britain's most successful Paralympians of all time, Christopher Holmes. Holmes amassed an almost laughable total of nine gold medals swimming for GB in the 1990s, while Renae Domaschenz, formerly of **Darwin** College, has seen great success as a coxswain, most recently in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics with the Australian national setup.

Admittedly, despite Cambridge's continued success at the Olympics and Paralympics, there has been a notable decline in modern-day professional footballers and rugby players who attended the University. Steve Palmer, who attended **Christ's** College, is a footballing exception – widely seen as the only Cambridge graduate to have played in the Premier League, where he enjoyed spells with Ipswich and Watford. In the Rugby world, **Robinson** College alumnus Joe Ansbro played internationally for Scotland, scoring a try in the 2011 World Cup. Tragically, his career was cut short by a broken neck, but Ansbro does hold the trailblazing honour of being one of the first non-white rugby players to turn out for the Scots.

With two colleges left, it's the turn of the multisport athletes, one such being Syed Mohammad Hadi. Formerly of **Peterhouse**, Hadi represented India in both cricket and tennis, while his expertise in a myriad of other sports, including football, helped to earn him the nickname 'Rainbow Hadi'. Completing our 31 athletes is **Trinity** College's Max Woosnam, the man dubbed the 'Greatest British Sportsman'. Woosnam's achievements are fairly absurd, winning gold at the 1920 Olympics in tennis, leading Manchester City agonisingly close to a first division title in football the year after, and securing his status as a quadruple Blue after additionally representing Cambridge in cricket and golf.



Nick James goes behind the scenes with boxing captain Anna Townend

Who is your sporting idol?

Alessia Zecchini – Italian freediver. She increased women's visibility in freediving. Her fearlessness and boldness inspires me!

Best sporting moment?

Accurately executing a slip and roll successfully while sparring.

Worst sporting moment?

Getting concussed from sparring and having to go to A&E – very humbling.

Why boxing?

It gives you such a rush. I like both the physical and mental aspects of the sport.

Pre-match rituals?

Listening to hype music, specifically Sexxy Red.

Funniest memory?

Learning why it is best to bring your own gloves and not use the uni ones (if you know, you know).

working with such a fab committee and men's captain Alan!

Worst bit about being captain?

Keeping up with the WhatsApp chats.

Secret to success?

So cliché, but to keep going even if you don't succeed at first. And to accept the cringe when you first start. Everyone starts on this side of cringe before getting better.

Is it easy for beginners to join?

Not as easy as it should be. At least for women, getting started in boxing can be quite intimidating as it really is a predominately male-dominated sport. While men tend to box from a younger age, at uni, women tend to take it up later. There are also fewer boxing gyms easily accessible to women.

What is the best bit about being captain?

Helping to encourage and improve women's access and equality in uni boxing. Also



Sport

Captain's corner
pg. 31



Cambridge's
sporting
stars
pg. 31



Still no luck for the Blues



▲ HELEN RITCHIE

Cambridge continue to splutter through BUCS hockey campaign

Joss Heddle-Bacon

Sports correspondent

Cambridge's impressive defensive resolve could not withstand a relentless Durham outfit that consigned the Women's Blues to a fourth consecutive BUCS defeat. Under ominous Wilberforce Road skies, Durham's calibre triumphed 2-0 over Cambridge's containment tactics, with the home side still yet to notch their first goal of the season.

The visitors looked to seize the initiative from minute one, forcing Cambridge keeper Serena Cole into two early saves and slapping a penalty corner narrowly wide. In a stark contrast of approaches, newly promoted Cambridge looked to sit deep and absorb the initial onslaught, but increasingly found themselves fenced in behind their 23 metre line with no obvious escape route.

Having successfully frustrated Durham in the first quarter, Cambridge's defiance came undone in the 20th minute after a clinically executed move from a penalty corner – the visitors slipping left and slapping the ball to the back post, where Amelie Hales coolly tapped it home. Once off the mark, Durham's high-press, high-intensity hockey continued to offer no respite for the Light Blues.

Yet while Cambridge remained unable to find any kind of attacking foothold, their disciplined defending prevented Durham's possessional dominance from yielding any further rewards. Ironically, the closest Durham came to obtaining a two-goal first half cushion came in the immediate aftermath of Cambridge's best attacking move yet, after the host's scarce departure from their rigid low block left them exposed to a lightning Durham counter-attack.

Perhaps in a fitting metaphor for the opening 35 minutes, Durham's seemingly inevitable goalward charge was curtailed by the half-time whistle – the visitors dominant, but thwarted in their pursuit of a substantial lead.

During the break, the Durham players' bouncy demeanours and good-natured high fives seemed to defy the bitter November air, while Cambridge remained locked in an intense huddle. Nevertheless, the tactical wisdom imparted to the hosts initially proved successful, with Cambridge's subsequent midfield overload nullifying Durham's attempts to pass their way into the scoring area following the restart.

The cagey atmosphere was eventually set alight by Lizzy Pocknell, who managed to rip the Light Blues' defensive wall apart with some dazzling stick skills. Easily the match's standout performer,

Pocknell almost doubled Durham's advantage on numerous occasions, including a wicked reverse stick effort from distance that pinged off the crossbar. As the third quarter entered its dying moments, Durham finally managed to find the back of the net, the visitors niftily robbing the ball from an attempted Cambridge one-two, driving down the right-hand side and crossing the ball to a waiting Katie Rimmer, who completed another back-post tap in.

Now finding themselves staring down the barrel of a two-goal deficit, Cambridge began to play more expansively, especially after gaining a numerical advantage when a Durham defender received a yellow card for some choice words with 12 minutes remaining. The game's final stages bore witness to some stellar hockey from Cambridge; the hosts combining an effective shutdown of Dur-

ham's passing lines with increasingly direct play when in possession, enabling them to begin fashioning some promising positions higher up the pitch.

Come full-time – superficially – the picture remained as bleak as the Wednesday evening murk for the Light Blues. After a game in which they never looked like troubling the scoresheet, their winless, goalless start to BUCS lingers on, with the highs of last season's phenomenal unbeaten league run perhaps feeling increasingly distant.

Even so, Cambridge's tightly marshalled defence and stubborn resistance of one of university hockey's class acts should provide some hope, amid a steep learning curve in the top flight.