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Oxford's international fees surged by 100% since 2018

Cem Kozanoglu investigates.

A Cherwell investigation has found that international student fees have doubled from 2018 to 2023, rising from nearly twice the home fee to around four times as much. A big part of the increase can be attributed to the large hike from 2018 to 2019, when average fees rose by 54% in one year.

The University did not comment on the reason for the sudden spike, however the 2019 fees were paid three months before Brexit occurred, which eventually led to EU students being dropped from special consideration in 2021

How does the university determine tuition?

A recent Cherwell Freedom of Information request revealed the process behind how tuition fees are calculated. The University stated: "Fees for overseas students are agreed through a longstanding process involving stakeholders at all levels of the institution."

The overarching Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) determines the initial rate rise before the departments make adjustments and the Joint Fees and Student Support Advisory Group (JFSSAG) approves these changes and presents it back to the PRAC. The factors considered by the committees include "inflation (CPI), projected cost increases, application numbers, impact on scholarships, and competitor benchmarking," according to the university.

Although the University assures

that "[s]tudent representatives are involved at all stages of the process and there are student members of both JFSSAG and PRAC", the PRAC is a 20 person committee with a very wide jurisdiction and the only student representative on it is the SU President.

Furthermore, while the JFSSAG has 2 student representatives (the

Education & Access officers for Undergraduates and Postgraduates respectively) among its 11 members, there are no explicit provisions made for the representation of international students, whose fees are the ones up for negotiation.

Fee increases

While home fees have remained

constant, the rate of international fee increases have outpaced inflation in every year since 2019 except 2022, contributing to the growing gap between home and international student fees. Despite the pound's loss of value in the aftermath of the Truss ministry, the cost of tuition has continued to grow in dollar terms too, rising from \$44k in 2021

to \$46k in 2023.

Another aspect of the price increases has been the convergence of fees for STEM and humanities subjects. While STEM fees were 30% higher than humanities degrees in 2016, this premium dropped to 14% in 2022. to £44k in 2023.

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New College student greeted by "escort" in their room amidst hotel havoc

Jakub Trybull reports.

A student at New College was met with a "woman sitting on [their] bed in a lingerie robe" when they opened their room door at the Leonardo Royal hotel. The shock came as third-year New College students were re-housed an hour walk away from the centre following delayed building works. The College has responded to the incident by reducing rent by half and putting in place a night porter at the hotel.

Students were due to move into the New Gradel Quadrangles building on Mansfield Road at the start of this term. However, on 16 August they were informed by email that due to slow progress on site, it wouldn't be ready on time and that they would be accommodated at the Leonardo Royal until 1 November. On 27 September, the College delayed the move-in again until Monday of ninth week.

Cherwell has exclusive access to first-hand accounts of the incident that occurred last Tuesday, when a third-year student moved into what was supposed to be a student-only corridor in the hotel.

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Oxford accepted £1.2 million from fossil fuels companies in 2022

Grace Kyoko Wang reports.

An investigation by DeSmog, the climate-focused news site, has found that Oxford University was the sixth-largest bene-

fiary of funding from fossil fuel companies out of all UK universities in 2022-23. Forty-four UK higher education institutions received a total of £40 million from oil and gas firms over the past year, of which Oxford received

£1.2 million.

Out of the 32 contributing corporations, Shell, Malaysian state-owned Petronas and BP were the highest contributors, providing over 76% of the total funding to these institutions by fossil fuel

companies. Oil and gas giants such as ExxonMobil, Chevron and Saudi Aramco were also involved in these philanthropic activities.

Oxford pledged to divest its endowment from fossil fuels...

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News Shorts

Shake Shack set to open on Cornmarket

Shake Shack will be opening an Oxford franchise on Cornmarket Street this coming year. The American fast casual restaurant chain already has 16 locations in the UK. The new Oxford franchise will be replacing the now-closed Oxford Pandora jewelers store, and it is expected to serve American-style hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries, and milkshakes.



Just Stop Oil hosts stand at SU Freshers' Fair

The Oxford Student Union invited Just Stop Oil to recruit new members at this year's fresher's fair. The inclusion came amid the movement's controversial tactics intended to draw attention to the United Kingdom's role in the ongoing climate crisis. As part of the organizing efforts, Just Stop Oil also distributed over 17,000 leaflets to student pigeon holes at various colleges.



New College opens new Gradel Institute for Charity

On 29 September, New College opened The Gradel Institute of Charity, the first research center in the world to "concentrate on charities as organizations, not solely a form of philanthropy." According to Professor Peter Frumpkin, who will be acting as the program's academic director, "The Gradel Institute has the dual goal of catalysing the resources and expertise of the University of Oxford to develop new insights about charities, while also translating these ideas into programmes that engage leaders who are committed to achieving greater effectiveness in their work."



