

Features

Ukraine and Oxford, a year on.

p.10-11

Culture

Glink gorpcore? Sackler streetwear? Oxford's libraries' style

p.17

Life

What your college room tells you about your parents' divorce

p.21

Sports

Tabs crushed in ACS Varsity football match

p.23

Cherwell

Independent since 1920

Meet Oxford's most iconic kebab van owners, p.7-9

Fake professor dismissed, apologises for misogyny at fraudulent booklaunch

Cherwell News reports.

Onyeka Nwelu, a Nigerian author, has had his Academic Visitor status at Oxford University terminated after misusing University logos and premises for commercial purposes, an investigation by Cherwell has found. Nwelu is also facing complaints of misogyny towards students and the spread of racist, classist, and sexist content online.

The fake professor

Nwelu, a self-published author and filmmaker, held Academic Visitor status at Oxford's African Studies Centre from Michaelmas 2021, until its removal in early February this year. During this time, he represented himself as a professor at both the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, but has been unable to provide Cherwell with evidence of an academic PhD. He was not credited as a professor by either institution in the course

of his associations with them, and Oxford confirmed to Cherwell that he has never been a professor at the university. This week, the University of Cambridge also told Cherwell that Nwelu's connections with Cambridge have been terminated following investigations into his conduct.

On 31st January 2023, Nwelu's Instagram bio described him as "Prof of African Studies & Academic Visitor at University of Oxford & University of Cambridge" and on 1st February 2023, his Twitter bio said "Professor + Academic Visitor", tagging the accounts of both universities. He also tweeted: "I am a university professor, attached to two of the top best universities in the world", along with many other tweets where he referred to himself as a professor.

However, when asked to clarify his academic affiliations in light of this, Nwelu told Cherwell: "I have never ever posed as a professor at Oxford and Cambridge. My card says I am an Academic Visitor and that is exactly what I tell people. The accusation

that I say I am a professor at Oxford is baseless."

At Oxford, Academic Visitorship is set up on terms agreed between an individual and the University. The University confirmed that it does not employ Academic Visitors – they do not get paid, and are not expected to undertake duties for the University.

> Continued on Page 2

1,880

2,195

2,766

Posts

Followers

Following

Onyeka Nwelu

Prof of African Studies & Academic Visitor at University of Oxford & University of Cambridge

Founder, James Currey Society

Owner, Abibiman Publishing

Dr. Onyeka Nwelu

@onyeka_nwelu

Don't be poor and ugly. It's a curse. At least, if you are fine and poor, you can be used as a sex object.

7:24 AM · Dec 14, 2022 from Oxford, England

Dr. Onyeka Nwelu

@onyeka_nwelu

Poor People = Prostitution + Purse-Snatching.

10:55 PM · Dec 31, 2022 · 160 likes

Cherwell politics poll: 54% of students AREN'T proud to be British

Jack Twyman reports.

Politics and Oxford are closely assimilated. Of the total 57 prime ministers to date, 30 were educated here at Oxford, and the relevance of Oxford on the domestic and international political scene is unquestioned. Cherwell wanted to find out what the current students, who will decide tomorrow's political future, believe. Are we, as Senator Sanders called our student body, "the most progressive generation yet"? Or is Oxford currently host to the next

batch of Boris Johnsons and Liz Trusses?

Cherwell's Politics Poll survey received nearly 500 responses from students university-wide, mostly from undergraduates. In general, they were dissatisfied with the current UK government with only 4 percent of students somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied.

Party time

If a general election were to happen tomorrow, Labour would win strongly, with 61 per cent of students hoping to vote for that party. The Greens would be in second, just a percentage higher in popularity than the Conservatives, while 7.7 percent of students would support the Liberal Democrats. Smaller parties received less than three percent of the vote and 5 percent of students answered none and or that they would abstain.

At the college Level, University College is the most staunchly Labour with 100% of respondents supporting that party in an election, beating out famously-lefti colleges like Wadham.

Stereotypes held true on the other end of the spectrum. The top three Conservative colleges are Oriel, Christchurch and Regent's Park.

Subject-wise, the top Labour degrees were History and Politics, Human Sciences and Law. Classics and PPE did not top the list of Tory degrees. Instead, Theology, Philosophy and Classical Archeology and Ancient History came out on top.

When asked to choose between Labour and Conservative, 83 per cent of

respondents answered Labour, with only 17 per cent Conservative. On the whole, most students feel that Oxford's student body is progressive, regardless of party affiliation. In terms of more precise political ideology, 50.8 percent answered Socialism, 23.8 percent Liberalism and 8 percent Conservatism. In a rather surprising statistic, 1.8 percent of respondents answered Communism.

> Continued on Page 5

WEBSITE – cherwell.org

INSTAGRAM – @cherwelloxford

FACEBOOK – @CherwellOnline

TWITTER – @Cherwell_Online

Continued from front page

In his social media bios, Nwelue has also described himself as a Research Associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, but SOAS confirmed to Cherwell that he is not listed as one of its Research Associates.

When asked by Cherwell to provide further details of his academic certifications, Nwelue said: “I have the equivalent of Master’s as a filmmaker. I also have an Honorary Doctorate. I have been Visiting / Research Fellow in other universities. Prior to Oxford, I made award-winning films and published a lot of books. [sic]”

Twenty-two books have been published in Onyeka Nwelue’s name. Twenty of his books were either self-published or published by companies owned by Nwelue. Nine of these have been published since the start of his visitorship at the University of Oxford, and of the 17 listed on Amazon 13 have no consumer reviews.

The Tweets

During his time as an Academic Visitor at Oxford, Nwelue posted content on Twitter which was racist, classist, and misogynistic. These include Tweets where he stated: “being raised in a poor family chains you mentally to be stupid.”; “no poor person has any value”; “African women look like masquerades when they wear wigs and make up”; “Arabs are known to relish slavery and servitude”; China “is poor, filthy (smells a lot!) and overpopulated”; “Eastern Europeans...only produce pick-pockets and scammers”.

When asked about these tweets, Nwelue told Cherwell: “It was a social experiment to get feedback for a book I was working on. Apologies that they came off wrongly.” He denied being racist, misogynist, or classist.

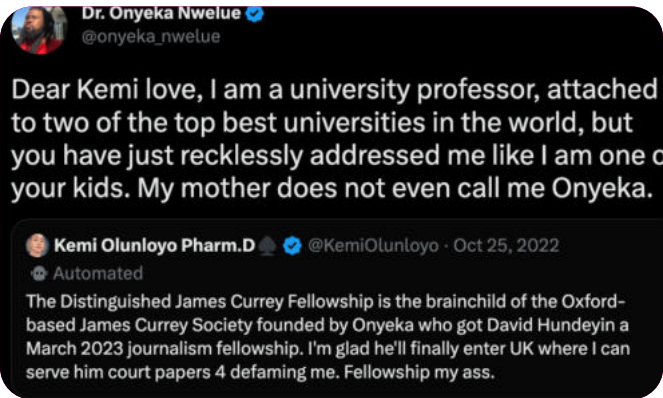
The University of Oxford has not confirmed whether any background checks were carried out on Nwelue before he gained status as an Academic Visitor.

The James Currey Society

The event leading to the termination of Nwelue’s association with Oxford University was a book launch, which he hosted for the Nigerian blogger and author David Hundeyin in affiliation with the James Currey Society.

The James Currey Society was founded by Nwelue and incorporated as a for-profit

The current holder of the James Currey



Fellowship at Oxford is Mitterand Okorie, who in 2022 authored a hagiographic account of Nwelue’s life titled, Onyeka Nwelue: A Troubled Life, published by Nwelue’s own publishing house Abibiman Publishers.

Meanwhile, the 2023 holder of the James Currey Fellowship at Cambridge was David Hundeyin, who maintains a controversial social media presence and has been a significant supporter of populist politician Peter Obi in this week’s Nigerian elections.

Cambridge told Cherwell: “Onyeka Nwelue and David Hundeyin are no longer associated with the University of Cambridge. Their connections were terminated following an investigation into their conduct”. They added: “The James Currey Fellowship is not administered, awarded, or funded by the University of Cambridge.”

The book launch

On 31st January, Nwelue and Hundeyin ran a book launch together on Oxford University premises for Hundeyin’s most recent book, also published with Abibiman Publishers. This was marketed through the James Currey Society and tickets were priced at £20 for Oxford students. One attendee told Cherwell: “I signed up to

attend the event, and was surprised I had to pay £20 to attend. Events run by the African Studies Centre are usually free as they are catering towards students.” In addition to charging £20 for entry, copies of Hundeyin’s book were also on sale for a further £20 at the event.

The book launch was originally advertised as taking place in the African Studies Centre, but the location was changed at short notice to a room in the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages at Wellington Square.

Attendees of the event told Cherwell that misogynistic remarks made by its organisers and other audience members made them feel “incredibly uncomfortable”. One student said: “Explicitly sexist comments were made throughout by the speaker and audience which were not challenged and were in fact encouraged. ... Comments made suggested that women slept their way to the top, which oppressed men, and that marrying a woman held you back in life”. Another student added: “A key point

of concern occurred when a question was asked by an attendee to Hundeyin concerning the issue of sexism and sexual harassment that African female journalists endure. Hundeyin replied with the implication that women who were of a fair complexion, tall and had long legs would not face hurdles to their career advancement in journalism.”

A third student said: “Nwelue laughed and agreed with [an audience member’s] comment about women being controlling. This made me feel angry and upset.”

When asked about the event, Nwelue told Cherwell: “I am very sorry if the students felt uncomfortable. About sexism and misogyny, I will never condone that. I am apologetic if that happened. Really sorry.”

In the marketing of the event, Nwelue used the Oxford University logo, the African Studies Centre logo and the MML logo without permission. Oxford told Cherwell: “The [Modern Languages] Faculty logo was used on the event publicity without authorisation. Once it was brought to the Faculty’s attention, the Faculty contacted the organiser to request removal of the Faculty’s logo from the publicity.”

What next?

On 20th February, Nwelue stepped down as Director of the James Currey Society, announcing his replacement as the Zimbabwean actor Charmaine Mujeri. He confirmed that he resigned following the termination of his Academic Visitorship, “so that [his] personal affiliation with the University of Oxford can end there”. It is unclear if the

James Currey Fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge will continue or be awarded again in future.

This week, Nwelue has locked his Twitter account, after Cherwell saw one of his tweets from 1st March reading: “I am leaving social media this evening. It will be for long. I might delete all my accounts as well. Bless you all!”

Cherwell has also seen a letter written by Nwelue to Oxford’s Vice Chancellor Irene Tracy, pictured below, in which he appeals the termination of his academic visitorship.

Investigations into Nwelue’s conduct during his time at Oxford University are ongoing.

Vice-Chancellor
Professor Irene Tracey, CBE, FMedSci

Vice-Chancellor’s Office
Clarendon Building
Oxford
OX1 3BG

Dear Honourable Vice Chancellor,

A HUMBLE REQUEST/APPEAL

I respect the decision of Professor Larmer and I understand if there is any pressure on him, to kick me out. I still adore him very much, as he is kind, humble and down-to-earth. It will be a great joy, to continue to work with him, until my Visitorship ends.

I understand the independence of every college, department and faculty. I am only pleading for concession and the things I have defaulted on, I take full responsibility and will correct them.

I am most grateful to the University for even considering me worthy to be a Visiting Fellow here. What I ask for, is to be reinstated so I can finish for my time, because it has already generated a lot of bad records for me, as I wish to continue to donate to the University and support the development of African studies here.

Thank you for considering this Appeal and Request to review my termination based on medical and humanitarian grounds, as I just lost my father, too. Professor Miles is aware of this.

I have the honour to remain, Ma, your most humble and reverent subject.

Yours sincerely,

Onyeka Nwelue

News Shorts



Ben’s Cookies faces price rise

A regular cookie from Ben’s Cookies, the cookie chain founded in the Covered Market in 1984, now costs £2.20 after a price rise from £1.85.



Oxford Professor Receives Grant to study Ethical AI

Professor John Tasioulas has been awarded a research grant to study the ethics of artificial intelligence (AI). He will attempt to understand how fundamental questions of human rights, democracy, and determinism can be applied to AI.



Oxford led research finds small rises in temperature can trigger significant human displacement

The study estimates a 1° celcius temperature rise could cause a 10 fold increase in forced migrants.



Dr. Onyeka Nwelue
@onyeka_nwelue

Poor people don’t use their brains. That’s why they are poor.

12:00 AM · Jan 13, 2023 from Oxford, England · 480 Views

company in May 2022, under the name of James Currey International. It is named after the South African book publisher James Currey. It has sponsored African authors to attend both Oxford and Cambridge, through awards of the James Currey Fellowship. Nwelue told Cherwell that “[the Society] was established in partnership with the University of Oxford”. However, Oxford clarified: “The James Currey Fellowships are not awarded, funded, or run by the University”.

St. Cross College’s £10m new building falling apart after only three years

Charlotte Lai reports.

St. Cross College’s “innovative” West Wing Building started falling apart soon after it was completed and is now closed for a multi-million-pound refurbishment. The development initially cost £10m and was funded by college members and the university as part of St. Cross’s 50th anniversary. It hoped to be a “remarkable” new building, providing St Cross graduate students with a new lecture theatre and library, more seminar rooms, and 53 student bedrooms. The building plan was described by an English Heritage inspector as “ingenious and successful”. However, soon after its opening in 2019, cracks and veining began to show on the window surrounds. According to the planning documents submitted to the council, there was a “rapid deterioration” in a significant proportion of the window panels. Upon further investigation, building specialists have stated that the issues are “irreparable”. They discovered flaws throughout the manufacturing process. St. Cross College has subsequently been forced to close the building. The refurbishment required is projected to cost millions of pounds and is due to be completed in late 2023. In response to reports about the deterioration of the West Wing Building, a postgraduate student at the university commented that one should “stick with the tried and true and ditch ‘innovative’ designs.” He gestured to Pusey House, situated next to the West Wing Building,

and “still going strong 100 years later” from the date of its unveiling in the 20th century. The construction of the West Wing Building has been controversial from the outset. Its location beside Pusey House, hailed as one of Oxford’s finest examples of Gothic architecture by Harry Stuart Goodhart-Rendel, former president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, sparked complaint from Oxfordshire Architectural and History Society. They described the West Wing Building as “an overbearing and utterly incongruous neighbour” for Pusey House. Similarly, the Victorian Society objected to the plans for the building, feeling that it would “adversely affect the setting of the Grade II-listed college chapel.” They felt that the buildings were “busy, blocky, and assertive,” “inappropriate to what should be a tranquil environment.” Oxford City Council rejected the plan based on the feeling that the St. Cross building would have what they described as an “unacceptable impact on the special character and appearance of the



conservation area.” However, despite opposition to the design and construction of the building, the Planning Inspectorate accepted the college’s appeal and permitted the building’s construction. The building’s fast deterioration has since been investigated further by building consultants. They found that the original structure of the building was based on a maximum weight that did not provide “adequate structural capacity to support many heavyweight or solid materials”. The building specialists also realized that, at the manufacturing stage, the window surrounds did not meet the specification requirements, and the quality control at the manufacturing stage had “little-to-no” oversight. This resulted in some of the glass reinforced concrete (GRC) window paneling being manufactured with a “thickness less than the minimum allowable,” resulting in their rapid deterioration. All of this GRC now needs to be replaced with a different material. St. Cross College released a statement to

explain the refurbishment. They stated that “the final stages of the building work were complicated when the main contractor and subsequently the glass reinforced concrete sub-contractor both went into administration.” Niall McLaughlin Architects, the firm which designed the building, refuses responsibility as they agreed to a “design and build contract.” They claim their role was to produce the original outline drawings which the contractor would use to complete technical designs and the construction work. The contractor was then “responsible for the ongoing performance of the building.” A spokesman for the firm stated: “Niall McLaughlin Architects were not involved, nor were they intended to be, with the quality control or oversight of the manufacturing process of the glass reinforced concrete panels.” He confirms that the firm spoke to the building specialist who reported on the damaged panels, and “[the specialist] confirms that there was no issue with the description of the panels.” St. Cross College states on its website that “it has taken time to find a permanent solution to the issues with the window surrounds,” but “the College team is confident that the right solution and contractor have been found.” The college concludes: “We look forward to being able to enjoy the building for many years to come – and to a proper re-opening event in due course.”

Students protest against raw sewage release into river

Becky Powell reports.

Oxford University students protested at the Torpids rowing race against Thames Water’s dumping of untreated sewage into local rivers and waterways. This comes amid increasing frustration that the designated bathing water status awarded to Wolvercote Mill Stream has not had a marked impact on sewage dumping. Protestors are asking Thames Water to produce a public timescale for capacity upgrades and to regularly fund bacteria testing at Donnington Bridge or Folly Bridge. They urge Thames Water to take stronger and quicker action against this pollution. Between 28th December 2022 and 20th January 2023, the Witney sewage treatment plant continuously discharged 552 hours of sewage spills. It follows the established trend of high levels of discharge in 2021, when there were 891 hours of sewage being released from Oxford STW processing plant. Consequently, the Environmental Agency has classified the Wolvercote Mill Stream, in the north-western corner of Port Meadow, as of ‘poor’ bathing quality, advising against bathing. Informing this assessment is the dangerously high levels of E. coli bacteria that have consistently been found in the river, which can come from either raw

sewage or other sources such as agriculture. One protestor told Cherwell: “For me and many people living here the rivers in Oxford play an important part of everyday life. Across all seasons, students continue to interact with rivers whether this be novice rowing in Michaelmas, cold wild swimming in Hilary, and sunny punting in Trinity. However, the rivers do not always feel like a safe space that I and others can enjoy due to frequent sewage releases made by Thames Water.” Previous campaigning by the Oxford Rivers Project led to the designated bathing water status at Wolvercote Mill Street, yet there have not been significant improvements in water quality. Thames Water has begun a £15 million upgrade to Witney sewage works which they expect to complete in early 2024. They have also launched in response a near real-time map which shows discharge activity. In a public statement, they affirmed: “Putting untreated sewage into rivers is unacceptable to us, our customers and the environment. That’s why we’re working hard to stop these discharges, with the help of the Government, Ofwat and the Environment Agency.” One student protestor remarked that “their current plans to reduce releases by 50% by 2030 are not enough when the Thames is such an important part of the city. Overall, we are calling for a cleaner Thames, where users of the river can feel safe.”

Oxford researchers predict automisation of half of household chores in next decade

Anika Gupta reports.

Recent collaborative research from the University of Oxford and Japan’s Ochanomizu University conveys that almost four in ten hours currently devoted to unpaid housework and caring responsibilities could be automated in the next ten years. During the project, researchers from the universities asked 65 Artificial Intelligence experts (29 from the UK and 36 from Japan) to predict trends in the future automation of common household tasks. On average, experts agreed that grocery shopping is the most automatable household activity. They predict that grocery shopping time in the future would fall by nearly 60% in 10 years, in comparison to current statistics. On the other hand, experts believe that care for children or the elderly is the least likely to be impacted by AI; with research suggesting that time spent on physical childcare would only be reduced by 21%. Dr Lulu Shi, a postdoctoral researcher at the Oxford Internet Institute and departmental lecturer for Oxford’s Department of Education, summarises that in general; “only 28% of care work, including activities such as teaching your child, accompanying your child, or taking care of an elderly family member, was predicted to be automated. Yet 44% of housework,

including cooking, cleaning, and shopping, was thought to be automatable.” Strikingly, previous studies have highlighted that the UK’s population, aged 15 to 64, spends nearly 50% of their entire work and study time on household errands such as cleaning, cooking and care. However, the recent research suggests a potential increase in the prospect of leisure time, due to the fact that there would be less to do manually around the house. To this day, the burden of undertaking household labour has fallen disproportionately on women. Ekaterina Hertog, an associate professor in AI and Society at the University of Oxford argues that this has negatively affected women’s earning ability, savings and pensions. Evidence illustrates that in the UK, the majority of working age men do around half as much of domestic (unpaid) housework as the majority of working age women. In Japan, using the same parameters, the men do just 18%, which is less than a fifth. Having increased automation and more “smart homes” would therefore also free up working time for women, and could lead to strides which help achieve gender equality. However, technology is still relatively expensive and more extensive and diverse research is needed to be undertaken. The complete research is published in the journal PLOS ONE. This research project was funded by ESRC in the UK and JST-RISTEX in Japan.

Oxford refuses to end £10 million legacy with Sackler family

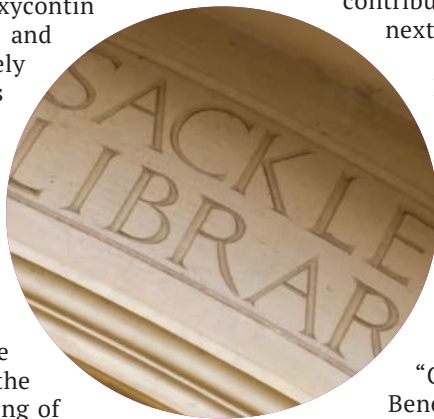
Rufus Hall reports.

Oxford continues to maintain relations with the Sackler family, of American opioid crisis notoriety, despite student outcry and ostracisation at dozens of other institutions around the world. According to the Financial Times, Oxford invited members of the Sackler family to exclusive university events, accepted funds from charities related to the family, and retained Sackler naming rights on university buildings and academic positions.

These events all happened during or after the Sackler family's negotiation of a multibillion-dollar bankruptcy settlement concerning their role in the US opioid epidemic, which is estimated to have claimed over half a million lives since 1999.

Purdue Pharma, run by the Sackler family, lobbied heavily for their opioid painkiller Oxycontin by misleading doctors and authorities. The massively over-prescribed drug has been labelled by the Drugs Enforcement Agency as "heroin in a pill."

Oxford has received more than £10 million worth of donations from the Sacklers' two UK-based charities since 1991. Most notably, the family funded the building of the Sackler Library, which focuses on the study of archaeology and the ancient world.



Whilst the university has not applied for any new donations since 2019, the Oxford Development Trust received £50,332 from the Sackler Trust in 2021. This money was previously pledged to fund research positions at Worcester College and the Ashmolean.

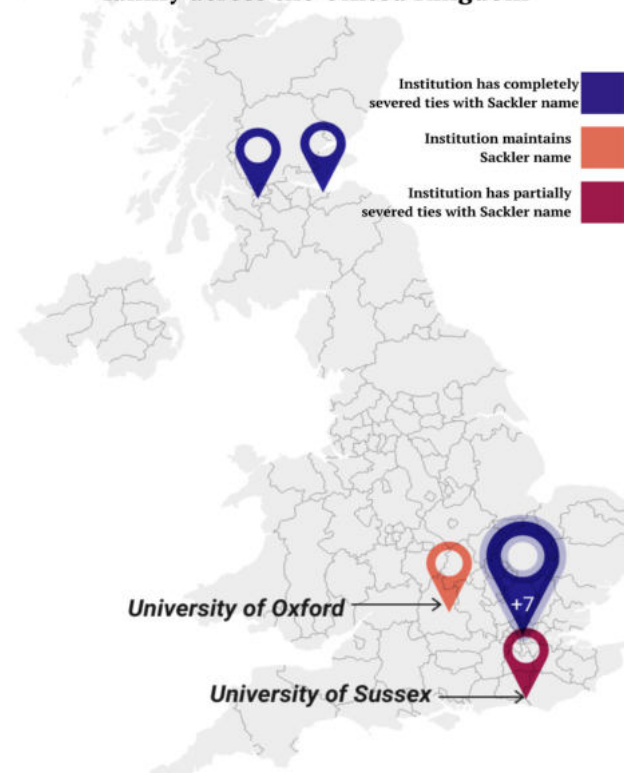
Worcester College told Cherwell that it has since cut ties with the Sackler family: "Worcester College's Governing Body made the decision to terminate the Sackler Research Fellowship and decline further funding in 2021. The College has not received any further donations from the Sackler family or its charitable foundations since this decision was taken."

However, only a few months after Purdue Pharma filed for bankruptcy, the Ashmolean chair of the board of visitors, Lord James Lupton, wrote to Dame Theresa Sackler: "As the new face on the board, I am 'all ears' to the views of our most important patrons and supporters, and I very much hope that you will contribute your ideas over the next few weeks."

Last year, former Purdue chief executive Dame Sackler was invited to the annual Ashmolean Gala Dinner in September and to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race in April as a member of the prestigious "Chancellor's Court of Benefactors."

Other institutions have cut ties with the Sacklers in light of the public outcry over their role in the opioid

Institution's ties to the Sackler family across the United Kingdom



epidemic. The University of Cambridge has recently joined the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow, and Imperial College London in renouncing its associations with the family. A Cambridge spokesperson said that they intended to "remove the Sackler name from any relevant funds that still exist, as well as from university spaces."

Oxford's comparative inaction has caused indignation among staff and students, and the student union has said it will continue raising concerns with the

university.

Phillip Pyle from the campaign group Shame on Sackler Oxford told Cherwell: "Oxford is not only contributing to the marginalisation of Americans and people everywhere facing addiction through their lack of action. The university is also destabilising its relationship with students, staff, faculty, and the wider city community through failing to act in line with their stated core values."

Citing the university's response to the student union motion in 2021 to change the name of the Sackler Library, Pyle said: "I also know that when ex-Vice-Chancellor Louise Richardson was asked by the FT about the reasons for not renaming the library, she said that she didn't know because the University hadn't looked into it. This comment came

after the SU motion passed, meaning that Oxford not only didn't take up the motion but that they didn't even consider the matter.

"I do have hope, though, especially knowing that a large portion of the University seems to be in agreement on the issue. I'm also hoping that the new Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey will be more receptive to student opinion on the issue."

Just Stop Oil protestors stage banner drop at Torpids

Stephanie Nourse reports.

Student supporters of Just Stop Oil staged a banner drop on the final day of the Torpids boat race to draw attention to the escalating global energy crisis and climate emergency.

At approximately 1pm on Saturday 25th February, a large orange banner with the Just Stop Oil logo was hung from a bridge next to the racecourse. The student protestors are demanding that the government commit to ending all new oil and gas projects in the UK, and are also keen for the University and its members to join the movement in peaceful civil resilience.

Daniel, a biochemistry student at New College who was involved in the banner drop, told Cherwell: "We were hoping to announce our presence to the student community and encourage students to join our group. We find the apathy of many students shocking and saddening."

When asked whether there would be further Just Stop Oil action in Oxford, Daniel told Cherwell: "There will be plenty of protests and events

over the next few months. The banner may be reappearing around Oxford over the next few weeks and a slow march is coming in the next month, but the date is unconfirmed right now."

First seen in London last year, the group's 'slow march' tactic is a form of protest designed to block roads and bring traffic to a standstill.

Ollie, a biology student at Keble who was also present at the protest action, expressed his frustration with the UK government's approach to tackling environmental issues: "Inaction on the climate crisis threatens everything we know and love. If the government continues to license new oil projects, we will not have a future in which to enjoy sporting events such as Torpids. I am taking direct action because it's the only way to force the

change that we need in the short timescale that we need it."

Extinction Rebellion Oxford also displayed their support of the banner drop. April Jones, Extinction Rebellion's Oxford coordinator told Cherwell: "There are a range of views on Just Stop Oil within Extinction Rebellion Oxford, but broadly, we have respect and gratitude for their efforts to halt the climate and ecological destruction that threatens us all. Every action that brings attention to the crisis, such as the banner drop on Saturday, is appreciated."

The Just Stop Oil campaign was launched in February 2022 and has waged non-violent civil resistance through tactics such as strikes, boycotts, mass protests and disruption across the country. Among the most notable acts of resistance by the group are incidents

of vandalism, such as the throwing of tomato soup at one of Vincent van Gogh's Sunflowers paintings in London's National Gallery, and the spray-painting of the exterior of the Aston Martin showroom on Park Lane.

Protestors have also attempted to disrupt football matches, the BAFTA awards and the British Grand Prix. According to the group, more than 2,000 arrests have been made during their protests over the past year.

Determined that the national reliance on fossil fuels needs to end in the next eight years, Just Stop Oil believes that energy demand needs to be cut by insulating Britain and providing free public transport across the country, enabling a switch from fossil fuels to clean energy. This year alone, the government plans to issue at least 100 new oil and gas licenses across the country, and UK subsidies for the production and consumption of fossil fuels have recently amounted to £12 billion a year.

Just Stop Oil will host a talk in Oxford on Thursday 9th March titled 'Our Responsibilities at This Time'. The talk will focus on "civil resistance to climate chaos in 2023" and will be held at the St Aldates Tavern from 7pm to 9pm.



Continued from front page.

A Labour supporting student said “capitalism has left millions of people in the UK alone to freeze and/or starve this winter while energy companies announce record profits.” One other said “nobody should be 20,000 times richer than someone else.” “Socialism is the next step in the development of human kind” claimed one respondent, “The late stage capitalism system is a failure that benefits only the few”. Arguments against socialism pointed at historical failure of socialism, contrasted against the possible freedoms and wealth in capitalist societies.

The future politicians: they’re not just PPEists

Just under a quarter of Oxford students would enter politics in the future, while 77.9 percent had no intention. However, if the job of Prime Minister was offered to them 43.9 percent would take up the post. The majority of students would not like to be Prime Minister and around the same number are unhappy that so many Prime Ministers have been to Oxford University.

Unsurprisingly, the PPEists were the most eager politicians, but still less than half of those students admit to wanting a career in politics. Historians were next likely to aspire to politics, followed by Lawyers, then Classicists and Geographers.

A quarter of Labour supporters want to enter politics, while 32.5 percent of their Conservative counterparts do.

One Labour student wrote that “it seems that those that most want to hold leadership positions are actually the least qualified to hold them (looking at the Union and the characters that it attracts).” Another student is disheartened at “the thought that all the Oxbridge educated politicians were just hacks”.

One Conservative student said Oxford politics is “extremely toxic. JCR Committees and the Oxford Union should both be abolished.”

Freedom to preach

A large majority of Conservative students believe they cannot express their political views in Oxford for fear of potential ramifications. This is juxtaposed by 76 percent of Labour and Green voters who said they were able to express their views freely. Lib Dem voters were split 50/50.

One Conservative said “You are sometimes not allowed to express any view out of the consensus of the student body without unreasonable scrutiny or social loss. I might be allowed to say what I want, but it still comes with consequences.” One Reform voter echoed this sentiment: “It is true what they say... [Oxford] is very left wing dominated, especially by academics. Any slightly right wing comment and you’ve been branded as something you’re not.” Another ‘moderate left’ Labour supporter described the cancel culture as ‘worrying’.

Nevertheless, there are many political forums in Oxford. The Oxford University Conservative Association (OUCA) and Oxford University Labour Club (OULC)

What party would you vote for in a general election?



both hold debate and drinking events. OUCA has Port and Policy, and OULC has Beer and Bickering. Only a small fraction of respondents had been to either: 16.9 per cent for Port and Policy, and 22.7 per cent for Beer and Bickering.

The reputation of these groups is not good overall. One student said that “the only thing worse than the OUCA (private school Tories who are completely out of touch) are the private school commies who are completely out of touch.” Another claimed “student politics is mostly useless. The big names in OULC or OUCA won’t be the Oxbridge graduates who

make big change in years to come.”

When asked about the political scene in Oxford one student said: “There’s the joke that everyone at Oxford wants to be prime minister. I mentioned this to some of my friends, one said “oh no, I only want to be a SPAD”, the other said, “well, I’d be happy with a cabinet position personally”. The thing is they weren’t even

joking.” Another student believes that there are students with the intelligence and empathy to solve political problems, however, “those people are not likely to be the people that go into politics.”

One disillusioned student also hated this trend and the “union to Westminster pipeline”, which creates politicians who “think politics is a game, it’s like they’re still at Uni.”

Re-drawing party lines and re-writing political discourse

Students were asked if they feel represented in the political discourse of today. Most answered no.

Socialist and conservative students had many grievances. Green students told Cherwell that “the mainstream political discourse is between outright fascism on one side and a socially conservative economic liberalism on the

other.” One student who chose Labour said: “Kier Starmer is a red Tory”, another feels that “champagne socialists have taken over.” Disillusioned Conservatives students complained that they didn’t feel represented in the House of Commons or Lords.

Many students complain of a lack of centrist options or nuance in contemporary politics. One noted that there is “no credible centre-centre-right option”.

Another pointed out that their “views (perhaps because they are so divergent on various issues) are not well-represented by the political elite, even though [they] may mix with the future political elite.” One simply because “Nobody is nuanced.”

Political discourse and party power angered many. One student bemoaned a lack of “serious opposition to Brexit within political discourse”. Lib Dem students said the “political discourse is too focused on the power of parties and not making meaningful changes.” One Reform UK student said that “there is no party that wants low government intervention anymore” another said “too often people are put into one group or another based on one viewpoint they have or even based on appearance.” One SNP voter worried that a return to reasonable and informed political discourse was impossible.

A Monster Raving Looney Party supporter complained that the issues they care about “are shut out by many other louder voices on much more menial topics.”

Rule Britannia?

Students were asked, if applicable, whether they were proud to be British.

A narrow majority of 54 percent said “No”, while 46 per cent said they were proud to be British. Nearly all Conservative voters were proud to be British, while the vast majority of Green voters were

not. Most of those who are not proud to be British are Green and Labour students. One Labour student said “I love my home, but when I think of Britain as an entity in both the past and present it’s hard to find much that’s worth being particularly proud of - even our “successes” are built on blood.” Some others said simply because “We left the EU”, “the police are corrupt” and that they were proud

“sometimes when we play football but don’t like all the colonial stuff.” Numerous respondents referred to Britain as “Terf Island”

Those who answered in the affirmative did so for a variety of reasons. Many Conservatives touted history, achievements and power. One called the UK the “Stronghold of Protestantism and the beauty of the Anglo-Celtic union.” Another said “luv me country, luv me beer, ‘ate the french. Simple as.”

One proud Liberal Democrat student said “while flawed in many ways, Britain has one of the most successfully multicultural societies in the world.” While one Labour student touted “our shared knowledge of those random Christian songs we sang in primary school. Our inability to decide what a roll/bun/bread should be called.”

When it came to one of Britain’s most famous institutions, the monarchy, most students would abolish it. A strong minority however, believe it is important. They value its history and sees royal power as the essential referee in our political system.”

This question had a strong partisan divide: 85 percent of Conservatives would keep the monarchy, while 56 per cent of Labour supporters would abolish it. Labour students in favour of abolition said frequently described the monarchy as “useless”. Another said “while not something I would push for at the expense of more practical concerns, the monarchy is obsolete and contributes to the UK’s archaic political culture.”

Some conservatives had a mixed opinion on the monarchy: “I don’t want to abolish it but I can understand it being gradually phased away”. Many students also had weaker opinions on abolishing the power of the royal family, one writing “We should...but like eh. They’re kinda fun.”

“85 percent of Conservative students would keep the monarchy, while 56 per cent of Labour supporters would abolish it

In defense of Buckfast

Joey Ricciardiello

Aspectre is haunting Britain - the spectre of Buckfast. “Bucky”, “fuckfast”, “commotion lotion” or “wreck-the-hoose juice” is a highly controversial, but unfairly maligned drink. Brewed in Buckfast Abbey in Devon by one of the last remaining communities of Benedictine monks in the UK, Buckfast has inexplicably become the national drink of Scotland. North of Hadrian’s Wall, Buckfast has taken off like nowhere else. There, it is invariably associated with Glaswegian hooligan ‘ned’ culture where it is enjoyed by anti-social violent youths like the protagonists from Trainspotting (if you look closely, bottles of Buckfast can be seen in the background of various scenes in the film, including Mother Superior’s heroin den - a ringing endorsement if nothing else.)

Buckfast is a fortified tonic wine which although not particularly alcoholic, at only 15%, contains the same quantity of caffeine as roughly 5 cans of Coca Cola. It has become so associated with delinquency and violence that it has been the subject of numerous political crusades against binge drinking. In 2011, Scottish Labour MEP Catherine Stihler called for a European-wide ban on the fortified tonic wine, citing it “has caused untold misery to millions of communities”. Sheriff Alastair Brown of Dundee said in 2016: “There is in my professional experience a

very definite association between Buckfast and violence,” while a Dunfermline man was told in the same year by a court judge at his assault trial - in possibly the biggest understatement in history - that drinking four bottles of Buckfast a day is “not conducive to a very long life”. According to the BBC, Buckfast was mentioned in 2500 Strathclyde police crime reports in 2011-12 where the defence “the Bucky made me do it” was a common utterance in magistrates courts.

It is unfair that the onus of British youth violence should fall solely on Buckfast, however, which seems like a rather lazy scapegoat against the institutional failings of Scottish politicians and the police to tackle crime. A very small minority of Buckfast’s customers need not tarnish the entire reputation of the drink, and I find that many Buckfast enthusiasts are among the most genial and agreeable folks out there. Indeed, if the issue lies, as its detractors claim, in the dangerous combination of alcohol and caffeine, where are the campaigns against Jäger Bombs, Cuba Libres, not to mention the Clockwork Orange-esque gang violence associated with drinkers of Espresso Martinis? It is rank hypocrisy and nothing else - another example of the dead hand of the nanny state interfering in the lives of punters and monks alike. Some of my best nights have been spent in the company of fellow bacchanals indulging in the monastic juice, and although the label states that Buckfast contains “no medicinal qualities”, I am inclined to disagree. The monastic origins of Buckfast imbues it with the qualities of a kind of secular transubstantiation. A bottle of Buckfast deep, even an atheist can find God.