Deliveroo strikes in Oxford city centre

Lili Waters reports.

Assembling in Central Oxford last Friday, around 30 Deliveroo delivery drivers took to the roads to demand better pay and working conditions. A demonstration also took place outside the Carfax Tower. The drivers turned off notifications for incoming pick-up requests and drove slowly in order to cause maximum disruption.

In April of 2021, through the red smoke of their flares, Deliveroo drivers made similar demands outside the company's London headquarters. Apart from raising public awareness around the few protections for food delivery drivers, these protests were largely unsuccessful.

The primary demand of the riders is a pay raise. Amidst the cost-of-living crisis, the strikers have emphasized that Oxford is an expensive city. Since the pandemic, Deliveroo fees have decreased while costs to riders have increased. Labeled as self-employed, couriers must pay for their own fuel, bikes, motorcycles, helmets,

backpacks, and any other supplies needed to safely complete deliveries.

The strikers have multiple further longstanding demands, including extra compensation for long waiting times in restaurants, rough weather, late night deliveries, and mid-route changes to delivery addresses. Their demands reflect the de-prioritization of riders

in Deliveroo's current system. The strikers want protection, and some are calling for government regulation of the food delivery industry.

Hailing from a variety of international backgrounds, the strikers came together to plan the strike over a two-week period under the leadership of Deliveroo rider Nelson Martins from Timor-Leste.



Many of the riders, including Martins, have been with the company for several years. Couriers from Just Eat and Uber Eats accompanied the strikers, making similar demands of their own companies.

Many of the riders who spoke to the press chose to remain anonymous. One said "[W]e are scared of getting our names out because Deliveroo might close our accounts." The riders say that, in the past, those who spoke up or complained to the company about unfair pay saw their accounts terminated.

The drivers are not direct employees of the delivery companies and so there is little regulatory protection for their position. In the past, protests of a similar nature have had limited success.

Deliveroo told BBC that in most cases drivers earned "significantly more" than "the National Living Wage plus costs" and Just Eat said its drivers were provided "regular incentives" to earn more. There is a significant disconnect between the perspectives of the drivers and their respective companies.

Image credit: Jakub Trybull

WHO recommends Oxford malaria vaccine

Fay Lorien reports.

A Malaria vaccine developed at the University of Oxford has been recommended for use by the World Health Organization (WHO). This is the second of two Malaria vaccines produced in the last two years. Oxford's vaccine has been selected for a mass rollout because of its potential for cheap mass distribution.

The first-ever Malaria vaccine, which was approved by the WHO in 2021, represented a significant step towards lessening the impact of the disease. This second vaccine is easily deployable, requiring a smaller dose than its predecessor, and is manufactured at about half the cost.

The world's largest vaccine manufacturer, the Serum Institute of India, will make 100 million doses per year, with plans to increase to 200 million. The vaccine

is set to help prevent half a million deaths per year.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-general of the WHO, said: "Demand for the [the first] vaccine far exceeds supply, so this second vaccine is a vital additional tool to protect more children faster, and to bring us closer to our vision of a malaria-free future."

Due to constant mutation, Malaria is hard to eliminate entirely. In 2021 96% of Malaria deaths worldwide were in Africa. Recently the new vaccine has been approved for rollout in Ghana, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.

Dr. Ghebreyesus said this was for him a moment of "great pleasure".

"I used to dream of the day we would have a safe and effective vaccine against malaria. Now we have two," he said.

Image credit:

Bratislavskysamospravnykraj via Wikimedia Commons



Oxford accepted £1.2 million from fossil fuels companies in 2022

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in April 2020, but have maintained partnerships with oil and gas firms in order to fund research activities and scholarship programmes. For instance, two scholarships aimed at African postgraduate students studying at Saïd Business School and at St Antony's College, respectively, were established in 2022, funded by Eni, the Italian multinational oil company.

A spokesperson for the University said: "Our partnerships with industry allow the University to apply its knowledge to real challenges of pressing global concern, with funding often going directly into research into climate-related issues and renewables. Philanthropic funding has been used to widen access to education and to fund scholarships, academic posts, and capital costs, while the proportion of research funding going into fossil fuel exploration and extraction has declined significantly over the last decade and the percentage going into renewables projects has increased."

The average annual funding accepted by all UK universities from sources linked to fossil fuels seems to have increased in recent years: openDemocracy reported in December 2021 that in the four years since 2017, oil and gas firms had donated almost £90 million to UK higher education institutions, which, averaged would correspond to a much lower amount than was received in 2022-23.



Over the same four years, Oxford received an average of just under £2 million per year, a considerably higher figure than in 2022-23, suggesting that the University is reducing its reliance on funding from these sources.

The environmental activist group Just Stop Oil included the most recent numbers in a press release published Tuesday after they took responsibility for spray painting the Radcliffe Camera.