The syrupy sweet notes of Buckfast are certainly an acquired taste, and it is hard to forget that what you’re drinking essentially

tastes like concentrated grape juice with added ethanol, or as an American reviewer of the drink described it on Reddit, “like drinking liquefied methamphetamine through a dirty rag, whilst simultaneously on your knees under a bridge orally pleasing a vagrant”. But it is a flavour which, once you have become acquainted, cannot be shaken off. Like many drinks, Buckfast can be enjoyed in small doses - perhaps as an after-dinner apéritif or even as a substitution for communion wine - but like many drinks, it is best enjoyed in substantial quantities. The French author Emmanuel Carrère, in his biography of Russian political dissident Eduard Limonov wrote of an episode known as a “Zapoi”, which roughly translates to “binge”. However, the term also involves aspects of a total surrender to alcohol, where one puts their body through the greatest possible strain in order to reach some form of enlightenment, finding the meaning of the human condition. He writes: “Zapoi is serious business, not a one-night bender of the kind we partake in, the kind you pay for with a hangover the next day. Zapoi means going several days without sobering up, roaming from one place to another, getting on trains without knowing where they’re headed, telling your most intimate secrets to people you meet by chance, forgetting everything you’ve said and done: a sort of voyage.”

A ‘Bucky zapoi’ is a truly transcendent experience, and it can be achieved at the price of £7 a bottle from any number of vendors in Britain and beyond. When you push through the initial sickness of the first few gulps, and find that the liquid in the bottle has reached below the iconic orange label, there is no turning back - the Zapoi has begun. In fact, finding enlightenment through this monastic elixir has become far easier in recent years. The app ‘Find Me Bucky’ available on the App

Store and Google Play provides a useful map detailing the locations for all vendors who sell it.

Though Edinburgh, Glasgow and London would be your best bets for finding a bottle of Bucky, Oxford is by no means deserted. One can pick up a bottle from at least two corner shops on St Clements, as well as the ubiquitous Deli on the Cowley Road.

If your tastes are not suited to this, and you would scoff at the sight of a man on his 4th day of a Buckfast zapoi, then there are alternative ways to enjoy the beverage. There has been a string of trendy bars in cities like Glasgow and in some parts of East London which have incorporated Buckfast into more well-established food items, with one venue in Shoreditch selling Buckfast ice cream. Even closer for Oxford readers, The Library pub on Cowley Road actually sells a Buckfast Negroni on their menu, substituting red Vermouth for Buckfast which works surprisingly well, giving a sweet counterbalance to the bitterness of the gin and campari. Though a negroni is ostensibly a sensible drink, enjoyed by Don Draper types who embody the notion of sprezzatura - a sophisticated, nonchalant, urbane excellence - the addition of Buckfast is a welcome take on this classic cocktail, which does just service to the original, whilst providing a unique tongue-in-cheek spin.

The eighteenth-century French aristocrat and freethinking libertine, the Marquis de Sade, said that “in order to know virtue, we must first acquaint ourselves with vice,” and this is certainly true of the experience of indulging in Bucky. Though it’s an unhealthy and immoderate decision to consume an entire bottle of Buckfast in one evening, it is also a joyful, transcendent, life-affirming one which I shall continue to do until my last days. Floreat Buckfast.

Cherwell, ISIS, OxSci, Industry, PHASER, & more

60+ years
39+ colleges
100% student-run



JOIN NOW!

OXFORD STUDENT PUBLICATIONS IS RECRUITING

Join OSPL, Oxford’s student-run publishing company behind your favourite outlets like Cherwell and more!

Gain experience working in a real student company while getting involved in the business side of student journalism.

Interested? Follow this code below or email chairman@ospl.org for more info.



We’re currently looking for:

- ❖ Secretary
- ❖ Archive Director
- ❖ Marketing Director
- ❖ Development Officer
- ❖ Leads and Relations Officers

The story is told through the eyes and mind of a boy growing up in Oxford during the 1950's. It was a time when homosexuality was criminal. Oxford University – “The Gown” flouted the law. The law kept local or “Town” homosexuals underground. This created perfect cover for pedophile men to exploit vulnerable boys.

Specially selected Town boys could cross to the Gown world via the “11-Plus” intelligence screening that took place in that time. For some the polar differences they encountered between home and school, made life difficult. These boys were a target for paedophiles, out looking for them in the streets of central Oxford.

Could one of these abused boys fully survive this experience?



OXFORD TOWN & GOWN BOY

JONAH WEST

ISBN 978-1-7387322-0-3

OXFORD TOWN & GOWN BOY

A NOVEL

Researcher/Associate for Book Launch/Promotion

Canada-based writer seeking Associate for launch of “Oxford Town & Gown Boy” – a Novel by Jonah West. Negotiated working deal to include direct compensation, UK copyright share, future royalties. Need for an available, talented, reliable and motivated person. Book themes should resonate. Strict confidentiality and privacy ethic required both sides of any future agreement. Please respond by email, with a less than 100-word self-synopsis explaining your interest. Next step - phone conversation. Thank you.

<jonahwest24@gmail.com>



The first pioneering kebab van, Ali's, cowboy parked on the curbs of 1980s Oxford without a permit, serving students midnight feasts until the police jogged them on. Today, (huts and Covered Market stalls included) Oxford "kebab van culture" is an



institution, as entangled with boilerplate student life as over-caffeination and college puffers. *Cherwell* stringers did sober what many of you will have done drunk, chatting with the men and women behind the counter.



HASSAN’S

In our brief interview with Hassan’s on Broad Street, it became evident that this ever-popular van is not afraid of rivalry. When asked about their biggest rival, Hassan adamantly assured us that, “I’m not interested, I like to focus on myself.” Even when asked the follow up question of what makes his the best kebab van, Hassan was quick to flip the answer on to us, saying, “You answer this question, not me.”

This confidence is not unwarranted given the popularity of his van, and his longevity. Hassan told us that he has been “on the same road for the past 30 years”, providing the Oxford community with some much-needed sustenance after a night-out or during a particularly hard essay crisis. My personal go-to order is chips, hummus and falafel with chilli sauce; try it and thank me later. But I’m not the only one that loves Hassan’s. The owner told us that they still get customers from 20 years ago returning to this van: “when they visit Oxford, it’s the first thing they have to do.”

This cult following around the van has led the owner to start selling Hassan’s merch. He reassured us that, “You can buy [the sweatshirts] for 15 pounds. I’ve got plenty. I don’t get any profit, they are a souvenir.” These legendary sweatshirts are a massive hit, not only surfacing here and there when walking down Cornmarket Street, but also popping up in London. Hassan even gave us an anecdote of two customers that bonded over their sweatshirts at a London gym.

Hassan’s future is retirement, with the owner jokingly renouncing kebabs: “No more kebabs. I just want to sit down and relax.” These plans are not in the works right now, so rest assured that Hassan will be livening Broad Street for a little while longer.

ALI’S

I arrive at Ali’s at 2am on a Monday, just as Ali is closing up and getting ready to go home. Famously friendly, he chomps on a homemade tomato pasta “made by the missus”. The plus side of working here, he says, is you can get two full meals a day; “whenever I fancy something, I just eat it.”

It’s not long till we get to the topic of Ali’s history. Set up by his grandad in the 80s, he maintains “we’re the oldest kebab van in Oxford that’s still working”. How have things changed since the 80s? He explains that you used to be able to park anywhere you want, so all the vans were next to the clubs. But “right next to a nightclub there’s a 95% chance your customers are going to be drunk, and then they get in trouble and in fights.” His grandfather opted for a calmer setting, nestled between St Anne’s and The Royal Oak. “To be honest I’m happy here. People are nice to me and I’m nice to them, and I have a good time, I wouldn’t change that for anything.”

It’s not all friendly customers though, as he recounts an extremely drunk man at 4am, just before close asking for a burger. “I was cooking it for him but he didn’t want to wait, so I gave him a can and he walked off. So I said ‘pay for the can at least!’ and he turned around and threw it at the van!”

When I ask what vans are his biggest rival, he laughs. “We are kind of far away from everybody, to be honest with you, they’re not really rivals.” What makes them different is their homemade food: “we do burgers that nobody else does, like New York, Chicago burgers. We try to be different from everybody else, while trying to keep it simple.” He recalls that his Grandad has been working the “same hours, same days, same menus” since the 80s, though he’s winding down a little now.

His favourite thing on the menu by far (eyes lit up) is the “Super Chicken Burger”, which is “chicken burger, kebab meat, salad, cheese, chips” all in between one burger bun. “That’s my favourite, I eat that almost every day,” he says with a grin.

AHMED’S

We got to Ahmed’s Bar B-Q on a weekday evening, before the midnight rush, so the ‘main man’ was quite happy to chat to Cherwell for a few minutes. Our conversation started off cheerfully; “One can of Diet Coke, and an interview please!”

A kind and affable man, who answered our questions with a smile, Ahmed declared that he has no competing kebab vans. In fact, he feels a sense of community among all the kebab vans. This is, of course, backed up by the van’s popularity, with its seemingly infinite menu and Ahmed’s claim that he always has enough of every item. He told us that his consistency is what makes his van the best and the quality of his food has met the same, high standards for the 26 years that he has been running it.

In that time, he has gathered enough stories to “write an entire book”. He did not name any names, but he has served quite a few government ministers and politicians from his perch on the High Street. Both his daughter and son said they were astounded by Ahmed’s ability to recognise random figures on the television as someone he served from the van. Even well-known people have late-night essay crises and panic-stricken trips to get a Kebab, it seems.

The kebab is, of course, what got him into this business, with his previous experience in kebab catering leading to the purchase of his first van in the 90s. While his van has definitely come a long way, looking to the future, Ahmed is still waiting for “the second Ahmed who can take over” and then he might just move on, but for the moment, the kebab grill burns hot every evening, so please have a try (with or without a side helping of hangover and/or essay crisis).

HUSSEIN’S

Hussein’s Kebab van has the lovely Nadiya who Cherwell spoke to. When asked about which van is her main competition, she told us, “none, they’re all good and too nice to pick one out.” However, if she had to pick, it would be “Kebab King”.

What makes Hussein’s stand out is that, in their own words, “the service is always great. Food comes second, service comes first!” An Oxfess about how lovely Nadiya is garnered 300 likes this term. Nadiya said “It’s just natural. It runs in the family,” adding, “the good vibes of customers helps a lot.” Nadiya has not had any bad experiences with customers.

Hussiens started in 1992, after Nadiya’s Grandad, Ali, started his kebab van on Woodstock Road. “There’s no rivalry,” Nadiya is quick to add, “Everyone has their own business and customers.” Solomon’s is also family — so no Kebab Wars here!

Nadiya thinks kebabs are so popular because they are the ultimate nighttime food: “You’re not going to ask for a tagine, are you?”

In the future Nadiya plans to bring different types of chicken to the van: “Peri Peri, Moroccan Chicken in the future. Jerk Chicken has just been added to the menu!” She also hopes to offer Peri Peri Salt soon.

Nadiya’s favourite menu item is “Chicken wings with Peri Peri - OMG.”

ROZANA

The new kid on the block, Rozana in the Covered Market has become fondly known among Oxford Students since its opening in December as ‘Fake Najar’s’. The owners here are keen to distinguish this as fiction, not fact. “It’s different, completely different, and completely different food too.” She is quick to point out that people think falafel is all the same — in reality the differences from country to country, region to region, and city to city across the Middle East are complex and detailed.

Defined by Rozana’s roots in Aleppo, the Syrian and Lebanese flavours run through the store that now has a daytime queue to rival any of its more established predecessors. Starting with the sujuk, Rozana infuses it with the 12 unique spices of her community in Aleppo. That community is made up of just a million people and is the reason that the flavour is so unique here in Oxford.

In the centre, the owners simply couldn’t find the takeaway Lebanese and Syrian options they were looking for. Comptoir Libnais and other chains are no match for their authenticity and other kebab vans use different flavouring, so they simply started their own.

After coming from Aleppo in 2014, Rozana worked as a chef for four years at a larger restaurant before helping in her brother’s restaurant for 12 months. After that experience she finally felt ready and equipped to set up shop on her own.

Her go-to option? The classic falafel and hummus. The hummus here is homemade by Rozana herself and is notably smooth. She attributes this to the cooking process, which is long and thorough. The chickpeas themselves are cooked first onsite before being used to create the spread. Among students, people go for the lamb, baba ganoush, and tabbouleh. These are the more established tastes of Middle Eastern foods in the UK and the owners think that is why they are perennially popular.

Plans for the future? Rozana is thinking big. First she wants tables and chairs outside, but before long she wants outlets across the city and to make her family name famous. So, looking for an authentic Syrian twist on your standard order? Head to Rozana, but be prepared to wait...

NAJAR’S

Najar’s is not a van — it’s a listed building rented yearly from St. John’s painted Oxford blue. Alex told us, “we started almost twenty years ago. My brother-in-law started it, and I came over to give a hand. Back then, you could walk in. We liked it because we could keep you lot out of the rain. But, actually, it’s better now. A lot better.”

Alex spoke to Cherwell with George, his pet pigeon, perched on the end of his right pointer finger. George the pigeon is a Najar’s regular — he lives in the eaves of St John’s and he swoops down when Alex opens up. So much of Najar’s revolves around looking after their relationships with regulars like George; hence their closing time at 9pm, which means they don’t really have to deal with drunk people. Alex says, “We don’t want to fall out with our regulars. People come in, you know, students that come in every day and they’re different people when they’re sober. The last thing we want to do is ruin that relationship that we have with them... we know a lot of people by their first name and they do the same with us.”

“The pressure can get to us sometimes, but it’s you guys that make our day, you know, you come in and you ask how’s it going, and just that kind of snaps you out of your bad day.”

And Najar’s is, of course, an ‘us’ — Alex is just the maestro. He tells me, “everyone is from a different part of the world here as well. I’m from Syria, we’ve got one Bengali guy, we’re Kurdish as well. So it’s a real mix, and people come and go here, they don’t tend to stay. The ones that do are the regular faces that you’ll see here for a long time, but we do get the odd guys that come in and do the dishes.”

As for Najar’s menu, Alex tells me, “I like the lighter stuff. I like the tabbouleh either by itself or with bread, a little bit hummus and a couple of falafels. Trying to watch my weight after COVID... I guarantee you go anywhere else and try anybody else’s falafel. You’re never going to taste something like this. I’ve never tried them but it’s down to these two things. Frozen food. Putting water and oil together. We come in at three o’clock every morning — Maz comes in and prepares everything.





Ukraine and Oxford on the anniversary of the invasion

Interviewing Oxford Ukrainian Scholars and refugee coordinators as Russia's invasion of Ukraine reached its one year anniversary.

Jack Twyman

Friday 24th February 2023 marked a year since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with the anniversary Peace Rally in Radcliffe Square attracting impressive crowds in a strong show of Oxford's solidarity. The University launched a Ukrainian Scholarship scheme in May last year to help post-graduates from across Ukraine live and study in Oxford.

Cherwell interviewed three recipients of the Ukrainian Scholarship alongside the Programme Coordinator for 'Refugee Academic Futures' and a member of the Kharkiv and Przemyśl Project (KHARPP). Cherwell also caught up with a Romanian engineer involved in provision for Ukrainian refugees who first spoke to Cherwell a year ago, and visited a special Ukrainian exhibition at the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Sofia Nosirova is a student on the Ukrainian Scholarship Scheme. Studying Historical Linguistics has always been her dream and "this scheme was at Oxford, so I felt a responsibility to take this opportunity to apply, and I didn't believe I would be admitted". When she arrived she found "the people here are extremely supportive and helpful and that outdid expectations".

She adds that Oxford events have fostered a "community of people and [an] environment where everyone wants to share experiences." However, "[y]ou do feel very isolated - my longest stay abroad was Michaelmas term". This is exacerbated by having her parents and grandparents back in Kyiv.

“You do feel very isolated. My longest stay abroad was Michaelmas.”

There are many potential trigger points in Oxford. From overhearing Russian-speakers, to being presumed to speak Russian and like Russian culture, and people misunderstanding the situation. Sofia says this means there is "a constant feeling of danger actually here and anywhere abroad. Anywhere ... outside Eastern Europe". Thankfully, she adds, "college are being really supportive of students' well-being".

After arriving in Poland her "biggest shock was the civilian plane [at the airport] because I was scared of it. I have never seen a military plane but I have heard them. This plane was white, grey, and ridiculously big. All the people were so relaxed and living carefree as if there was no war in their town".

Sofia spent five months in Ukraine during 2022 and tells me that "people are trying to go on with their lives. They are attempting to find this war-life balance". Generally, "[p]eople are succeeding".

In response to whether she finds it hard to relate to people here, Sofia says she places people in several categories: "There are Ukrainians who were in Ukraine on the 24th of February. These people have a huge variety of experiences and I don't understand all of them, but we are kind of together. [Then] there are Ukrainians who are not in Ukraine on the 24th of February. They're kind of the same group as us however they don't fully get it and sometimes they have the wrong story."

The next category is "Eastern Europeans", who can relate from Soviet times, as "they hate Russia", but "they don't get it either. They're not supposed to get it. I don't want them to get it. I don't want anyone to get it". The fourth group is people from

post-colonial countries because "they hate colonialism", but they do not have the same connection to Russia. This categorisation places many westerners firmly outside of any capacity to relate, and no more is this shown than in Sofia's candid account of the outbreak of war.

On the night before the war broke out, Sofia was due to go on a trip with her friend to a concert. She revivifies how "in the taxi on the way to the train station we were reading the news and discussing it with our driver and trying to decide if we should go or not". Then, "suddenly we heard an explosion. And you know, we hadn't heard explosions before. We didn't know what an explosion sounded like. And that explosion was pretty far away. It was outside the city. So it wasn't very loud - wasn't very clear. And you were like whoa, is this an explosion or is it not?"

This continued when they arrived at the station and they went inside. Eventually they decided on their plans: "Well, why not? It's not less safe than here. So we took the train." Soon "we were sitting on the train, waiting for it to leave. And we heard another explosion. I was still not sure if it was an explosion. The third one. That one was louder but we were still not sure because there was no siren and no alert". Sofia tells me that five minutes after each explosion a piece of news would confirm it as an explosion, "and we were still discussing our options when the train departed".

Once they arrived after many delays they found a cafe with wifi as Sofia needed to hold an online class "but only one person

came and we decided not to have a class today because today is such a special day. You shouldn't study". Unsurprisingly the concert was cancelled and they went to the bus stop: "We took the bus that was about two or three hours late because of the shelling because the road was destroyed and the bus had to go through the fields. So you imagine the mental state of the driver."

Sofia and her friend made it to Lviv and spent a week renovating a bomb shelter which they immediately moved into. Sofia told Cherwell "I'm so glad I wasn't alone".

Sofia's stoicism is striking. She tells me she plans to go back to Kyiv during the Spring vacation. She is positive in her outlook and believes that Ukraine will be victorious.

Sofia finishes the interview by noting that "war changes everything, especially your perception of life". She continues: "Something I'd like to say to all the people helping Ukrainians is it depends on the person and on the trauma, but you cannot make it right. You can make it better. You will not make those people happy. You will make those people okay. You can help them to deal with their problems, but you can not solve them. And you cannot make them happy, just make them feel safe. And even if you do your best, they will still be extremely grateful. They will feel so much better."

Daria Koltsova, another Ukrainian Scholar, is an artist focusing on social and political problems. She told Cherwell: "Oxford gave me the opportunity to continue my practice, to keep working and be able to get a supportive, intelligent community to collaborate and discuss... Oxford is very supportive. However the whole country is."

“War changes everything, especially your perception of life.”

I came here from Germany and the difference is obvious.”

One trigger point for Daria “is the idea that Ukrainian refugees are privileged”. Daria is an active figure on the Oxford art scene having held a talk in early February at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in Oxford. She told Cherwell: “All my art is built on artistic research about war, traumas, and resilience. I gathered bunches of stories. I worked with refugees and military people to create the projects, I engaged families of missing people, I analysed my own traumas and inter-generational traumas as well. For me art is a weapon and a chance to deal with my traumas, to sublimate. Now I’m working on four projects about war and colonial traumas.”

Looking towards the future Daria says: “I feel that we all changed too much, there are many years of hard work to restore the country. I feel myself a part of the lost generation and we now have so many challenges to overcome, to decide where to live, to be useful for the country and to find our ways to live a happy life. We will never feel safe again near Russia. I know that we will win, but the price is enormous, the best were killed, 60% got really serious psychological traumas, young people became injured, thousands of Ukrainian children were kidnapped to Russia. It sounds like an amount of work for 2-3 generations.”

Yaroslava Bukhta is also acrecipient of the Ukrainian scholarship. She believes in the importance of the scholarship as “here we have the opportunity to represent Ukraine in the academic world and learn the skills and knowledge essential for the reconstruction of our country in the future”.

She adds: “It highlights the necessity of the decolonising of Ukraine as a locus of study - since in academia it is still often viewed through the lenses of ‘post-soviet’ rhetorics. Luckily, the changes are happening already, and we as Ukrainian scholars in Oxford are doing our best to be the drivers of those changes.”

Being in Oxford during the war is difficult: “In a sense, it is like living in two realities: in one of them you are pursuing a degree in the best educational institution in the world and doing your best to come out a great professional; in another one you keep monitoring the situation in your home country and worrying for eloved ones.”

However, Yaroslava is upbeat. She told Cherwell: “Still, it is a daily reminder of what we are here for: to be able to build a better future for our country and the children of those who are now protecting Ukraine and the world by the price of their lives.

“On the 23rd February last year I had plans for work, studies and had work for my first masters degree. On the 24th we woke up at 5am from calls from our parents and swtiched on the news. It felt quite like a bad dream, it was very surreal and didn’t feel like it would last for a long term. But two, three weeks and months later you realise that it’s not a sprint, it’s a long term marathon.

“War is not an experience that any of us are ready for. Imagine normal life here in Oxford with lots of things going on around, and this is all suddenly interrupted by missiles that can kill your family and loved ones at any moment. Your friends take up arms and go to fight on the frontline. Life has changed completely. It goes on in a very different way than it used to be before the 24th February.

“I was in Ukraine when the war started. I spent the first two weeks under the Russian Occupation together with my family. We managed to escape. I went to Brussels to stay at my aunt’s place. I started working again in Brussels as a journalist as I thought it was important to bring a Ukrainian perspective into the Brussels media world. And to be able to speak about Ukraine and raise attention. “The scholarship I have here in Oxford emerged as a response by the University of Oxford to the beginning of the full scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. I believe the role of us 26 Ukrainian Scholars is to a greater extent make an influence in each of our fields, and to bring a Ukrainian perspective into these fields, something that has been absent for many, many years.

“Each of these bright minds can help to change the situation in the World. War in my country made me more sensitive to conflicts in other countries. It made me think more globally in a sense of the changes that each of us can make in our own countries, to make the world generally a better place within which to live.”

Asked what she would say to Oxford students, Yaroslava told Cherwell: “Each one of us here has an incredible opportunity not only to get something from this place, but also to meet so many people from different countries. My message would be to stay sensitive to the real world. The world doesn’t end at the walls of this University. These are real issues, real challenges, and real peoples’ lives [beyond these walls]. Don’t waste your opportunity to make someone’s life better.”

Yaroslava believes a certain ‘war fatigue’ is setting in among the University, the Colleges and the wider Oxford community, and “therefore, we are trying to do our best to contribute to the war effort from abroad and appreciate any signs of help and solidarity coming from the Oxford environment”, with Friday’s Peace Rally being a key part of this.

Myroslava Hartmond is the Programme Coordinator for ‘Refugee Academic Futures’ at the Oxford Department of International Development. She told Cherwell: “The intake of 26 sanctuary scholars across 23 different colleges on the new Graduate Scheme for Ukraine Refugees, alongside other programmes that brought brilliant Ukrainians to Oxford — both students and fellows — is completely unprecedented. We have the highest number of Ukrainians studying and working at Oxford than ever before. At no point in the University’s history had there been a scholarship geared specifically towards Ukrainians.

“Some have voiced their concerns that Ukrainians had been given an unfair priority as white Europeans (by contrast with refugees from the Middle East and Africa in previous years), calling out systemic bias. However, the [University’s] dynamic response has demonstrated that the system can and must do more for refugees if they want to attract the best talent from around the globe, and a new infrastructure is being put in place to provide more financial, administrative, and welfare support for those applying to the University from a background of displacement.

“What’s more, if many endowments for national scholarships limit their yearly intake to one student, and Ukraine has been independent since 1991, then present numbers have given the country a chance to catch up. For so long, Ukraine has been in the shadow of its Soviet legacy and the

colonial narrative of its eastern neighbour — Russia, benefiting from neither EU or Commonwealth frameworks.

“While both humanitarian and military aid remain essential to Ukraine as the war drags on, we see evidence of a new resilience and self-awareness developing in the mainframe of all Ukrainians — both at home and abroad. No matter where we find ourselves, a part of our mind and our heart is always with those people and places that we left behind. Thus, every Ukrainian shoulders a double burden, regardless of the benefits that displacement may bring in the form of free housing, financial support, or scholarships. Most Ukrainians I have spoken with intend to return home as soon as they are able, many have done so already.

“The war in Ukraine has put the country — its people, its culture — on the international agenda, and a year on from the start of the shocking events we must ensure that momentum is not lost in campaigning for a better representation of Ukrainian content in the public imagination, media discourse, academic curricula, [and] in museum collections. Working closely with Multaka-Oxford, the Refugee Studies Centre (which administrates the Ukrainian scholarship) has developed the first-ever after-hours tour of the Ukrainian exhibits in their important 500,000 item anthropological collection. This will be an effort to better the University’s understanding of Ukrainian material culture, as well as an effort to decolonize some of the narratives around it, frequently imported wholesale from Russian sources.”

Charlotte Farrar is a member of the refugee response initiative KHARPP, founded by Oxford alumnus Ada Wordsworth. She told Cherwell she took a gap year and first came to Przemyśl last summer. The city receives many Ukrainian refugees due to its proximity as the first major station after crossing the Ukrainian border.

Charlotte first got involved at St Andrews University, lobbying the Russian Department to add more Ukrainian elements to the curriculum. However, she says “I felt like that wasn’t really sufficient and as I have been studying Russian for 3 years now I wanted to do something useful with that”. Studying Russian has had implications for Charlotte. She told Cherwell: ‘I think there’s sort of a strange balance at the moment, especially among people who speak Russian or study Russian. They have the feeling of sort of shame and how that perpetuates this imperialism and, you know, cultural domination, but at the same time, given the number of Ukrainians that speak Russian, it’s also a useful tool.”

Asked what she would recommend to Oxford Students wanting to help Ukraine, Charlotte told Cherwell: “There are many differing levels of involvement. I did a lot of stuff at the university and at the community level at first, and I think that was meaningful. We raised hundreds of pounds and sent them for military equipment. I also know people who have been hosting Ukrainian refugees.

“I think there are ways on a more local level to get involved to support Ukrainians, within your own community. But I think on sort of the higher level, you just need that first connection to use as a jumping off point.”

Charlotte says her Russian professors and Ukrainian friends within the department were her staying point: “Thankfully, within

the UK, I think all the Russian departments are quite connected, so they knew KHARPP. I think just having that one connection is sort of enough. Also, finding active organisations on social media is great.”

Regarding the future, Charlotte told Cherwell that “there was a lot of talk, from Western analysts, about how we would see a huge flow of refugees coming out in December and January, because of power outages and the harsh winter”. However, “that really hasn’t materialised.” . With a new spring offensive planned by the Russians Charlotte says that “there could be an increase but most people cannot really predict accurately”.

There are disparities in the treatment of refugees, and as 50% of the volunteers are Polish local customs are translated into this work. “There are quite a lot of Roma, Sinti people who have left Ukraine since February 24.” She adds that “they have an especially hard time accessing benefits as refugees. They’re often not allowed into the shelters for ‘safety reasons’. And they often have to argue with people in order to secure food or clothing”.

Charlotte is originally from Tuscaloosa, Alabama and tells me of the experience her family had sponsoring her Ukrainian friend: “I think especially given the international reputation of Alabama, seeing people in this fairly small community in Alabama come together to help this woman was quite heartwarming”.

Charlotte is also working with Dattalion, a witness database that aims to document Russian war crimes, read online for some accounts.

Finally, Cherwell interviewed Florin Musiuc, a Romanian engineer who now lives and works in Hertfordshire. Cherwell first spoke with Florin a year ago to learn more about the Romania-Ukraine refugee crisis. Florin fundraises in the UK to support his friends back in his hometown of Gura Humorului in Romania, near the

border with Ukraine. The neighbouring town, Siret, is a popular crossing point to Ukraine.

The situation in Florin’s hometown is ‘fluid’ but, a year on, “things are quite organised now, compared to the first weeks, and we just don’t notice as much.... It is a continuous process, they come and go”.

Asked what happened to the 60 families his contacts

in Gura Hymorului were hosting, Florin told Cherwell: “At least one or two families have stayed since last time we spoke. These are families with young children who decided to stay after getting attached to one another. Some have decided to go back home, or stay in Romania, or transit to relatives in Poland and other European countries.” Florin says that they have names and contact numbers for “each and every” Ukrainian they have hosted over the past year, surmounting to hundreds.

Surprisingly, Florin says that “a lot of Ukrainians decided to go back - as while the war is still unpredictable, it is more predictable than it used to be. Those who are less exposed or at lower risk of attack have decided to go back go back home and get on with their lives”.

Asked whether Russia is looking for a way out, Florin says: “Unfortunately I think Russia is on a one way road - they could pull out but that would be the end of Putin’s reign.”

For expanded interviews read the full piece at Cherwell Online.

“
For me, art is a weapon and a chance to deal with my traumas.”

“
We must ensure that momentum is not lost in campaigning for a better representation of Ukrainians.”

CHERBADLY

New College Bell Tower to Install Water Slide

In an effort to draw in more tourists and increase revenue this upcoming summer, New College has announced its intention to install a water slide which will descend from the top of the old New College Bell Tower into the nearby river Cherwell.

The fourteenth century gothic Bell Tower, a Grade I listed historical site, will be left intact except for the addition of a spiral water slide which will wrap around the tower before sending riders out over the chapel and through the main quad of the college. The water slide will be aesthetically pleasing according to the construction firm and will, “barely change the look of the college except for the bright right water slide part.”

The waterslide will feature music performed by the New College Chapel organ and choir pumped in via stereo to provide “the proper mood for reflection” as the riders zoom through the historic college grounds. Visitors will get a view of the famous spot where that one scene in Harry

Potter was filmed, as well as the priceless pieces of medieval and modern art which line the cloisters all while having a slippery-slidey joy ride. The slide will then spill out into the river Cherwell where riders can swim or punt back to the shore.

New College has also announced that they will be selling tie-dye t-shirts and piña coladas for visitors to enjoy while waiting in line for the waterslide. “The idea is to make New College into a fun-in-the-sun summer destination for the whole family,” said the college Chaplain. The New College summer experience will also feature a yacht rock band playing the easy listening hits of the 1970s and, for the kids, a touch pool aquarium full of exotic sea creatures. A team of New College graduate students will operate the water slide and the limited time summer experiences as part of their Trinity term requirements.

To book your tickets for this summer visit the New College website to find the special two day, three night family of four packages that include fast passes to skip the line.

Magdalen, in an effort to compete with the coming summer attractions at New, has announced the construction of a loop-de-loop roller coaster that will take riders on a 240 km/h ride through the 15th century college.



After six weeks of peace and quiet, it almost seems like a Third Intifada has engulfed the Oxford Union. It first began with my previous iteration, whose inartful words caused many an angry reaction from various (ex-)members of committee. While some were legitimately aggrieved, it seems like the New College Power Bottom took the most offense, taking to email to complain about his lack of fancy seats at debate dinner and some harmless fun poked at him in Jevelyn. Astonishingly, he decided to not only announce that he will not do any further work, but admit that his actions constitute a dereliction of duty, a violation of the Union’s rules. What a great way to #BLOOM disciplinary complaints against his sizable Power Bottom!

To make matters worse, the Union announced the visit of the Israeli Ambassador. In predictable fashion, some totally not antisemitic students decided to propose a vote of no confidence, seemingly oblivious to the fact that stating grounds for a vote of no confidence invalidates the motion. Of course, they could not help themselves but write some totally not antisemitic dog whistles, accusing the Alcoholic Anglican of “conspiring with foreign governments”. I’m sure he is also a Freemason (cupcake edition), a member of the Illuminati, a secret Lizard Person, is Turning the Frogs Gay, and will institute a New World Order from the hallowed halls of Frewin Court. Moreover, it almost seems like the protests outside only engendered more to attend the talk of the Israeli Ambassador. Great work promoting Union events, protesters I’m sure DComms is very happy!

As we enter Seventh Week, election day looms. And what is a Union election without a Sixth Week Surprise. This time, it is Resignation from Access Committee 2: Electric Boogaloo! After declaring her intention to attend all Hilary term Access Committee meetings and then not attending three consecutive ones, it seems like the fate that befell Chairman Now-Was has also afflicted his arch-nemesis, the (ex-)Library Liberator. The Graduate was, predictably, more than amused. But whatever the merits of

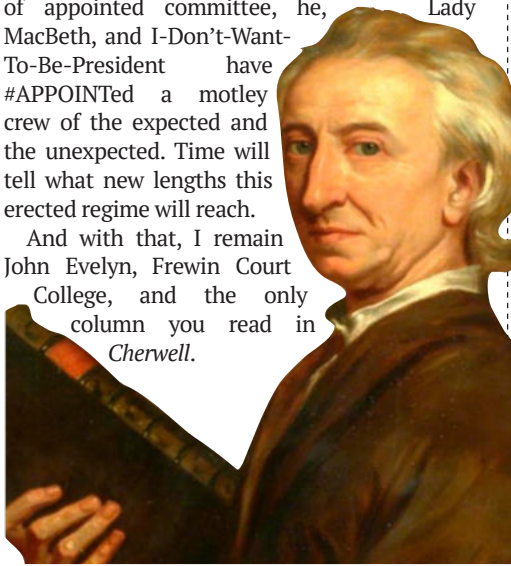
removing Now-Was, Jevelyn could not help but feel a bit bad for the removal of the (ex-)Library Liberator from her position. Now her Librarian and Treasurer candidates outrank her on D1.

In the world of the Lightweight Heavyweight, it seems like she is running a tighter ship, with the Duck Lover deciding to pursue both Standing up and sitting on the Secretary’s desk. While she doubtless has stronger Seccies, time will tell if her smaller slate can #DEVELOP a strong enough PV against the (ex-)Library Liberator’s deluge of wannabe-BNOC seccies. Jevelyn has a pretty good track record of predicting electoral outcomes. But this time around, he is now totally confused on how this election will go. I guess we will all be surprised #COME Saturday morning.

And what is a Union election without some cross-slate-cest. Last Jevelyn heard, Macaulay Culkin’s doppelganger’s treating expedition has left him with a new lady love. What a forbidden romance indeed. I wonder what else will transpire between these stressed and repressed hacks...

And as we meet the twilight days of the Alcoholic Anglican’s reign, so comes the erection of the Eton Dildo. Through a dizzying series of maneuvers and a culling of appointed committee, he, Lady MacBeth, and I-Don’t-Want-To-Be-President have #APPOINTed a motley crew of the expected and the unexpected. Time will tell what new lengths this erected regime will reach.

And with that, I remain John Evelyn, Frewin Court College, and the only column you read in Cherwell.



THANK YOU!

to our wonderful contributors, columnists, artists, and editors, HT23

Zoe Abereoje
Emerald Ace-Acquah
Seni Akinduro
Izzie Alexandrou
Florence Allen
Suzanne Antelme
Felicite Baroudel
Anya Biletsky
Ashmeet Bhaumik
Flora Bigham
James Bromfield
Laura Brink
Thomas Bristow
James Bromfield
Olivia Boyle
Charlie Bowden
Freya Buckley
Cecilia Catmur
Sharon Chau
Cartell Cheema
Matthew Clemmet
Mizy Clifton
Coco Cottam
Veronica Corielli
Jill Cushen
Huda Daghem
Luke Dale
Bintia Dennog
Jack Dillon
Anna Dowell
Alex Dunn
Isaac Ettinghausen
Nicole Dimitrova
Fatima El-Faki
Oliver Elliot-Williams
John Evelyn
Tom Farmer
Chloe Field
D’Arcy Yasar de France
Albert Genower
Nicole Gibbons
Amelia Glover-Jewesbury
Anika Gupta
Maeve Hagerty
Oliver Hall
Rufus Hall
Eoin Hanlon
Sean Hartnett
Alexandra Hedström-Blake
Jonathan Honnor
Phin Hubbard
Harry Human
Rahul Jakati
Freya Jones
Dowon Jung
Henry Kay
Andrea Kovacic
Charlotte Lai
Keng Yu Lai
Mei Law
Matus Lazar

Kevin Lee
Isobel Lewis
Canqi Li
Meg Lintern
Sophie Lord
Wang Sum Luk
Katerina Lygaki
Sophie Magalhaes
Sahar Malaika
Julia Males
Iseult de Mallet Burgess
Max Marks
Jessica Mason
May McEvoy
Anuj Mishra
Kobi Mohan
Samuel Moore
Leila Moore
Nina Naidu
Ollie Nicholls
Natascha Norton
Stephanie Nourse
Deborah Ogunnoiki
Matthew Oulton
Itsoghena Oyedeji
Antonio Patteri
Charlotte Perry
Duncan Pinchen
Michael Pista
Rebecca Powell
Farabee Pushpita
Andrew Raynes
Sonya Ribner
Joey Ricciardiello
Beatrice Ricketts
Jenny Robinson
Ifan Rogers
Iustina Roman
Ciara Rushton
Adam Saxon
Cathy Scoon
Hannah Selig
Evie Sharp
Spencer Shia
Charlotte Slater
Martha Smith
Anna Stephen
Abigail Stevens
Flora Symington
Daniel Thomas
Oliver Thomas
Jakub Trybull
Jack Twyman
Tilda Walker
Phoebe Walls
Andy Wei
Ursula White
Maggie Wilcox
Ciara Williams
Alfie Williams-Hughes
Ayaat Yassin-Kassab

Masthead

Editors-in-Chief
Dream Chronicler
#SlayerInChief

Deputy Editors-in-Chief
Madam President
The Gourmand
Jonesing for News
Microsoft Excellent
Outsourcing Queen
(Fr)In(ge)Design

News and Investigations Editors
Temple Lounge Correspondent
Clever, Healthy and Terrible
Shittest Story
Baby BNOC
Principle Rower
Uber and Above
Return of Balliol
Flourishing

Comment Editors
Issue of the Week
Traffic Obsessed
Smiling but Serious

Profile Editors
Bringing Vogue to Cherwell
Artist in Residence
The Belle of Cherwell
The Pet Whisperer

Features Editors
Definitely Not AI
Gutter Correspondent
Bringing Investigations to Features
Comedy Gold
One Man Wonder

Culture Editors
Electric Viola Enthusiast
The Experimentalist
In-house Rihanna Stan
Cozy Book Reader
International Film Fan
Graphic Design Whiz
Stage's Freshest Face
Oxford Drama Compiler
Self-proclaimed Cult Member
Cherwell's Own TikTok Star
Wannabe Parisienne
Formalwear Hater
Fashionable Biker
Average Fringe Enjoyer

Life Editors
Buck the Trends
Jessisthebest
Twenty-first Century Cupid

Food Editors
"My laptop's died!"