The continued fossil fuels funding comes against the backdrop of a funding crisis in UK higher education: the loss of around £800 million a year in EU financial support due to Brexit, coupled with an extended period of high inflation, have led universities to be in an increasingly precarious financial position.

Image credit: kamshots/CC BY 2.0 via Flickr

Oxford research shows promise for repairing brain injuries with 3D printing

Emily Henson reports.

Researchers at the Oxford Martin School have developed a method of 3D printing cells that mimic the brain's architecture. The research, published Wednesday 4 October, is the first to introduce the technique. Although nearly 70 million people are affected by brain injuries annually, existing treatments have only a limited effect.

Published in Nature Communications, the method involves using the patient's stem cells as a "bio-ink" to print a structure that can become neural tissue in the brain. When tested on mice brain slices, the tissue was able to integrate and function with the host cells. The use of a patient's stem cells removes the risk of rejection from the body. It also allows for greater practical use as cells can be harvested easily.

The aim of research going forward is to enhance the printing process to better mimic human brain structures. Beyond injuries, this could aid drug evaluation and further understanding of brain development and cognition. Senior author Dr Linna Zhou said: "Our droplet printing technique provides a means to engineer living 3D tissues with desired archi-

tectures, which brings us closer to the creation of personalised implantation treatments for brain injury."

The technique uses human induced pluripotent stem cells. These cells are typically taken from blood or skin and are reprogrammed to be used as any type of cell. The immature cells are then differentiated into two variations, each used to print one layer of the tissue.

The Oxford Martin Programme on 3D Printing for Brain Repair aim to create low-cost medical technology to address the expanding problem of brain injury. Globally, 5.5 million people suffer a severe traumatic brain injury every year. Research is divided over the effects of traumatic brain injuries, with some evidence pointing to an increased risk of cognitive decline as a result.

Senior author Professor Zoltán Molnár said: "It would be naïve to think that we can recreate the entire cellular progression in the laboratory. Nonetheless, our 3D printing project demonstrates substantial progress in controlling the fates and arrangements of human iPSCs [stem cells] to form the basic functional units of the cerebral cortex."

Image credit: Cottonbro studio via Pexels



New College student greeted by "escort" in their room amidst hotel havoc

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According to the student, the hotel said it made a "human admin error" and gave the woman a student room by mistake. The hotel then offered two options: wait until five o'clock and have the room cleaned again, or move to a distant room.

Another student told *Cherwell* they saw a man walking down what was meant to be a student corridor, who then entered the room: "ten minutes after that as we walked out of [the neighbouring] room we could hear them having loud sex – and then 20 minutes later he left and we watched him leave the corridor." They claimed to have seen three further people enter and leave the

room.

Another student reported to New College that after having brought this issue up to a staff member they seemed "unfazed" at the news and "implied" this was a regular occurrence. The hotel has denied this, telling *Cherwell* they do not condone such behaviour in their hotels and always aim to be accommodating and prioritise their guests' best comfort.

The Leonardo Royal Hotel lies in North Oxford, just by the ring road and three miles from the main site. As compensation, students were offered free bus passes into central Oxford, and free breakfast and dinner, despite not having direct access to kitchen facilities anyway.

Initially, they were to pay the same rent as they would have paid for the new Gradel suites, according to cor-

Oxfordshire constituencies redrawn

Daniel Thomas reports.

The electoral map of Oxfordshire is set to be redrawn, with big implications for the next general election, as the four-month deadline for the Government to approve new constituency boundaries fast approaches.

Covering all 650 seats in the Commons, final proposals by the 2023 Periodic Review of Westminster Constituencies were laid before Parliament this June, following an extensive consultation by the four national boundary commissions. The commissioners decided against cutting the number of parliamentary seats down to 600; nonetheless, they made a number of significant changes in Oxford and beyond.

In particular, two wards in central Oxford, Carfax and Holywell – covering the vast majority of the University of Oxford's colleges and a large population of students & academics – have been transferred to Layla Moran's seat of Oxford West & Abingdon. This constituency will also receive the rural Marcham ward, while losing the outlying Kidlington and Yarn-ton communities.

With an early general election looking more and more likely, this mixture of urban and rural voters is likely to shake up the constituency's political dynamics, opening new opportunities for student campaigners to find their voices, and potentially turning the contest into a three-way race between the Conservatives, Labour, and the incumbent Liberal Democrats.

These parties, whatever their national platforms, will be forced to take into account the sizeable student vote in the new boundaries when running their campaigns, and to rely on student political societies for campaign fieldwork.

Indeed, it's possible that the focus of student political activism may shift westwards, from the safe seat of Oxford East – represented

by Labour Party Chair & Shadow Cabinet member Anneliese Dodds M.P. – in the face of a projected landslide for the Opposition.

Plans to split Banbury constituency in two, with Chipping Norton folded into Banbury and a new Bicester & Woodstock seat formed from wards in the District of West Oxfordshire, are also going ahead, though some responses to the consultation sought – unsuccessfully – to recognise Kidlington in the constituency's name.

There is little demographic variation in the new Oxfordshire constituencies, with each one sporting an electorate between 69,943 and 74,356.

Representatives of Oxford's political parties seem entirely satisfied with the changes. Layla Moran M.P., speaking to *Cherwell*, described the review as "very positive for the Liberal Democrats", expressing regret for the transfer of Kidlington and Yarnton but optimism for the party's future prospects in the county.

"The new Bicester & Woodstock, Didcot & Wantage, Henley & Thame and Witney constituencies are all very solid prospects for the Lib Dems."

Ms. Moran M.P. further praised the Boundary Commission for carrying out the 2023 Periodic Review "fairly and effectively", though expressed the Liberal Democrats' preference for a "fairer and more proportionate" electoral system.

The Oxford University Conservative Association, meanwhile, told *Cherwell* they were "excited for the new challenges" the updated electoral map poses, suggesting that the city "could become a genuinely competitive area for our party".

The Oxford University Labour Club was also asked for comment, but did not respond prior to publication.

All that remains is for the Government to submit an Order in Council to put the recommendations into effect.

strike as an idea to get College to listen," according to an email seen by *Cherwell*.

New College told *Cherwell*: "The College was made aware of a situation occurring at the hotel during part of the check in process which was witnessed by one student and their parents."

"The College and hotel worked immediately and collectively to address the issue and have subsequently spoken to the student concerned. The matter was then closed and every precaution against a reoccurrence has been taken."

Leonardo Hotel has responded, telling *Cherwell*: "The comfort and safety of all our guests are of paramount importance to us. We are fully investigating the allegations being made and sincerely apologise for any distress that this has caused."

Cross-Campus

Harvard President condemns Hamas

Harvard President Claudine Gay forcefully condemned the Hamas attack on Israel and distanced the University from a group of student organizations who signed onto a statement that called Israel "entirely responsible" for the ongoing violence in the region.

Gay wrote in a statement to The Harvard Crimson Tuesday morning that "while our students have the right to speak for themselves, no student group – not even 30 student groups – speaks for Harvard University or its leadership."

Gay's administration had come under fire from a wide array of figures over the weekend, first for its lack of response and then for failing to forcefully condemn Hamas or antisemitism broadly in the University's initial statement – which contained no reference to the letter by the Palestine Solidarity Committee.

Cambridge: Nick Davis wins Union presidency

Nick Davis was voted in as president of the Cambridge Union this evening, in the debating society's first election since last term's ballot rigging scandal.

Davis, a former co-chair of the university's Labour club, carved his name into the history books after being elected unopposed, with former rival Ellie Breeze not standing.

As Lent term's Cambridge Union chief, Davis will have to confront ongoing damages to the debating society's reputation. Questions over transparency and elitism at the institution remain, merely months since Max Ghose resigned from the presidency after being accused of vote rigging.

Davis said: "It's a privilege to be elected by the membership of the Cambridge Union."

Edinburgh UCU Members Strike

University of Edinburgh was one of the 42 universities nationwide on strike for five consecutive days in the week 25 September.

The industrial action comes as part of an ongoing dispute between the UCU and the University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA).

The UCU cite "Four Fights" in their reasons for striking, listed as: "a fair pay deal, action on reducing the pay gap, the elimination of casualisation and reduction of workloads."

New Oxford study shows reduction of antibiotics in animal feed does not increase antibiotic resistance

Liya Sebhatu reports.

A new study published in the Journal of the International Society for Microbial Ecology (ISME) has found that the reduction of antibiotics in animal feed does not reduce the evolution of antibiotic resistant genes in bacteria.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) can be caused by the overuse of antibiotics, leading to drug-resistant infections and 1.2 million deaths each year. In 2017, a rapid increase of antibiotic resistant bacteria *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) carrying mobile colistin resistance (MCR) genes caused the Chinese government to ban the use of colistin in animal feed. Colistin is a ‘last-line’ antibiotic: thus, reducing its usage plays a vital role in being able to treat multidrug-resistant infections.

The ban reduced colistin consumption by 90%, and it was hypothesised that this would result in a similar depletion of AMR rates. Despite this, studies across China showed the drop in the *mcr-1* gene was slower than anticipated.

In response to this, researchers at the University of Oxford, led by renowned biologist Professor

Craig MacLean, focused on the region of the DNA that controls the expression of the *mcr-1* gene. They found that the region shows high levels of variation, with certain variations being able to offset the fitness costs of the *mcr-1* gene. After ‘fine-tuning’ the *mcr-1* gene to a lower level, these new variants were able to grow faster whilst also increasing colistin resistance rates. These mutations were compared to *E. coli* strains carrying *mcr-1* from both before and after the colistin ban, and it was found that the mutations that improved the fitness of the

gene within the lab had remained at similar rates both before and after the colistin ban.