Sports Editors
InDesign Wiz
"I'm sure it's fine"
Eoin "Parisian" Hanlon

Puzzles
Puzzling Commitment

Cartoons
Sean Harshel

Katerina Lygaki
Editor-in-Chief

We've reached another inevitable end. Have I fought blood, sweat and tears to get here? Well... no. Have I spent one too many afternoons stressing to get here? Yes. Will I spend many more afternoons stressing over something else in the future? Definitely.

I won't bore you with the clichéd musings on change being the only constant in life, but I will indulge myself *for the last time* and share my thoughts on beginnings, endings and everything in between (sorry for paraphrasing one of my favourite books growing up, it simply wouldn't be an editorial written by me if I didn't insert a somewhat cringey reference somewhere). Anyways, back to beginnings: this term began with a lot of trepidation and excitement. Cut to 8 weeks later, and I've lived, laughed, loved my way through the paper and not to be cheesy, but I think that the team has done an incredible job this term.

I have worked on Cherwell for the past year (thank you Jill and Charlie for doing God's work and hiring me) and it has been hard and stressful, but it has also been extremely fun. I've learnt so much from everyone here, from making pretty Instagram stories, to creatively laying-in pages, to caring for a team. I've sent out passive aggressive messages through my horoscopes, set up a lot of bad dates for Cherpse, and dished out a lot of unsolicited dating advice. I've forced my friends to read my shitty articles on college sport rankings or my favourite Greek foods and made them take pictures of me outside the Rad Cam (go show our photo competition some love, a lot of hard work and embarrassment has gone into it). I will honestly miss it all, and while there have been moments where I thought I wasn't cut out for student journalism, I wouldn't change anything.

Maybe I'm getting sappy because, as I've mentioned many times, I'm a finalist and the end of my time at Cherwell concedes

with the end of my time here at uni. Or maybe it's just because I'm listening to 'Kiss me' by Sixpence None The Richer while writing this. Either way I have loved and hated my time here, and I wouldn't change it for the world. It's bittersweet to close a chapter in your life, but inevitable. It is time for new adventures and whatnot. I'm ready to live, laugh, love, and slay wherever life takes me next.

Finishing working on Cherwell means saying goodbye to a lot of things. Here is a list of the things that I'll be happy to see the back of: Facebook Messenger group chats; Isis Magazine meetings; printers; the Oxford University Press Office; the Head of the River pub; Oxfesses about Cherwell; the twinge of self-hatred I get from "knowing what's going on at the Union"; blank spaces at the bottom of documents; long Wednesday afternoons in the Choffice; writing these editorials; etc etc etc.

While this list is long (really very long, I had to cut it down by about 150 words), it's matched by a far greater list of things that I will Actually Be Quite Sad about leaving behind. Don't worry, I won't bore you with the same rhetorical device that I started with, but trust me, it's a long list.

As much as I've laughed about previous editors getting misty-eyed when they hit their last couple of weeks in the position, I did find myself – despite my best

Isaac Ettinghausen
Editor-in-Chief

efforts – a little bit emotional when I was preparing the "thank you" graphic opposite this column. It really is a labour of love, and it's hard not to feel a little bit possessive handing the proverbial baby over to Meg and Izzie, as well as thankful for all that the experience has given me. I've met great friends on Cherwell, with whom I hope to stay great friends (although this relies on the assumption that we'll still have things to talk about after I've uninstalled InDesign). I've reported on some really interesting stuff, and I've learnt a lot about a lot that I wasn't aware of before (although I'm still not sure what a Returning Officer does).

Before I begin my pivot to becoming an OUDS boy (two post-audition rejections won't faze me), I'd like to shout out a few people who have made this whole experience worthwhile: first, of course, to my incredible co-Editor Kat; Pieter; Charlie; Meg; the rest of the fantastic SET; everyone who's written for or edited the paper this term; my friend Dylan, who himself edits pretty much everything that

I write; and most of all to everyone who has picked up a copy (even if it's just to get annoyed at something we've written). I wish the absolute best of luck to Izzie and Meg as EiCs next term, and can't wait to watch what you do with the paper with an equal mix of jealousy and joy.



Leader: An inside scoop from the Cherwell News machine

are extreme, with threats and entreaties sent to the News inbox in abundance. One subject of the Nwelve case told me: "I trust you are aware that printing buzzwords next to someone's name in an attempt to create a nonexistent "scandal" is to journalism, what paragliding is to launching a Falcon 9 rocket." Well, that certainly made me raise an eyebrow, but didn't make me any less confident in our methodology and journalistic rigour. With substantial evidence linked to our articles and diligently filed by section editors, *Cherwell* has shown its ability to hold those in power to account, from university staff to Oxford Union hacks and terminated Academic Visitors.

Quite why it so often falls to students to investigate claims of academic corruption in our very place of study is a question I shan't try to answer, but I know many at *Cherwell* have embraced the responsibility.

Sometimes, however, I wonder how this affects us as people. Is it "normal" to respond calmly when faced with legal threats or furious tirades in response to

your writing? I also wonder whether those around us see us as news reporters ahead of anything else, as it's not always possible to switch out of a working capacity. The tip you hear about JCR drama while chilling with friends could be every bit as valuable as the quote you pick up while running around Frewin Court with a cup of coffee, but how do your friends see you as result of this?

Perhaps this is why the majority of my friends are, in fact, fellow student journalists, I'd like to use the last part of this leader to thank the News team for being so brilliant to work with. I'd also like thank Charlie Hancock and Pieter Garicano in particular, for giving me so many tips on journalistic practice and, accordingly, the confidence to lead investigations at *Cherwell*. Finally, I'd like to wish the incoming Editors Izzie Alexandrou and Meg Lintern every success for Trinity, when I'm excited to continue my work on Oxford's biggest and most surprising investigative stories.



Freya Jones
Deputy Editor

The Onyeka Nwelve case on this week's front page is the culmination of intensive work by this term's News team, and a testament to how far our standards of investigative journalism have come at *Cherwell*.

During my time with the newspaper, I've been lucky enough to work on a number of long-term stories, each of which posed its own set of challenges. The Nwelve case was no different, adding to our collective experience of how to handle sources and deal with the reactions of the people we write about. Sometimes, these reactions

Oxford, the 15-Minute city, and the birth of a lie

Alex Dunn

It was impossible to miss the commotion of February 18th. As I left my room on that morning, the first hint that something unusual was afoot was the police drone being launched out of the front quad of my college. By this time, I had an idea of what I was about to stumble upon. As a native citizen of Oxford, I have been following closely the backlash against the County Council’s Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and traffic filters, which have become controversial issues beyond the city’s borders. I was therefore unsurprised, upon leaving college, to see a “don’t tread on me” flag fluttering above the crowd. Many of the protesters were not even Oxford residents; most of the opposition to the Council has been external, and typically based on cynical misrepresentations of what the policies are, and what they seek to achieve. I soon found myself debating a man- not a local- who believed that 15-minute cities are the thin end of the wedge for total global domination by the World Economic Forum.. Bewildered, I scuttled off to the Bodleian, where - the noise of the protesters still distractingly audible through the window - I asked myself: how on earth did we get here?

The first thing that should be noted is the distinction between the policies of the City Council, and the County Council. The idea of 15-minute cities is a key element of the City Council’s “Local Plan 2040”, a broad vision for the development of the city over the next 20 years. According to the plan, a 15-minute city is one which is “planned in such a way as to optimise the opportunity for people to be able to reach a wide range of facilities [...] within a 15-minute walk of their home”. Although this concept is tied to the goal of reducing car use, the plan does not include any references to the traffic restriction policies, which are the purview of the County, not City Council. Claims from conspiracy theorists that the County Council’s policies are attempts to “lock citizens in” their 15-minute neighbourhood are completely misguided.

The central issue of the February 18th protests was the County Council’s proposal to introduce six new traffic filters on key connecting roads around the city. This plan does *not* designate 20-minute zones, as conspiracy theorists claim. Traffic filters are a way of controlling the number and type of vehicles that pass through a certain point on the road- these are not physical barriers blocking the road, as can be found in some streets in Cowley. The primary goal of this scheme is to reduce unnecessary car journeys within the city, so there are numerous exceptions made to give free passage to buses, taxis, business goods vehicles, care workers and blue badge holders. Also, residents of the city are permitted 100 days per year in which they can travel through the filters with no charge.

As a consequence, of rampant online misinformation, however, outsiders to the local politics of Oxford have been given evidence for their conspiracy theory of authoritarian government control. Take, for instance, the claim that 93% of Oxford residents had voted against the proposal. The origins of this idea lie in the first public consultation on the proposal, in which a free-text box was provided to give respondents the opportunity to give their comments on the benefits of the scheme. In this box, 7% of respondents wrote comments categorised as supportive the scheme. Keep in mind, this was by no means a binary poll – by comparison, 8% of the comments were categorised as disagreeing with the scheme. Yet in the mind of the bad-faith anti-traffic filter activist, 100% minus 7% support equals 93% opposition. This becomes a tweet, which becomes a retweet, followed by comments. Soon people are repeating the idea that “93% said no” to the traffic filters. People then read this, and assume that there had been a formal poll on the issue. This morphs into the lie that 93% of Oxford residents had voted against the proposal, the type of lie that drives thousands to take to the streets in protest.

The traffic filters will undoubtedly increase journey times for those who choose to travel around the city by car, unless bus services are improved in tandem. Of course, for people with mobility issues, walking, cycling, or taking public transport is much more difficult, and they may still need to travel by car. There have concerns from local businesses that the traffic filters will lead discourage potential customers from driving to their premises, resulting in a loss of revenue.

When you cut through the noxious fog of social media hyperbole, a genuine, honest debate is uncovered. As students, we are part-time citizens of Oxford, and have a right to be a part of it. Whether or not you support the traffic filters, remember that you are able to register to vote in Oxford, and can participate in the City and County Council elections. The next time an rowdy mob comes to distract you from your essay crisis, remember that you have just as much a right to make your voice heard!

Will we no longer accept religious views in politics?

James Bromfield

Kate Forbes launched her SNP leadership campaign in prime position as the bookies’ favourite. Within 24 hours her campaign was leading the conversation and headlining the news. But not for the reasons she wanted.

In her initial media round when questioned over her previously stated views on same-sex marriage, Forbes doubled down. She expressed personal disapproval of same-sex marriage, pre-marital sex, and also reiterated personal opposition to the recent Scottish Gender Recognition Act. The basis of these views? Her religion. Forbes is an active member of the Free Church of Scotland, an evangelical and Calvinist denomination of Christianity which believes that the Bible is God’s word.

This is certainly not the first time that a political career has been hampered by religious views. Notably, Tim Farron’s leadership of the Liberal Democrats was dogged by his Christian beliefs. He resigned after poor results in the 2017 General Election, stating that he had become “torn between living as a faithful Christian and serving as a political leader”.

As someone about to write a Master’s thesis on the theme of promoting religious diversity and tolerance, something made me feel uneasy about this situation. Would it have been better for Forbes to be dishonest in the face of questions over her views? Must politicians strip themselves of all personal religious beliefs? I do not support Forbes’ views, nor would I vote for her, nor am I at all invested in the success of the SNP – but answering ‘Yes’ to either of the previous two questions seems deeply problematic if we are to build a religiously diverse and tolerant society.

Partly it appears to come down to the question: ‘What do we want from our politicians?’. Scotland, and the United Kingdom, operates under the premise of representative democracy – we vote for people to represent us. But do we want elected members who ‘represent’ us in the sense that they will most effectively and competently advocate for our needs and interests, or do we want to elect those who ‘represent’ us in the sense of having a similar background to us (looking, acting, and thinking like we do). Whilst often there are, rightly, calls to increase the notice given to the latter type of representation, in moves to increase opportunities for minority representation – it would seem on the whole we vote with the first type of representation in mind. This is particularly the case when voting in constituency-based systems (Single Member Districts in Holyrood Elections) where one is not just voting for their local representative, but also with the make-up of the national government in mind.

Yet, if we are voting for politicians to represent our interests most effectively, and to form the most competent governments, then should we not accept a distinction between a politician’s personal views and their professional views. This is perhaps particularly the case when situations such as the cost of living crisis and the Ukraine war increase the need for effective governance more than ever. If the intention is not to represent us in the second sense, but primarily the first, then can we not accept that politicians personally hold views, which they do not intend to represent in their professional capacity, and thus will not be involved in their policy direction or their campaign pledges.

In her Sky News interview, Forbes initially retorts: “You’re asking me if I would impose my views on other people”. She is quite clear that this is not the case. She goes on to say, “for me, it would be wrong according to my faith, but for you I have no idea what your faith is. So, in a free society you can do what you want.” Does this particular quote not illustrate exactly the attitude that is required if we are to promote a diverse and yet tolerant society?

A distinction between the personal and private vs. the professional and public. A mutual respect that, as individuals, we can hold views and engage in discussion and attempted persuasion on such views, but that at the end of the day each individual is at liberty to hold their own private views, so long as it causes others no harm.

In other jobs equality protections around religion as a protected characteristic are clear, although often tested. Where one’s private religion does not negatively interfere with their professional capacity one cannot be discriminated against. Forbes has promised she will “not roll back on any rights that already exist in Scotland”, and ultimately is the leader of a party that will collectively decide policy, not a sole dictator. Her personal views will not become SNP policy. But is the problem here that politics is different to other jobs? Are we unable to untangle the personal from the professional in politics? Either consciously, through active campaigning or profiling such views via their platform, or subconsciously, through biases during voting and equal interactions with constituents – perhaps politics is a profession where the interwoven nature of personal and professional is too messy to separate. After all, we are particularly interested in the personal lives of politicians – most recently, the character and misdemeanours of Boris Johnson became one of the many reasons for his downfall.

Forbes’ response to this? She cites the example of Angela Merkel, former Chancellor of Germany, who in 2017 allowed a Bundestag vote on same-sex marriage. The vote passed, and Merkel implemented the legislation – but Merkel had personally voted against the legislation, voting instead in line with her ‘conscience’ on the issue. Despite her personal opposition, Merkel stated after the vote that she hoped the result “not only promotes respect between different opinions but also brings more social cohesion and peace.”

There is undoubtedly a major problem of politicians with a platform holding views that, if promulgated, would reduce individuals’ rights. And we should use the ballot box and campaigns to ensure that progressive views are promoted. But if we also advocate for a tolerant and diverse community which promotes freedoms, including religious freedom, then it seems wrong to preclude someone from a professional political role purely on the basis of private religious beliefs. If Forbes is right that the crux of the Sky interview questioning was to ask if she would impose her views on other people, then are we hypocritical to embolden ourselves to impose our views on her? I will not proclaim to give the answer, but if we are to move forward into a truly tolerant and diverse community with a representative political system then these are the questions we must face.

Image credit: Leslie Barrie / CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



State of the Art

Commenting on why the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities is a revolutionary project for the future of Oxford.

Adam Saxon

After a ground-breaking ceremony on the 23rd of February, work has officially begun on the £185 million (including an additional £10 million announced last week), 200,000 brick Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities. It seems fitting to take stock now and evaluate what such a project means for the future of Oxford and the Humanities.

The project has experienced no shortage of criticism. Concerns have been raised over Schwarzman’s support for Trump (since rescinded) as well as the environmental and economic impacts of his company, Blackstone. Holding the University to account is important, but my short time in student journalism has taught me that it is easy to get caught up in frustration and negativity at the expense of recognising the bright future of the University.

For this reason, I would like to turn to face the under-acknowledged positives. The future is bright: £185 million is an unprecedented donation for the eternally underfunded humanities and is particularly crucial given the era we are entering. The institute for ethics in AI will place Oxford at the forefront of research into questions like what it means to be human, while the new humanities cultural programme will bring the university’s research to wide new audiences through lectures, exhibitions and performances. Truly, the Centre has the potential to cement Oxford’s position as the leading destination for humanities not just in the UK, but in the World.

The new institute for ethics in AI has the potential to be particularly influential. It will have six main research themes including what AI will mean for democracy, human rights, and the environment. We are moving into a period dominated by discussions of what humanity’s relationship should be like with the artificial intelligence it creates. As such, it is vital that scientific and technological discoveries are complemented with considerations on issues like how we come to terms with what AI may mean for employment and the automation of day-to-day tasks. There is so much we are yet to understand, and the Schwarzman Centre truly cannot come quickly enough.

Another major part of the new centre will be an array of exciting venues, including a 500-seat concert hall. Professor Dan Grimley, head of humanities at Oxford stated for Cherwell that: “Oxford has a world-class music scene but has long needed a venue that could do full justice to the high standard of music making that the city sustains. Our beautifully designed 500-seater hall will be a top spec facility, with acoustics engineered by the best in the business: Ian Knowles of Arup.” The prestige of those hired to work on the project is inspiring. Bringing in the ‘best in the business’ will ensure that the facilities the building contains will be top of the range, exactly what is needed for academics

to further their research. Professor Grimley went on to talk about the range of performances that will be hosted in the new venues, with genres ranging from classical, to jazz, to south Asian music. It is particularly exciting to note the attention he brings to experimentation. If Oxford’s music scene is to remain “world-class”, he states, then significant investment will be needed now and into the future.

The university’s willingness to provide such investment is an inspiring commitment to the importance of music and the arts in the 21st century, even amidst a misguided attempt by the likes of Rishi Sunak to move the education system towards a more STEM-based focus. Indeed, developments in STEM directly affect our lives, but it is the humanities that allow us to understand where we lie in relation to such developments. This can be done through studying the past as well as the present and the future, allowing us to learn from the social and moral challenges of previous generations and draw parallels with our own.