Director of Biology at the Ineos Oxford Institute and co-author on the paper, Professor Tim Walsh, said: “Colistin resistance across many strains of *E. coli* and in diverse environments... should act as our warning of the dangers of antibiotic overuse and misuse... It is not enough to reduce antibiotic consumption in order to effectively combat antibiotic resistance. We need... new strategies to protect our last-resort antibiotics for when we need them most.”

Further, Professor Craig MacLean, said: “Our results provide strong evidence that the evolution of the *mcr-1* gene has helped to stabilise colistin resistance in agricultural settings, even though colistin use in agriculture has declined by 90%.” This finding is of major importance for all future interventions targeting the reduction of antibiotic usage, demonstrating the need to consider the evolution and transmission of resistance genes to introduce viable strategies to reduce resistance.”



Image credit: Drew Hays via Unsplash

Dippy diplodocus court case dropped against Oxford Just Stop Oil activist

Victor Cheung reports.

The court case against Daniel Knorr has been dropped. The 21 year old biochemistry student at Oxford University, apprehended yesterday for vandalising the Radcliffe Camera, was arrested in April for conspiracy to cause criminal damage to the Dippy exhibit in Coventry.

Dippy, described as “the nation’s favourite dinosaur” is a beloved plaster-of-paris Diplodocus replica that was donated to the London Museum of Natural History in 1905.

Recently, it has been on a tour of the nation’s museums, with its current tenure at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in Coventry set to continue until 2025. Representing Just Stop Oil, the activists breached security, revealed message-bearing t-shirts

before being arrested. On 6 October, whilst in court at the Warwickshire Justice Centre for a pre-trial hearing, Knorr and Victoria, 67, from Leamington Spa, were informed that the case had been dropped on the grounds that the prosecution could not find sufficient evidence.

Just Stop Oil is a British environmental activism group, which uses civil disobedience, direct action, vandalism and traffic obstruction. The group aims to commit the government to ending all new licensing and production of fossil fuels.

Following the case’s dismissal, Knorr said that “any prosecution of nonviolent demonstrators is a waste of time and money.”

He also levelled criticism at the British judicial system, saying: “people are dying every day, and the courts are more concerned with be-

ing good bureaucrats than they are with saving lives.

“It’s time for those in positions of power to accept their responsibility and pick a side – the side of life.”

Knorr was previously convicted for aggravated trespass, after throwing orange powder onto the pitch at a test match at Lord’s, along with two other Just Stop Oil activists.

Representing a species that fell victim to mass extinction, Dippy was a crucial symbol in the protestors’ plea. Knorr said, “the dinosaurs had no choice about extinction but we do!”

The case’s dismissal comes as the UK government announced more than 100 new north sea oil and gas licences in July, something that the United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, described as “moral and economic madness.”

Image credit: Just Stop Oil



Oxford Council could join nationwide calls for ban on disposable vapes

Faris Firoozye reports.

The Oxford City Council is holding discussions on whether it should support a ban on disposable vapes. A recent motion was proposed by Green Party councillors Lucy Pegg and Rosie Rawle at a council meeting on 2 October.

Disposable vapes are known to be one of the more popular forms of e-cigarettes with 1 in 9 people between 11-18 experimenting with e-cigarettes with 69% choosing disposable vapes according to Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). Oftentimes containing up to 2% nicotine they are known to cause both respiratory health problems and nicotine addiction to teenagers they market them to. Moreover, single-use vapes have a detrimental environmental impact with 5 million vapes being thrown away every week, an astonishing fourfold increase from last year.

This move to ban disposable vapes comes from increased calls from ministers in Westminster to ban single-use in the UK due to public health and environmental reasons. The Scottish Government has already agreed to carry out a consul-

tation on banning disposable vapes.

In July, MPs pressured the government to introduce restrictions on the packaging and marketing of vapes that seemingly are targeted at children. Germany, New Zealand, Australia and France have all instituted bans or restrictions on both or either flavoured e-cigarettes and disposable vapes.

The Oxford City Council in a recent press release also called attention to the fact that vapes contain critical raw materials such as lithium and copper which are critical for green technologies. The Council stated that “the disposable vapes thrown away over the past year contain enough lithium to create 5,000 batteries for electric cars”.

Green Party councillor Rosie Rawle meanwhile stated in the press release: “Vaping can be an effective public health intervention to reduce tobacco smoking, however, this could be achieved without the excessive reliance on environmentally damaging disposable vapes.”

Between 2020 and 2022, there has been a seven-fold increase in disposable vapes as well as an astonishing 50% year-on-year increase in the proportion of children using vapes of all kinds.



Analysis: Disposable vapes are obvious hazards

Freddie Maud comments.



Disposable vapes are obvious hazards – to the environment and, directly and indirectly, to health. They leave our streets filled with empty, lurid tubes of plastic; they drain resources vital to the ensuing green transition, and they risk bringing tobacco cigarettes and the experience of addiction ever closer to an increasingly younger pool of consumers.

es in bubbly fonts and dubious claims of their recyclability.

What is more, they are cheap. Anybody - including many children, albeit illicitly – can get at least 200 puffs from an exotically-flavoured disposable vape and end up just £5 poorer. When sold alongside packs of chewing gum, it is only too easy to pick one up and thereby avoid setting aside £20 for a reusable vape.

Oxford City Council’s move to ban disposal vapes, or at least tax them, can therefore be no bad thing. At the very least, it will take cheap vapes off the market and significantly decrease the waste of plastic and lithium batteries, even redirecting the latter for use by electric cars. But the very real issue of colourful, near explicitly child-friendly vapes threatening to make tobacco addiction that bit more attractive, remains. It will take more than a ban to eliminate this threat.

And yet their presence is pervasive. In 2022, a UK Parliamentary review found that 14 million single-use vapes were bought and 5.4 million thrown away each month. Their popularity, among adults and children, is overwhelming. Their design – bright, coloured, even rainbow – is one tobacco executives can only dream of. Their ads, plastered across buses and telephone boxes, display imaginings of these contraptions which dart joyously across the canvas, assisted by promotional messag-

Oxford’s international fees surged by 100% since 2018

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Philosophy, Psychology and Linguistics, for example, has increased by 42% from £31k in 2022 to £44k in 2023.

Change in international student demographics

International students have an important role to play in any global university. At Oxford, they made up 46% as of December 2022, which included 23% of undergraduates. Currently, they make up a total of one third of all students and around 21% of undergraduates.

Prior to Brexit, EU students paid the same as home students, however under the new system they pay the same as all other international students. The impact of these changes has been stark, with the proportion of EU students falling from 8.2% in 2018 to 3.8% in 2022.

“the proportion of EU students falling from 8.2% in 2018 to 3.8% in 2022.”

Impact on the University’s accessibility and diversity

The fee rises have changed the composition of the international student cohort, and therefore the entire student population. This is due to the large financial challenges that now face prospective international students, particularly those from developing nations.

SU President Danial Hussain told *Cherwell*: “The recent rises in tuition fees limits Oxford’s international student body to mostly wealthy individuals,

undermining the university’s commitment to academic excellence and accessibility.”

This is in contrast to the wide-ranging changes to admissions criteria that have been made over the last couple years to make Oxford more accessible for UK students, which have led to a significant increase in the proportion of state schooled students as well as people from underprivileged backgrounds and communities.

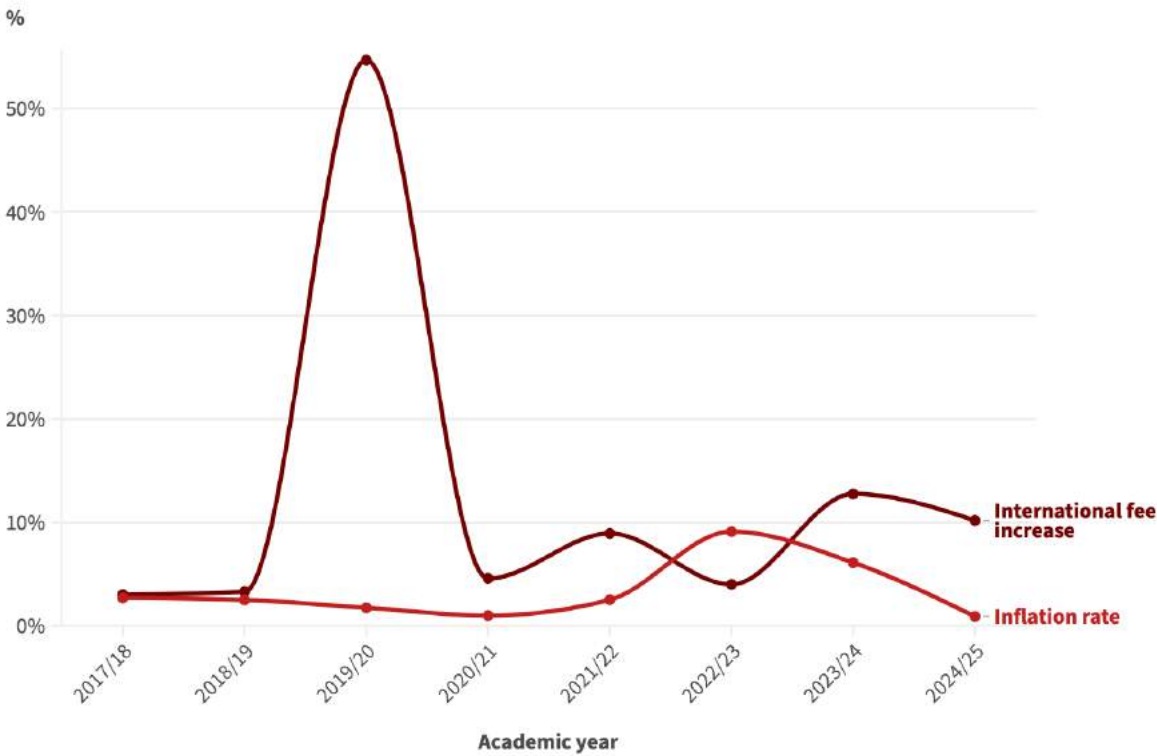
A second-year law student, Nanditha Dileep, expressed her frustration at the inaccessibility of the University: “The ‘world’s best university’ is only restricted to the economically privileged, or that if anyone from a background that isn’t financially privileged dares to pursue their academic dreams, they’re saddled with student debt and loans as a price for their ambition.