The scale of the project is unprecedented. It will bring together 7 faculties, two institutes, 600 members of staff, as well as 140,000 books and other items from core Oxford collections. When asked by Cherwell, Professor Grimley said that with the new facilities, “the possibilities are endless!” As well as providing the environment for collaboration between departments and existing researchers, the next generation of researchers will find inspiration in the 750 new study spaces it will create, around half of which are for graduate students.

In an era of climate crisis, the project will also be state of the art in its environmental commitments. It aims to be the largest building in the UK to meet Passivhaus standards, demonstrating again Oxford’s commitment to being at the forefront of the battle against climate change. This is exciting and again is the standard we expect from an institution like Oxford. The building will combine high levels of insulation, solar power generation on the roof and heat pumps to usher in a new standard of sustainability to the university. This is impressive, and not only sets a standard for Oxford, but sets a precedent for other large construction projects, university based or otherwise.

It should also be drawn to attention how real the project will begin to feel in the coming months and years. Imagining all these venues may feel irrelevant to a student body of which many will have left by the time it reaches completion in 2025. However, those in the first year of a four-year course this year will benefit, while a full intake of undergraduates who will have the opportunity to experience the centre’s world-class facilities will matriculate later this year. The project will also feel incredibly real to Somerville students in the coming weeks and months, as a new building takes shape in their back garden.

Image:Tejvan Pettinger CC BY 2.0 via Flickr.



Let them eat turnips?



Jakub Trybull

The environment secretary’s advice to trade tomatoes for turnips is at best tone-deaf. While she is correct in advising us to eat seasonal vegetables in light of the climate crisis’ increasing strain on our food supply chains, a dismissal of the severity of shortages and a lack of a constructive plan to overcome them should not come as a surprise.

The Conservative Party has a pattern of behaviour of externalising the the issues that the UK faces to factors beyond its control, whether the excuse is the war in Ukraine, the EU, or the woke mob. Often, they miss the point that there are practical things that could have and could still be done to relieve much of these problems.

Oliver Hall

Well well well, who would have thought it? Turns out that the single market has its benefits. It is true that bigger factors are at play in this recent salad shortage - extreme seasonal changes have driven up prices on the continent too. However, the fact remains that those supermarket shelves are stocked, and as a result of red tape and import costs, ours aren’t. For decades Britain has needed a reassessment of its food industry and the reality is that consumers do need to become comfortable with paying more in exchange for food security. That is a long term shift though and in the meantime lack of government support for growers with regards to rising energy prices and temporary visas for pickers that don’t last a full season, mean that we are likely to face problems for the foreseeable future...



Adam Saxon

Though its significance pales in comparison with the seemingly endless political and economic instability we have seen over the last few years, I believe there are still significant lessons that can be learned from the current vegetable ‘crisis’ hitting supermarkets in the UK. The way in which we currently consume food, especially in the winter months, is undeniably unsustainable. If we wish to tackle

climate change, moving to more seasonal purchasing patterns are likely to play a part. However, in light of suggestions that ministers could have done more to support farmers and prevent the shortages, it seems that yet again the conservatives have managed to generate another self-made crisis.

THE SOURCE AWAKENINGS

S E R E N D I P I T Y

Spring slips back in with its sweet perfumed rotting.
Each day, it becomes more trying to try to be.
Periphrasis, circumlocution, prolixity:
it's all different ways of saying the same thing.

I cut the rose-stems in the sink, pricked fingers
angled diagonally and verdant green leaves
the softest kiss against my wrists. My chest heaves
when I think of beauty for too long— how it lingers

and refracts in the minutiae of living beings interacting with
one another... The reverential watering of the flowers
daily and the murmuring movement of hope (sour
cloyingness); incarnadine petals setting alight, for me (myth-

making morning glow). Splintering wood gives way to a crack
in the hull, and time is poured out by the bucketful like flotsam,
yet another inadvertent casualty of destiny. I used to flounder, come
up gasping for air whilst I thrashed my limbs about in the sonorous black—

until now. The vase has dried up and the chartreuse sepals droop down
with its piquant aroma. Parched, wizened, desiccated: but nonetheless,
with its sun-drenched surety, the splendour still remains. Bless
the withered stems and the thorns, bless the fervour and the frowns,

bless the serendipity and the decay. Bless you, here with me now, as I say:
indelible, infrangible, indomitable. That's what we all are together. The hush
of the heartbreak and the hum of the human spirit (intertwined harmony, lush
symphony of survival). But I am trying. And all I have is today, and today, and today.

by Farabee Pushpita

E D I T O R S ' N O T E

In Serendipity, Farabee Pushpita imagines what welcoming the simplicity
of spring could feel like. Its 'sweet perfumed rotting' pervades the space
of the poem as the narrator prepares a vase of flowers, almost afraid
of their power- 'My chest heaves/ when I think of beauty for too long'.

The second half of the piece gives way to a splintering, in which we
remember what lies behind, beneath the face of spring. The flowers may
die, but Pushpita nurtures her hope, daring to bless that which decays in
her hands. She ends with a mantra, offering up the essence of this new
season- 'today, and today, and today'.



W R I T E F O R T H E S O U R C E !

Thank you for all your contributions this term! If you are interested in
writing or illustrating for The Source, email the editors at
culturecherwell@gmail.com.



BOOKS X FASHION PHOTOSHOOT



Going for Parisian chic in the Taylorian!
Manasi Chaudhari - Master’s in Law and Finance, St Cross.



be drinking too much wine.
Y2K aesthetic with candles We



What do you think of when you think about fashion and books? Well, any sane person would think of books, cool outfits, the dark academia aesthetic, even Rory Gilmore. Well, because I’m the epitome of *not like other girls* I thought of candles (wow how wacky am I?!). Skip to 20 minutes later, when my flat mate and I are lighting every single candle that we own and are recreating hardcore Y2K overhead shots with the exposure cranked up high. Whilst these pictures have absolutely nothing to do with the aesthetic that this competition was going for, it was actually a great opportunity for inventory purposes and I can now confidently say that we own 25 candles. After satisfying our pyromaniac desires I decided to go all ham, wear my weirdest outfit, put on a full face of make-up and make my friend take haute couture pictures of me at the Rad Cam. You have not felt true embarrassment unless you’ve stood in your leopard turtleneck, sparkly feather top, a pink party hat and face gems inside the Rad Cam while Amelia Sellors is taking secret pictures of you. Whilst this project began as an ironic photoshoot, I think I went too far and nobody goes that hard when they are being ironic. Anyways, that’s an issue I need to figure out with myself Books and fashion! These pictures may not be the most aesthetic, but they are what I unfortunately came up with. Thank god for student journalism, because now I can rest easy knowing that I’ve worn an inside-out mesh skirt at the Rad Cam <3

-Kat

Florence and The Machine: Dance Fever Tour Review

Recounting the life-changing experience of finally being able to see Florence and The Machine live.

Leila Moore

Performing in Birmingham on the resumed Dance Fever tour, Florence Welch stopped to address her audience: “I will bet that in here there are probably some chaperones, unwilling partners dragged along to some random concert - and you’re probably thinking, what the hell am I doing here?”. A few people reluctantly cheered, which was met with a wave of laughter around the arena that included Welch herself. “I get it. You’re probably thinking, have a joined a cult? Am I safe? My advice to you is... just let it happen. And remember to do everything I say.”

If being a fan of Florence and the Machine is equivocal to being in a cult, I have probably been indoctrinated for an unhealthy amount of time—despite all signs from the universe which have tried to dissuade me. In 2019, my post GCSE celebrations, which revolved around seeing the band perform at Boardmasters, were compromised by the festival’s cancellation. In November 2022 (my second attempt to see them live) Welch broke her foot whilst performing, an event which is easy to understand once you have had the privilege of witnessing her stage presence. Reluctantly, the tour was postponed until 2023 to give the lead singer time to recover—and I pondered the fact that perhaps it was my fate to never see her perform live.

Walking into the packed venue, the sense of the unreal was definitely about me, heightened by the unearthly chandeliers, draped in cobwebs, which were suspended from the stage’s ceiling. Once the band finished setting up and the harp (an iconic instrument in their discography) was added to the stage, the show truly looked as if it was taking place in a dilapidated mansion. When Welch materialised to greet the screaming crowd, dressed in gorgeous white chiffon with a beaded cape to match, she instantly commanded her stage—the fascinating wraith everyone ventures to the haunted house to catch a glimpse of. The set started off with King, the first single to be released off Dance Fever, and the powerful leading line “I am no mother/ I am no bride/ I am king” reverberated around the arena. The selection of songs included most of Dance Fever—Daffodil and Dream Girl Evil gave Welch the chance to bring to the stage the essence of her latest album, which ruminates on witchy, powerful femininities, self-destruction, and what it means to be addicted to performing. Her movements whilst singing were hypnotic, sometimes using hand and arm movements to command her voice with an air of regal authority, sometimes running around the stage or slithering on the floor. Classic tracks from earlier albums were also graciously performed, such as Dog Days are Over, Kiss with a Fist and Cosmic Love. Throughout

Welch’s voice was pristine, spiralling from her with the apparent ease of breathing - singing along at times felt like an offence because all I wanted to do was listen to her.

Attending the concert felt like finding a family, an ethos which Welch stressed throughout as she asked people to hold onto one another for June, dance together for Dog Days and, if you could manage it, pop someone on your shoulders for the closing number Rabbit Heart. This tension between the hyper-social and utter isolation is a key theme across the band’s projects. In High as Hope Welch confesses to “hiding from some vast unnameable fear” through performance; Dance Fever details “crying in the cereal at midnight”, locking yourself in rooms you don’t think you will ever leave, making solitary visits to the hospital. The satisfaction that comes with gathering these moments of despair and turning them into something you can share with others is palpable to anyone that listens to the band’s music, and as the lyrics “if I make it to the stage/ I’ll show you what it means to be spared” rang across the venue I became convinced that this show, this tour, is really about healing, especially in the post-COVID era.

It takes a powerful vulnerability to shoulder the burdens and joys of helping others, through art or any other means. Welch does it beautifully, confessing in her first song “I

Image Credit: Justin Higuchi via Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0



was never as good as I thought it was/ But I knew how to dress it up”. She stayed true to her words throughout; my highlight of the evening was an understated rendition of Never Let Me Go, an incredibly vocally challenging song from Ceremonials. Welch admitted to avoiding the song for over a decade- because it is so hard to sing, because she was “so young and sad and drunk” when she first wrote it. Releasing it to an adoring crowd was positively therapeutic, I imagine. What I know for sure is that it was a privilege to witness, and the band’s return to touring has been triumphant.

Books

Give a Book, Give a Smile!

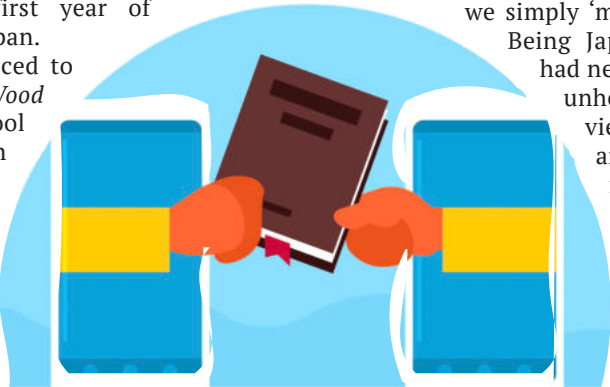
Discussing the experience of sharing literature following International World Book Giving Day last month.

Nina Naidu

By the end of 2021, having accumulated a book count higher than the IQ of the typical Matt Hancock enthusiast, I decided that I was going to start disseminating Haruki Murakami propaganda—starting with my boyfriend Zach. After reading fifteen of his books that year, I was certain that I would become Oxford’s resident Murakami expert and that my boyfriend would know all about it.

The work in question is *Norwegian Wood*, a nostalgic Japanese novel undoubtedly popularised by the world of BookTok. But I’ve decided that I have bragging rights in claiming that I discovered Murakami long before notorious BookTokker, Jack Edwards, did. It follows the coming of age of Toru Watanabe as he tackles loss, sexuality, and turning twenty, marking the first year of adulthood in Japan.

I was introduced to *Norwegian Wood* by an old school friend when I was fifteen years old, and we would, of course, giggle stupidly on the bus over any hint of sex. It is safe



to say that although I thoroughly enjoyed it, at the time I could not do the novel enough justice, so when I wanted my boyfriend to dip his toes into Murakami’s mastery, I got him his own copy. I take my book-giving very seriously!

Since he was a professional twenty-year-old, I was curious to see what Zach would say, whether he’d like it or resonate with it at all. Is the experience of turning twenty universal? Or is Murakami just weird? Probably. But I wanted him to read it because it was this novel that sparked my interest in the author, and I hoped that Zach could help me answer questions about adulthood that, for me, were blocked by naivety. Yet, it seemed that above all, the theme of loss that swamps the novel was the most poignant for him.

Zach was struck by the stoicism of Murakami’s writing; Toru loses countless people in his life through suicide yet adopts an almost apathetic stance towards their deaths, as though we simply ‘move on’ from it. Being Japanese myself I had never realised how unhealthy Japan’s view of death is, and whilst Zach may have found the novel to be helplessly awash with it, I was plagued with the normalisation

of poor mental health in Japan. The translation may have played a part in shaping this perspective, however. Zach wishes he could have read the novel in its original Japanese. Whilst I had the privilege of being able to do so, I found the faith we place in translators fascinating.

Upon asking my boyfriend what he found most interesting about the novel, surprisingly he mentioned the suicide of Toru’s childhood best friend Kizuki, who dies prior to the beginning of the novel. Zach resonated with the idea of losing touch with friends: Kizuki leaves this world with an outdated perspective of life, unbeknownst to the person that Toru becomes all these years later. He has been left behind, blissfully unaware of the fact that time keeps going, the world keeps moving, and people keep living. This representation of the past is what stuck with Zach the most. People you lose touch with retain an obsolete image of you, and there is something quite freeing that you can no longer do anything about it.

And as I approach twenty myself, I find myself yearning to pick up *Norwegian Wood* again, to appreciate it not by reducing it to a naughty romance, but to read it as a vignette of the past. As for Zach, he knows that *Norwegian Wood* is only the beginning and that soon enough he’ll be just as enamoured with Haruki Murakami as I am. If it were up to me, I would make every day International Book Giving Day.

Image Credit: FREE-VECTORS.NET

MUSIC

RECOMMENDATIONS

FORDBIDDEN DOORS-
TENNIS
Leila Moore

BOY’S A LIAR PT.2 -
PINKPANTHERESS & ICE
SPICE
Deborah Ogunnoiki

GHOST TOWN- THE
SPECIALS
Thomas Bristow

VALENTINE- LAUFEY
Iustina Roman

SHOULDERBLADES-
BREVIN KIM
Max Marks

Breath-taking, heart-stopping, terrifying: *Deuteronomy* review

Andrew Raynes

There are times in one's life—breath-taking, heart-stopping, terrifying times—when one feels as though one is witnessing genius. Watching *Deuteronomy* is one of those times. Charlie Thurston's script is an intelligent and moving piece of writing in Beckett's tradition, but, whilst it necessarily grapples with the question of meaning in one's life, it seems, also, to provide an answer.

The succinct play sits at about forty-five minutes and is a Platonic-dialectical conversation between two characters: the Man (Jo Rich) and the Beggar (Freddie Houlahan). Neither dragging nor rushing, it is exactly as long as it needs to be—a tough balance to achieve with any new writing, let alone something so philosophical. And, despite its lack of explicit plot, it does not feel devoid of action. Thurston's direction, and Rich and Houlahan's compelling performances have imbued every line of the script with genuine meaning—both philosophical and emotional—so each conflict is a credible, enthralling piece of action. Rich and Houlahan move with grace and skill from pitch to pitch, balancing moments of horrifying anger with still, subtle, sadness; the fun of conversation with the tragedy of conflict; the intense and the casual and the tragic side by side.

These changes in emotional register are

reflected in Thurston's script, whose subtle shifts and juxtapositions are some of the most affecting elements of the play. Much of the dialogue is explicitly philosophical: the characters discuss death, religion, language, the essence of objects. Is a rotten apple still an apple? Is a damaged thing no longer what it was undamaged? Does this matter, as long as happiness can still be derived from it? Part of *Deuteronomy*'s genius is in the importance of little things: we may not know why we are alive, we may not know why or when we will die; but we know “about trees and toadstools and the smell of a forest before it rains”—and this matters. The joy of life embodied in the eating of a rotten apple. The play itself is a thing ephemeral, but it is a thing of beauty, and it matters that one has watched it. Its language, too, is beautiful; the Beggar and the Man speak in an odd dialect, a mixture of dropped aitches and abbreviations



and idiolectic word order juxtaposed with dignified, expansive vocabulary, and it is musical to listen to.

What is significant about *Deuteronomy*, too, is that it is a play about someone nearing the end of a journey, in a way that brings finality and completion. It is deeply satisfying as a meditation on mortality, striking a credible and moving balance between the fear of the unknown and the reassurance of a life well-lived. Named after the final book of the Pentateuch, it begins with the Beggar, the one who asks, searching for a verse in that book: though he gets to the very end, he does not find the knowledge he seeks. A moment of near-fatal tension, later, is dispelled by him realising that the verse may indeed be in Leviticus; he takes us back to the middle of things. The Man, on the other hand, has no time for the book, and does not seek knowledge or answers; for him, it is enough to know where he has been and what he has experienced along the way.

This is Thurston's answer to absurdism: in *Deuteronomy*, Godot arrives, and the journey and wait have been worth it. The play is both heavy and uplifting, but, as it draws to a close, at its core sings a song of innocence and hope—as the Man sings; “hurrah, my boys, for freedom, ‘tis the rising of the moon.” I will be back tomorrow, and the day after; because if I never see *Deuteronomy* again it will be the tragedy of my life.

What's On: Week 8

SCONFINATA

BT Studio, Tuesday-Saturday, 7:00pm

It's the height of a burgeoning modernity in 1960s Italy, yet fourteen-year-old Elisa is ignorant of the world. So begins a fateful relationship with Nadia, a progressive secretary who introduces Elisa to the complicated world of injustice.

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

Oxford Town Hall, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 7:45pm

Lincoln College Drama Society proudly present Agatha Christie's courtroom drama, in which Leonard Vole is put on trial for the murder of Emily French, taking place in Oxford's Magistrate's Courtroom.

THIS HOUSE

Oxford Union, Monday-Wednesday

Voted 'Play of the Decade' in 2019, Graham's searingly funny yet deeply moving political epic is set in the period between the 1974 general election and the 1979 vote of no confidence in the Callaghan government.

Fashion

Dressing for the job

What is professional attire, and does it still have a role in the workplace?

Hannah Selig

What constitutes formal wear? The first outfit that comes to mind might be a neatly tailored suit or conservative dress, possibly involving a tie or blazer. Some Oxford students may even be thinking of sub fusc. Allow me to clarify my question: what constitutes professional attire? And why does it matter?