“After getting into Oxford, I started mentoring other students who wanted to do the same. These students come from families that scrape up every penny to send their children abroad for a better life. However, despite being extraordinarily academically gifted, many choose to apply to other universities instead of Oxford, in order to make it affordable.

“Other students choose to do cheaper courses when they’d much rather be doing other ones because international students’ fees differ by the subject.”

“The ‘world’s best university’ is only restricted to the economically privileged...”

Inflation rate vs international fee increases



Impact on students

The University states that they undertake “a detailed review of fee rates to ensure that these remain competitive” enabling them “to continue to deliver world-leading teaching, research and a wide range of student support services against a backdrop of increasing financial pressures.” However, fee rises have made the “Oxford dream” significantly more challenging to attain for international students.

A second year Biomedical Sciences student from Germany told *Cherwell*: “Personally, I have had to resort to hours and hours of research, culminating in only barely scraping together enough funds from three different foundations across different

countries to support my studies.

“I also have to renew these annually, which makes me anxious about the ability to progress

“...I have had to resort to hours and hours of research, culminating in only barely scraping together enough funds from three different foundations across different countries to support my studies.”

through my course.”

He also addressed the difficulty faced by international students from underprivileged backgrounds to attain funding, adding: “Compared to for example Ivy league universities in the US, Oxford offers no form of financial aid and only little support to a very tiny amount of international students from a selection of countries. Although some students, e.g. from HK, may be able to access governmental funds, others, especially from EU countries, are neither eligible for support from the UK, Oxford nor their home country.

“Working for Project Access, a non-profit supporting underprivileged international students applying to top universities in the world, it has been disappointing to see how many were discouraged to apply to Oxford due to financial hardship. Ever since Brexit, the number of EU students and thus diversity

amongst the student body have also dropped. Diversity should be valued prelims, due to financial hardship as an international student.”

Oxford’s international dilemma: National Champion or global leader?

How to consider international students and their fees is a dilemma that results from the university’s two interlocking missions. On the one hand is the role of the university as a “national champion” that exports its quality education, all the while utilising the profits made from international students to subsidise home fees and fund scholarship programs for UK students from underprivileged backgrounds.

The other goal is to reinforce the university’s world renowned reputation for its research, education and alumni. On how to achieve this, the SU President said: “For Oxford to maintain its status as a globally leading educational institution, it must focus on admitting the most qualified applicants, irrespective

“...to maintain its status as a globally leading institution, [Oxford] must focus on admitting the most qualified applicants”

of their ability to pay.”

It is likely that this dilemma will persist well into the future, at least as long as it continues to be both globally renowned for its research, and central in shaping Britain’s future generations.



Which kebab van is the best?

Heroic support for Hussain's

Adam Saxon



Hussain's is far and away the best kebab van in Oxford. An honorary member of Keble JCR since 1997, the man is a living, breathing legend. It's also the only kebab van I've ever had the honour of being invited inside of (I have photographic evidence). Not only does it have the best food, it also has the best staff: Nadia is always up for a chat!

Maccies: the rogue choice

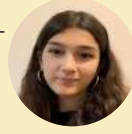
Raghav Chari



Move over, kebab vans. Let's be honest with ourselves. Where do we head when we're staggering back from a night at ATIK? Who'll be there, not just at night but in the day too? It's good old McDonald's, that's who. A Maccies visit guarantees the most 'bang for your buck'. You know exactly what you're going to get, and you know you're 'lovin' it'. When you're lost, it's a beacon of hope, standing firm at the heart of Cornmarket Street.