2023 seems to be shaping up to be the year of the revamped office uniform. Hot on the heels of Virgin Airways announcing last September that employees would no longer be restricted to gendered uniforms, this January British Airways unveiled a range of new uniform options for the first time in almost two decades, including a jumpsuit option for female ground staff and cabin crew. The redesign was more than purely aesthetical, with Business Insider reporting that “Engineers, for example, asked for easy-access tool pockets for when they're working on aircraft, while ground handlers asked for touch-screen technology fabric in their gloves for use in cold weather.” A tunic and hijab option is also available to British Airways employees and equally for HSBC bank branch employees earlier this very month, along with jumpsuits and—gasp!—even jeans.

It seems almost too easy to pin this development on the work-from-home policy of a certain recent global pandemic that I'm sure I don't need to name. I propose another

cause, evidenced by British Airways' proud declaration that “More than 90% of the garments are produced using sustainable fabric from blends of recycled polyester” and HSBC's use of “recycled polyester, dissolving plastic, ocean recovered plastic and sustainable cotton.” Modern companies are well aware of the power of social justice movements. By accommodating staff of all genders and religious minorities, and by combining practicality with sleekness and sustainability, these corporations signal that they have acknowledged and accepted their moral duty to create a welcoming workplace that places an emphasis on the well-being of its employees and customers.

Practical, stylish, inclusive, and strategic—these revamped uniforms are truly a display of twenty-first century innovation. But while it is admirable that companies are taking it upon themselves to give their staff more freedom with how they dress at work, it is also important to remember that we shouldn't have to rely on corporations to agree to allow their employees to wear practical options. We deserve a standardised law that demands equality and consistency in the workplace instead of hoping that employers deign to allow comfortable, practical alternatives to old-fashioned suits and gendered dichotomies. Double standards in office dress codes were catapulted into the public consciousness after Nicola Thorp, a PricewaterhouseCoopers receptionist was sent home on her first day of work in 2015 for wearing flats instead of two-to-four-inch-high heels. She subsequently created

a petition that gained over 150,000 signatures calling for the government to make such workplace double standards illegal to no avail. Although the government did debate the motion, no existing legislature was changed to explicitly criminalise forcing female staff to abide by impractical and potentially physically damaging dress codes. The Government Equalities Office eventually produced a document in May of 2018 with the specific aim of providing guidance to employers and employees about what comprises unlawful sex discrimination regarding dress codes, an endeavour that was condemned as “bland and vague, failing to make it absolutely clear to employers that requiring heels, makeup and skirts will virtually always be unlawful sex discrimination”. The guidance's determination that such rules would only be unlawful if no “equivalent requirement” is demanded of male employees fails to take into account that there is no ‘professional attire’ for men which inhibits their ability to walk and run or demands that they spend extra time applying cosmetics. The guidance document states that employees (rightfully) must accommodate disabled members of staff as well as transgender employees and those who wear religious symbols or garments, but no such binding provision is made to ensure that women are not required to endure discomfort and debilitation caused by impractical uniforms.

So, I ask again—what is professional



attire? What makes high heels and makeup professional for women and not for men? In what context should some employees be mandated to sacrifice comfort for appearance whereas others are exempt? With this year's cohort of finalist gearing up for one last vacation of revision before taking their final exams, let's remember that while the dress-code aspect of office culture certainly appears to have made great strides in terms of inclusion and equality, corporate permission is no substitute for legal regulation.

And if anyone is considering restarting Thorp's petition, know that my signature will be the first one on it.

Image Credit: rawpixel.com.

Oscars 2023: predictions

Guessing which films might take home the gold statuettes at the upcoming Academy Awards.

Abigail Stevens

It's 'the Daniels' race to lose this year—*Everything Everywhere All at Once* leads the 95th Academy Awards with 11 nominations, with *The Banshees of Inisherin* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* close behind with 9 nominations each. A similar selection of actors and filmmakers were recognized as nominees and winners at the Golden Globes in January, but nothing is set in stone—the Academy has a history of making very different decisions from the HFPA. Without further ado, let's get into my predictions!

Best Picture, Director, and Screenplay *Everything Everywhere* is the frontrunner for Best Picture with only *Banshees* offering a significant challenge. I had heard all about *Everything Everywhere* before finally watching it, and I was not disappointed—it has a wild energy, upbeat pacing, and an immensely entertaining and widely applicable moral. It is an exciting film both for the viewer and for the future of Hollywood. McDonagh's *Banshees* captures the complexity of friendship, and features debates on the condition of life itself: whether one should do something memorable or be content, whether it's better to be nice or interesting. *Avatar: The Way of Water* and *Top Gun: Maverick* seem to me mere token nominations in recognition of the Hollywood superstars involved. Honourable mentions are Steven Spielberg's semi-autobiographical film *The Fabelmans* and the bizarre satire *Triangle of Sadness*.

I originally thought *All Quiet* might win. Let's recall the 2020 Oscars, however: everyone was certain that *1917*, another war film, would be victorious, until *Parasite* secured Best Director and Best Screenplay and we began to suspect otherwise. Just like the Golden Globes cannot tell us for sure who will win, the categories of Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay are no package deal. I expect 'the Daniels' to take home Best Director for *Everything Everywhere*, although I think they will lose Best Original Screenplay to Martin McDonagh for *Banshees*. Sarah Polley's *Women Talking* doesn't seem to be a contender for much, but Polley could win Best Adapted Screenplay.

Acting Awards

The competition is fierce this year in nearly all the acting categories, with *Everything Everywhere* and *Banshees* up for four nominations each. Best Actress is going to be a very close call between Cate Blanchett (*Tár*) and Michelle Yeoh (*Everything Everywhere*). Colin Farrell (*Banshees*) is my prediction for Best Actor.

Yet it is the supporting casts which have me at the edge of my seat. I would love to see Ke Huy Quan win for *Everything Everywhere*, this is the comeback he deserves. For this to happen, he must beat Brendon Gleeson and Barry Keoghan (both for *Banshees*), but it is possible that this could come to pass. I was pleasantly surprised by Angela Basset's nomination for *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, but Kerry Condon (*Banshees*) and Stephanie

Hsu (*Everything Everywhere*) gave stronger, more layered performances. Condon exasperatedly telling Gleeson 'You're all boring!' was one of the best scenes of the year. Hsu, after being snubbed at the Golden Globes, is getting the recognition she deserves for her mind-boggling onscreen persona and her ability to rock an Elvis costume better than Austin Butler.

Behind the Scenes

Technical categories are notoriously where objectively bad films can redeem themselves—on that note, *Babylon*, the biggest flop of the year, has nominations in Costume Design, Production Design, and Music, but it's doubtful that it will win any of them. Either *All Quiet* or *Banshees* will win for Best Score, and I would guess that *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* will win a second time for Costume Design.

Everything Everywhere will probably win Best Editing—in fact, the editing and VFX team was made up of five people, none of whom had received any formal training, but taught themselves with YouTube tutorials and edited the entire film from home. Special Effects and Production Design, however, will of course go to *Avatar*. *All Quiet* may lose Best Picture, but will take home at least one technical or design award, with nominations in Sound, Production Design, Costume Design, and Makeup and Hairstyling.

Others To Watch

The Animated Feature category is frustrating. The award usually goes straight to that year's Pixar film. However, this year Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio* is the frontrunner, although I have a penchant for the adorable *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, and *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* has received glowing reviews all round. The Animated Short category avoids the problem of predictability, and this year's batch will get your interest from the titles alone, including *My Year of Dicks* and *An Ostrich Told Me the World Is Fake and I Think I Believe It*.

The International Feature category seems like a done deal this year: only *All Quiet* is nominated for Best Picture. Yet *Argentina 1985* won at the Golden Globes, and I think it would be hilarious if that also won instead. All of this is redundant to me, however, because *RRR* should have been nominated and I personally find it better than either of those films.

Some are pleased that the Academy is defying their stereotype by paying more attention to popular films rather than the seemingly complicated and pretentious ones, a trend which started with the first *Black Panther* movie being nominated a few years ago—even so, *Avatar* and *Top Gun* have no chance. However, whilst *Everything Everywhere* and the 2020 winner *Parasite* are both venerated by crowds of film-goers, they are still considered 'artistic' and deserving of all the accolades. Maybe this is a sign that Hollywood is learning to tell stories which speak to more people.

Women Behind The Wheel

An interview with Catherine Haigh and Hannah Congdon, the creators of the documentary.

Kevin Lee

CW: mentions of sexism, rape.

In this day and age, it is easy to be optimistic about the future of gender equality; the Western world especially has made great strides in promoting women's rights and interests. However, the fight for female empowerment is far from over. Cat and Hannah, the creators of *Women Behind The Wheel*, looked to explore stories of women in Central Asia, taking a 3,000km drive along the Panir Highway across the southern Uzbek deserts, through Tajikistan's Pamir mountain range, and into Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek. Through their grueling journey, Cat and Hannah were able to converse with women from all walks of life, from women's rights activists against domestic abuse to a 78-year-old gynecologist who lived under the Soviet regime. I had the opportunity to interview the creators of the documentary, which screens at the Ultimate Picture Palace in Oxford on Sunday 5th March at 15:00.

KL: Firstly, what motivated you to focus on the lives of women from Central Asia in this documentary?

Cat: Initially, Hannah and I were really curious about wanting to visit [Central Asia]; it's not a region that many people travel to, and it's not talked about often or in the press that much. When we started to do research into the region, we came across stories on Instagram and social media about women who were doing quite cool things to empower themselves. We also read about how this region used to be a part of the Soviet Union—how women had relatively good rights for that time period—but with the collapse of the Soviet Union, a lot of these countries have reclaimed quite a firm grip on Islam, which also greatly impacts the role of women. So we felt this was quite interesting: the dynamics of these two forces of Islam and the Soviet Union.

That's where the idea was born. Then we discovered this road—the Panir highway—that goes across the region, so we wanted to combine the idea of us as two women traveling along this road, getting behind the wheel and getting behind the camera, while using our journey as a vehicle or an opportunity to meet the local women and gain access to their stories. So the motivation definitely evolved over time.

It's clear that social media plays a large role in your documentary. While many other documentary makers are also adopting social media to communicate with people in repressive regimes, do you personally feel that social media provided an adequate channel for individuals to disseminate their stories in these regions?

Hannah: Social media played a huge role; we expected most young women to have Instagram. So while social media certainly didn't open access to older women, younger women we met on the road would end up connecting us to older people. And therefore, Instagram ended up being one of the best avenues for finding people in the initial stages of our journey.

Cat: That being said, there were very rural pockets, especially in Tajikistan in the Wakan Corridor, where we couldn't find a lot of the women in the communities we came across on social media. They were actually just women

we picked up hitchhiking on the side of the road, it was very organic. There was a lot more disconnect with the internet in these regions, so I would say it was fifty-fifty. We mostly had great success, and I think maybe we assumed wrongly that social media wouldn't be so important, but it was hugely important to meet people, and allowing us to stay in touch with a lot of the women even now.

Were there any particularly shocking or unexpected stories for you?

Hannah: We kind of read about it before, but when we were actually having conversations we were shocked still about stories of bride kidnapping. We had a conversation with a young woman who features in the film, but she talks about it in such a matter-of-fact way, as if this is a cultural practice that has been going on for so long that it's not surprising to her that her sister had been bride kidnapped and forced to marry, essentially, her rapist. The whole story was pretty shocking, talking to someone so young, who was nineteen at time, as if that's just a part of life.

How comfortable were women opening up their stories to you?

Hannah: We were quite taken aback—a lot of women really did open up. We were two 22-year-old women with a small camera and no crew, and that meant that a lot of the conversations that we had ended up feeling quite intimate and frank. We were quite overwhelmed at how brave people were, talking about difficult experiences. That being said, there were definitely instances when we were told, "This isn't a zoo. Put the camera down." I think that was quite an important learning curve for us—to not make any assumptions and to not put any pressure to share quite traumatising stories.

Cat: There was real importance to build trust before we started filming, or before we started asking questions. I think when we built that trust people really opened up to us. A lot of people were like "why are you asking these questions? Nobody asked these questions before", and really enjoyed answering our questions.

Finally, what is the main message that you would want Oxford students to take away from the documentary?

Cat: We went on the trip expecting grandiose, big-story, big-picture feminism, but when we reflected on the footage and the interviews, it was really women doing small things in their local communities that moved us. When we take a step back and examine the little actions these women are taking, it's clear that while they might be small in isolation, they can form an almost a mini-revolution when we put them together. These small changes are what are causing a gradual empowerment of women in the region. These small gestures mean a lot. Also, we found that these stories resonate with women all around the world. There is solidarity—a connection between women, between people irrespective of culture and language. There's always more common ground to be found rather than differences. Especially in the world and the UK, where there is a lot of xenophobia and anti-foreigner sentiment, we hope that this is a nice opportunity for the audience to open their eyes and look at other cultures and look at what we have in common with others.

CHERPSE!

BRANDY

First Impressions?

Very confident and a little quirky but instantly from the start of the conversation I knew that we were not suited.

Did it meet your expectations?

The date in itself was nice going for a walk but based on the person I met, I had higher expectations.

What was the highlight?

Probably going around the Meadows in the good weather.

What was the most embarrassing moment?

When he just started insulting me halfway on the date calling me a ‘woke leftie-lawyer’

Describe the date in 3 words:

platonic, bizarre and typical.

Is there a second date on the cards?

I don’t think so.

“

He called me a “woke leftie-lawyer”

MELVILLE

First Impressions?

She said that she would be wearing a green coat, but it was grey, this became a point of contention. I became convinced she was colourblind.

Did it meet your expectations?

I wasn’t expecting very much, so yes.

What was the highlight?

Ranting at length about the Suez crisis.

What was the most embarrassing moment?

The fact that I gave her my Instagram and she still hasn’t followed me.

Describe the date in 3 words:

One sided conversation.

Is there a second date on the cards?

No.

Looking for love?

Email lifestylecherwell@gmail.com or message one of our editors.

Sex & the Spires

My experiment in Oxford dating has sadly come to an end. Different sized test tubes have been sampled, various methods have been trialled, and the hypothesis pretty much remains the same: dedicating a term to having sex will result in equal amounts of confusion and fulfilment and a serious lack of academic commitment. Swiping through faces on apps just isn’t as sexy as a romcom meet-cute but it’s excellent procrastination nonetheless, and has brought more fun than heartbreak. Ultimately, more time has been spent swiping than typing, but I’ve significantly increased my body count, visited more colleges than ever before, and almost ended up agreeing to be (what I probably began writing this column craving) ‘exclusive’ with someone. I’ve also learnt many lessons this term which I will now proceed to share with you. I’m sure that at this point in my sex columnist career, I am the oracle of sexual knowledge for many Cherwell readers out there.

1. Casual sex just isn’t for everyone

However, I think I may have mastered it. Yes, ‘good for you!’ I hear you say. Get back to me when I’m in tears at the end of 8th week as I may be getting a bit too close for comfort with one of my late-night buddies. But for now, I’m slaying at the casual sex game. No commitment, no feelings, and I’m

cold-hearted enough not to feel bad about using someone for my own pleasure. It isn’t for everyone but that doesn’t mean that you should send a brash ‘it’s not you it’s me’ message on your walk home – catching feelings might not always be one-sided and sometimes all you need is a ‘casual sex breakdown’ to bring you some much needed clarity.

2. Choose your date location carefully

...and coordinate with your friends so you don’t end up on a quasi-double date in the Lamb and Flag. A debrief in the bathrooms is not worth overhearing familiar anecdotes at the table beside you. On the other hand, don’t suggest somewhere that is a million miles from your accommodations. No, I don’t fancy walking a half-marathon before we get into bed so you have no right to be surprised when I’d rather cut the race short and call it a night as I pass my own bed.

3. Ask whatever the hell you like

Particularly if a date’s not going great, what do you have to lose? I’ve had some wildly enlightening conversations this term when I went in with the hard-hitters like “why are you single” and “when was the last time you had sex”. You might get a strange look but that, I promise you, will be followed by admiration for having the balls to ask such

brazen questions. You could save yourself some time by finding out that he is a bigger jerk than you thought earlier in the evening, or even from potential illness by quizzing them on past sexual experiences to the point of being told that they “more than likely” have an STI. You might even get a chance to look through your date’s Tinder profiles to check out who you’re up against.

4. ‘X is typing...’ actually works

The classic Snapchat ploy of typing a message with no intention of sending will almost always work. They will take the bait. Those 3 little dots can work magic and your sly attempt to catch their attention will, if you want it to, usually be followed by an invitation. On that note, I have also learnt that a “u up?” message at midnight will without fail be received favourably. The fewer the messages required before you are out the door the better, in my opinion.

5. Never tell your date that you write a sex column for Cherwell

I’ve made a few promises I’ve found hard to keep this term and “don’t put me in” was a phrase I heard once or twice. But the reactions were worth it and it does mean that if I ever fancy taking pen to paper and continuing my sex columnist career then I certainly have a few more stories to share.

Divorce and Décor: how interior space manifests internal worlds

Ayaat Yassin-Kassab

Children of divorced parents with shared custody develop an attitude to their physical surroundings that is rooted in a heightened perception to how their space makes them feel. Carting back and forth every few weeks between houses, hauling cardboard boxes, stuffed animals, books, favourite blankets, children of divorce lose faith in the notion of home. Solid ground and cemented bricks may be physical manifestations of home, but they hardly provide stability. The only constant that remains for these kids are their identities, what they choose to bring with them and, indeed, what they leave behind. When children of divorce grow up, their habits remain clear indicators of their respective upbringings. As a child of divorce, I’ve observed that there are different approaches that those from divorced families take towards interior design and the decoration of the physical spaces that characterise us.

The Minimalist will do anything to prevent feeling overstimulated or flooded with emotion. I would put myself in this category. Growing up, I found that there was always too much and never enough space. Children of divorce learn from an early age not to get attached to places. Instead, they carry a sense of home on their person like a keychain. But resolving the issue by purging their belongings doesn’t really solve the problem. We Depop and Vinted and Charity Shop away anything we can’t realistically see ourselves wearing or using. We feel lighter by reducing the clothes and trinkets that cover our rooms, at the same time reducing the space we take up. But we are minimalists, not robots. It’s all about the sleek, clean, palatable aesthetic. We disinfect obsessively and change our sheets often because that crisp laundry smell is the same wherever we travel. On the off chance that we indulge in a stack of books (because

our shelves are too full), each one has to be parallel to the one beneath. We pack light. We micromanage. We prioritise efficiency and good time management. We’re either the parent or the diva of the group, insisting on completing our 25 step skincare routine before going out. It’s an exhausting life but we don’t know how else to function. We develop a lifetime of quirky (read: neurotic) habits that we don’t mind being bullied over because the alternative is, well, mental collapse.

The Maximalist will do anything to prevent confronting the reality that they will never be as whole as their photo wall. Their home also follows them around (there’s a theme here), but instead of shedding what the Minimalist would consider ‘dead weight’, the Maximalist hoards it. They find comfort in things. They love the sensation of getting lost amidst a pile of feelings and memories and nostalgia. As a child, they lugged every teddy and every Sylvanian family member they owned from one location to the other lest they spend a night with enough room in their bed to remind them that they will never feel as grounded as they hope they will.

The Patrick Bateman will do anything to distract themselves from recognising the need to attach their identity to a physical location. Acknowledging their emotional side is not something they’re equipped to do. The notion of home has proved utterly useless to them, so why should they dedicate any time or effort to their living space? Their bedroom is not an expression of their personality but rather an expression of their sterile, pragmatic approach to life. Their rooms are places that serve a practical function. They sleep there, get dressed there, and occasionally make use of the excess floorspace to do yoga (they carry the weight of the world on their backs, it gets sore after a while). When you consider what it might be like to decorate a room from an entirely practical perspective, the enormity of the task becomes apparent. It’s actually quite

difficult to do, but they do it because they’re too busy doing useful things that will glow on a CV to focus on which pillow is fluffier.

The Constant Makeover will do anything to avoid recognising that they want to feel perfectly managed because their home life never was. They find it impossible to establish control over their daily space except in sporadic 3am bursts of productivity, so they fixate on their own appearance instead. At best, they sunbed frequently and work out obsessively. At worst, they inject melanin before sitting in the sun and supplement their leg day with a less than healthy dose of trenbolone. Nothing is ever enough. They chase the thrill of looking and feeling their best... for 24 hours until the routine starts up again. If for some reason they can’t get to the salon, they’ll gorge on toxic TikTok content about the importance of buccal fat removal and drinking through a straw to minimise smile lines.

The Total Mess will do anything to procrastinate tidying because they fear that somewhere amidst the piles of rubbish, their inadequacies will emerge. They have completely given up on making their house a home. They did try, though. But alas, the energy drink cans and sweet wrappers pile up, the clean underwear runs out, and the blinds stay down. The living space becomes a hub of depression and, if they’re lucky, their mothers will get so sick of the sight of it that they’ll clean it to avoid having to legally declare it a health and safety violation.

No one said divorce was fun. It’s not. Somehow the now grown-up children of divorce will come to make their peace with the physical tumult of their upbringings. They might absorb and become their surroundings, they might reject them completely. They might decide to cut the process short and go to therapy. Until then, they continue to be wacky decorators, tortured artists of their interior worlds.

Sectioned: one year on

Rachel May

CW: Discussions of mental illness and suicide.

On 25th February 2022, I was detained under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983. I had entered a psychotic episode which had begun (in earnest) on 19th February. The Oxfordshire Crisis Team had been involved in my care since 21st February, before they deemed me in need of hospitalisation. A year later, I feel comfortable enough with my experience to share it with the world for two reasons. Firstly, in the hope that this article will reach someone who needs it. Secondly, to raise awareness of psychosis and what lesser-discussed mental illnesses can look like.

Anniversaries are odd things. Birthdays, the death of a loved one, breakups, marriages; all celebrated or commiserated, after one orbital period around the sun. They force us to reflect. This particular anniversary is the most unsettling and bizarre reminder of the passage of time that I have experienced in my life to date. I never expected to be sectioned. Subsequently, I never expected to be able to return to Oxford. Somehow, in the space of a year, both of these things happened.

A lot of people are unaware of what psychosis is. Essentially, it is a disconnect from reality which takes the form of delusions or hallucinations: seeing, hearing, feeling things that are not there. These are known as the positive symptoms of psychosis. Many things can trigger psychosis: stress, depression, and marijuana, among other factors. In my case, it was likely a combination of all the three mentioned. Psychosis has negative symptoms too, and often these can be more debilitating in the long-run. People appear to withdraw from the world around them, they take no

interest in everyday social interactions, and often appear emotionless and flat.

The positive symptoms of my psychosis took the form of delusions. In their most coherent form, I believed there to be a conspiracy against me by the state. I believed that my room was bugged, that there were hidden cameras everywhere, and that the radio and TV were speaking to me and me alone. A laughable thought now, but a terrifying reality to live in. I believed my friends to be spies. I thought this made sense, I'd always wondered why they were all so good looking.

I remember most of my time in the hospital. It was not a good experience—I had no toiletries or change of clothes for over a week. I was in isolation for 10 days as a result of the legacy of COVID-19. This made my delusions even worse. About a week into my stay I was diagnosed with psychosis and prescribed aripiprazole, an antipsychotic. This made me very restless, I remember pacing around my room relentlessly. However, the medication settled and I began to return to reality.

The delusions were terrible, but returning to reality was the most difficult part of psychosis. I had done and said some terrible things to those closest to me, accusing them of spying on or harassing me. I had hurt my family, ignoring them for days on end and then berating them for their stupidity. I made a fool of myself in front of several of my tutors, declaring my unrequited love for one and sending bizarre emails containing codewords to others. The forgiveness and understanding of my illness that I have been shown is something I will never be able to repay.

The negative symptoms of my psychosis began to emerge as I returned to reality. These manifested themselves in the form of the longest depressive episode I have experienced to date, lasting from March to October. I was sleeping for twelve or more hours a day, not leaving the bed, contemplating suicide and playing an unholy amount of board games online. I had suspended my studies for a year,

so I suddenly faced an overwhelming amount of time to fill, all while wanting none of it. I wanted to be back at Oxford, like it was before I was ill (I am still nostalgic for that era, but I can now accept that it's a chapter of my life that has closed).

In the autumn I began to accept that I had to find a new way to live and tried to move on with my life. I got a job, spent more time with my parents, adjusted my medication, started revising for finals and attended Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). All of these things helped. I spent those final months at home working on myself rather than hating myself. This was a much harder task.

Emerging out of a depressive episode is like the first spring's sunshine. Glorious, full of hope. However, there is no trick to recovery, no magic bullet. It is a difficult and long process that requires commitment, patience, and perseverance. It takes a toll on one's physical, emotional, and mental well-being, and often requires making lifestyle changes, seeking professional help, and developing a support system. But the great thing? It is possible. I know because it happened to me. I feel the rays of this February sun on my skin and I embrace them like a long-lost friend.

In January, I resumed my studies at the University of Oxford, Wadham College. This is the proudest achievement of my life. The days have their predictable ups and downs but overall I am happy, healthy, and independent. I am grateful for each adjective respectively.

In summary, I hope this article has been informative for those of you unaware of psychosis. I also hope that it has managed to reach someone who is earlier in their recovery than I. If neither, I can at least say that it was cathartic to write.

This February, this anniversary, three-hundred and sixty-five days after my sectioning, I can say with confidence that recovery is real. I have laughed until my stomach hurts again, sung in the shower, savoured my coffee, and loved the world so hard it takes my breath away. Here is to another year of recovery, of life, for you, and for me.

Addendum: I would not still be here to recount this story without my family, Hannah, Mike and Zack. There are too many others to thank for my recovery. Of note include Katie Overs, Jo Preston, my nana, my grandma, Jenny the dog, Anthony and Carolyn, Steph Potts, Charlie Grayson, Kiri Ley, Keir May and Leo Nasskau.



Aries

21 March - 19 April

Scary Noises in the Dark. You're a kid first, Aries.

Capricorn

22 Dec. - 19 Jan.

Failure. Working hard is your identity. Who are you without success?

Aquarius

20 Jan. - 18 Feb.

Being Irrelevant. You think you have a unique and special way of thinking, Aquarius. What if it all gets forgotten?

Pisces

19 Feb. - 20 March

Stability. It's the extremes of emotion, the angst, the perpetual anger that keeps you going Pisces. How would you function otherwise?

Taurus

20 April - 20 May

Disloyalty. You'd rather anything but a world where people aren't good.

Gemini

21 May - 20 June

Aging. Physically and mentally. You can't be young forever, Gemini.

Leo

23 July - 22 Aug.

Negative Feedback. There's insecurity lying behind that tough façade, Leo.

Virgo

23 Aug. - 22 Sept.

Unfamiliar Territory. How are you supposed to plan how to feel?

Cancer

21 June - 22 July

Being a Bother. You're never loved quite as strongly as you love, but it's safer that way, right?

Libra

23 Sept. - 22 Oct.

Rejection. You keep hurting them before they can hurt you, Libra. Or you just get hurt.

Scorpio

23 Oct. - 21 Nov.

Being Caught Out. There's always something dark bubbling away beneath your surface. What if they see the real you?

Sagittarius

22 Nov. - 21 Dec.

Commitment. Yeah, you might not agree with this one, Sag, but what if they impose on your travel plans? Your career plans? Your life goals? Yikes.

Horoscopes

You're most scared of...

Torpids: a bumpy ride for some

Reflecting on Oxford’s first big college rowing event

Tom Farmer

New champions as Univ and Christ Church triumph, with bumpy rides for Oriel and Wolfson

Along with sub-fuscs, mortar boards and RadCam essay crises, Hilary Term’s “Torpids” racing are a timeless part of Oxford culture. With the first men’s Torpids event being held in 1838, with the first women’s event in 1977, it is a highlight of inter-college sport calendar. Across six divisions of men’s crews and four divisions of women’s crews, the Isis river and its banks become alive for four days of thrills and spills.

“Bumps” racing was conceived because of Oxford’s narrow rivers, with crews unable to race each other conventionally as you may see in the Olympics. Instead, each crew lines up behind each other and starts at staggered intervals. Boats then attempt to “bump” (or catch up with) the boat in front of them, leading to a uniquely intense contest. With each “bump”, crews can climb up the league tables, striving to the title of “Head of the River”, awarded to the leader of Division 1 at the end of racing.

This year, in the late February frost, the

“What goes up must come down, with Linacre W1 and New W2 falling a cumulative 13 places

2023 iteration of this tradition was as intense as ever. Going into the event, the Oriel men’s crew had been “Head of the River” since 2018, adding to their 39 total annual victories. In the women’s competition, Wolfson looked to defend their title for the second year in a row. However, both crews started Torpids badly, with Wolfson being bumped by Univ and Oriel being bumped by Christ Church on Wednesday. After only the first day of racing, there were new leaders in both competitions, with the contest thrown wide open.

As the racing went on, the week got worse for Wolfson’s women. Bumped on all days apart from Saturday, the crew narrowly avoided being awarded “spoons”, given to boats bumped every day of Torpids. Finishing 6th, their three-year reign as champions was over, with Univ successfully protecting their lead for four days. In Div II, LMH forced promotion to the top league, whilst Jesus’ crew dropped down.

In the men’s competition, Oriel too could not regain their title after the early setback. After being bumped again, this time by Wolfson, the crew ended the week in third. Christ Church however were able to stay ahead of Wolfson, claiming their first

Torpids victory in the men’s competition since 2011. New College managed to force their way into Div I, rising four places across the weekend.

As ever, there were a number of notable rises and falls across the four days of racing. Trinity’s M1 (the college’s strongest men’s crew) fell from the bottom of Division 1 to Division 3, before ending Torpids in the lower echelons of Division 2. Trinity’s M3 also dropped 17 places across the weekend, the most of any crew. Oriel’s M2 also fell from mid-Division 3 to the top of Division 4, marking a disappointing year for the most successful Torpids college in history. In the Women’s competition, Lincoln’s W1 rose into Division I from mid-Division II, moving up seven places. Exeter’s W1 also had a good week of racing, rising six places into Division 2. However, as with the men’s contest, what goes up must come down. In fact, Linacre W1 and New W2 both went into 2023 top of Division 3 and 4 respectively, but fell a cumulative 13 places between the two crews. Regent’s WI also dropped a huge 11 places from the heady heights of 5th in Division 4 to 4th in Division 5.

And with the usual ups-and-downs of Torpids, complete with some very sore bodies, the four days of racing were over. With two new colleges holding the titles of “Head of the River”, it’s all to race for in Trinity with Summer 8s.

A varsity society match like no other: an ACS affair

Reporting from the Cambridge vs Oxford ACS football match, St Johns college Sports Ground

Zoe Abereoje

Following a long coach ride departing from the sunny skies and blue gates of Trinity college, the football team and its loyal band of travelling fans arrived under looming dark clouds in Cambridge, sizing up the truly massive St John’s Ccollege Cambridge sports grounds, the stage upon which the theatre of football would take place.

With the Cambridge team, sporting oddly oxford blue-ish bibs, made their way to the pitch, the ref blew his whistle kicking off the game. The Oxford support couldn’t be louder, the Cambridge side-line support lacked lustre. This became a trend, blue bibs donned by the Cambridge crew looked inferior to the coordinated custom black, white and gold jerseys worn by Oxford’s ACS team. Cardboard signs and chants littered across the Oxford supporters, with an atmosphere rivalling Anfield. Cambridge were more like London stadium-esque.

Still, the home team managed to put a goal in the back of the net first. The Oxford crowd and players stunned, despite their shabby appearance and lack of fan support, the Cambridge ACS seemed a challenge. One goal down but much of the first half still to play, there was still no panic from the away side, just determination, within

the next five minutes Oxford’s team began to gel and gain more and more possession.

For this they gained their two rewards with Oxford netting an equaliser and then putting themselves ahead before the half time whistle. By this time a steady Cambridge support began to develop, with the home side support becoming larger. Unfortunately in the time in which the Cambridge support streamed in, the Oxford side had begun to play more confidently and fluidly as the Cambridge side began to fall apart. Half time was a welcome pause for them to refocus their game plan and make some much needed substitutions.

As the whistle blew and the second half kicked off, fortune fled the Cambridge side, quickly replaced with misery. It seemed that the Oxford side, who were already dominant by the end of the 1st half, had decided to enter second gear. Rain began to pour down on the sports ground, and as umbrellas lifted high, it was clear the prospects for the Cambridge side fell low. Three consecutive Oxford goals, with no Cambridge attack in this period indicated the size of their woes, the worst of these being a penalty which reflected the unconsolidated defence Cambridge had to offer.

With 10 minutes to go and 6 consecutive goals conceded by the Cambridge side, times were looking rough for Cam ACS, playing to see the game out, knowing that

while conceding 6 was humiliating, 7 would be atrocious. Yet even this task was made difficult by the skills of the Oxford ACS players. Cam ACS were in serious trouble, lacking the ability to make more than two passes before they found themselves dispossessed, tackled or turning over the ball unintentionally, as this point the seventh goal looked inevitable

But in the spirit of Cambridge, those noisy neighbours couldn’t keep it down. After a match of outstanding saves, the Oxford goalie made a mistake, to which the Cambridge side, deprived of chances throughout the game, did not hesitate to maximise putting it at the back of the net. Incredible! Momentum swung. cheers erupted from Cambridge support, even if this goal was going to be consolation only. But a minute later, a swift Cambridge attack lead to another goal! Where was this side hiding?

With two minutes to go, was their actually a chance Cambridge could turn it around. Four goals in deficit and around 2 minutes to play, surely it couldn’t be possible right?

Before you could ask, Cambridge had another! The Cambridge support roared seeing their side outplay the other The formerly resigned Cambridge side were on fire and Oxford with a five goal lead cut to two looked almost vulnerable. The dominant Oxford ACS had disappeared,

Sport across Oxford and beyond!

University Sport Cuppers final:
Women’s cuppers winner:
Osler house
A truly dominamnt side, defeating the formidable Hilda’s/Peter’s on penalties.

Men’s Cuppers winner:
Brasenose
Despite being a division two side, the side found a way way to win 1-0 against Hughs.

Men’s MCR Cuppers final:
Worcester vs Jesus/Magdalen
4th March, Iffley Road Stadium, 11am KO

Upcoming Varsity fixtures:
We are well and truly in Varsity season, with many fixtures played and plenty of Tabs shoed! However, there’s lots more to come. On the 19th March, there’s the football Varsity fixture, with the men’s and women’s team both in action. On the 25th of March, Twickenham plays host to the women’s and men’s rugby union Varsity. The day after this, South-West London will be awash with college puffers for the Boat Race.

EFL League One:
Oxford United head coach Karl Robindson sacked after 8 games without a win, Including a 1-0 loss to Cambridge United

Outside of Oxford
Tennis
British hope crushed by Medvedev beating Murray in Qatar Open final was cured quickly by Norrie beating Alcaraz world number 2 in the Rio Open the following day

Zoe’s Note:
Arsenal women are having a poor season this year - with key forwards Mead and Miedema out with ACL injuries, it’s even gotten worse! Knocked out of the FA cup by Chelsea 2-0 this weekend I’m shaking in my boots for the upcoming Bayern game, but nevertheless COYG!!!

replaced with one searching for a full time whistle. 3 goals in five minutes was not what anyone had predicted.

Well...when the ruckus of celebration had died down, the sight of the linesman waving his flag furiously called time on the Cambridge celebration and ultimately the game, as a discussion between linesman and referee while the clock ticked on, led to the goal being disallowed and the full time whistle ever closer. With a final kick, the game saw its close with the away side storming for glory towards their supporters.

In a game in which the Cambridge side saw bursts of greatness at the very start and end, it was unquestionably Oxford ACS’s deserved victory. Once the full time whistle blew, in the midst of disappointment and jubilation, we are still united in the pride of having an ACS in both Oxford and Cambridge.

Puzzles

Sudoku

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

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

College Confines

Colleges, represented by numbers have received new land by an anonymous donor. However they need to draw the boundaries to divide them according to the following rules:

Each piece of land must be rectangular

Only one college (number) may be in each piece of land

This number must equal the number of squares in the boundary.

				4			6	
	9		1		3			
				5			8	
	4							
6					8			
			12					
							6	
	3		2		4			

Cryptic Crossword

by Ifan Rogers

1		2		3			4		5			6
7						8						
9							10					
11						12				13	14	
16			17				18					19
20												
22						23						

Across:

- 1. Key for astronauts’ drinking place? (5,3)
- 5. Satisfactory penalty (4)
- 7. Affirmative about augmented reality for long time? (5)
- 8. Territory in Spain with manors (7)
- 9. Ex tree repurposed for Oxford college (6)
- 10. Difficulty making alternative protocol (6)
- 11. First exchange used regarding official currency (4)
- 12. Variable taken in concerning beer ingredient (3)
- 13. Clarifying phrase is a wrongdoing (2, 2)
- 16. Artist’s surface protected by MFA? (6)
- 18. At chickens’ city (6)
- 20. A Pole, the French and Paul perhaps? (7)
- 21. Mass communication in dead language (5)
- 22. Fog concealing chasm is terrifying (4)
- 23. Appoint Richard – mostly tense (8)

Down:

- 1. Zesty lemon exhibiting fashion (5)
- 2. Friend buried in gold – right beginner (7)
- 3. Somewhat revolutionary software is aesthetically less complicated (6)
- 4. Fix up concerning shop (7)
- 5. German woman with daughter is a fraud (5)
- 6. Greek character in slope accident (7)
- 11. Shout out former statement (7)
- 12. Work out European lover’s troubles (7)
- 14. South-west consumer from Cardigan (7)
- 15. 99% follow most of country’s bold alternative (6)
- 17. Social call at 5:00 is it? (5)
- 19. Kind of wave to blue hedgehog (5)

View last week’s answers on the *Cherwell* website...