Solomans rules St. Giles

Alicia Martínez Patiño



My first chance to appreciate Solomans Grill's chips and cheese, obviously topped with their borderline angelic sweet chilli sauce, felt to me as if the pearly gates themselves had materialised in the middle of St Giles. A just-greasy-enough escape into absolute bliss after a night out was just what I needed to cope with the mental baggage of a week of ruthless essay feedback and what seemed like Imposter Syndrome 101. As an international student, ignorant to the sometimes peculiar customs of the British people, the concept of brown sauce and why I "shouldn't put it on chips" was thoroughly (and very nicely) explained to me – I still think about this interaction every time I go out and consider trying a new van.

Waking up to Russell Brand's 'razzle-dazzle' misogyny

Anna Hull

Hello there, you awakening wonders. This messianic flair is typical of comedian-cum-conspiracy theorist Russell Brand's address to his millions of followers. The short statement posted on his (now demonetised) YouTube channel on 16th September, in which he denied five allegations of sexual assault and rape, was no different. While still striking an intimate tone, his words had clearly been well thought through – unsurprising, given the severity of these accusations. Yet the very language which Brand has deployed in his defence also serves to highlight one of the most unpleasant aspects of this case. Many of us may well be awake now – but not in the way he intended.

The truth of the allegations reported by *The Times* and *Channel 4 Dispatches* has not yet been determined; Brand and his supporters maintain that this is an attempt by the mainstream media to silence him. But irrespective of these new claims, Russell Brand's misogyny is and has always been a well-documented fact. Some of the most shocking scenes in the *Channel 4 Dispatches* investigation are nothing new – archive footage of endless stand-up routines, talk show appearances, and television broadcasts, all presenting variations on the theme of objectifying women. The material is highly crass – suggesting that a female interviewee removed her underwear and then mimed masturbation, praising "them blowjobs where mascara runs a bit" and making exaggerated gagging noises (all the while claiming, "It was her idea!")

Yet it's all delivered with a cheeky smile and a knowing wink, to the tune of laughter and whoops from his audience. It's all part of his act, right?

Brand certainly appeared to be disarmingly candid about his exploits. "I was always transparent about [what he refers to as his "promiscuous, consensual conduct"] then, almost too transparent, and I'm being transparent about it now," he declared in the statement. On the surface his performances certainly had a frank, confessional air; yet while his remarks seemed uncensored and off-the-cuff, their earthiness was offset by eloquence. Lewd jokes were made more palatable by a veneer of verbiage, producing such whimsically

"Far from transparency, the aesthetic speaks of concealment and embellishment"

stark juxtapositions of register as "the sexual apotheosis that is bumming". Likewise, Brand's flamboyant style and animated, at times even earnest, delivery served to further underplay his degradation of women. It's just a bit of fun! Lighten up!

Although he has since abandoned his salacious material and reinvented himself as a wellness guru standing up to the establishment, these distraction tactics are still present in Brand's recent statement. The language used is oddly ornate in places – the word "litany" is repeated numerous times, and his "transparency" has not just been "twisted" or "distorted" by the

media, but rather "metastasized into something criminal". The use of this word is unusual outside of a medical context, since it describes the multiplication of cancerous cells. It seems clear that it has been chosen for deliberate rhetorical effect, in order to underscore his point about a hidden "agenda" behind this report, and also perhaps to provide an air of respectability and intellectualism. It's easy to forget that this is the same man once known for assertions of a wholly different sort. "I like to have it off, right? Yeah, why not?"

There is also an irony to Brand's dismissal of "this litany of astonishing, rather baroque attacks". While presumably intended to paint the accusations as absurd confessions of the mainstream media, the word "baroque" is also a fitting descriptor of his own persona and discourse. The images and associations it conjures up are of extravagant ornamentation, exaggeration, bombast, heightened emotions. There's also a hint of decadence – the style was a staple of the counter-Reformation – and a whiff of artificiality too: churrigueresque excess bordering on vulgarity, wood painted to imitate gold and marble. Far from transparency, the aesthetic speaks of concealment and embellishment. And long before his transformation into a modern-day prophet Brand was a fan of religious iconography, once even performing a stand-up routine in front of a huge image of Christ. He closed this particular live show by rapturously declaring "I worship divine sexual female energy!" Outwardly more positive than rape jokes, but still ultimately reducing women's worth to sex. And entirely undermined by the

follow up remark about how this ode to womankind has been carefully calculated – "there's no way I ain't getting laid after the show tonight!"

Still, surely it's reassuring that now, at least, his past comments are widely seen as sleazy and extremely sexist. No one would get away with that material today, let alone build a media career and become a Hollywood star on the back of it. But we shouldn't rush to congratulate ourselves and speak of a "different time". The height of Brand's fame on British television was less than 20 years ago, and while blatant misogyny is no longer socially acceptable it continues to rear its head. Lawrence Fox's comments about political journalist Ava Evans on a recent *GB News* broadcast are a prime example. "Who'd want to shag that?" Once again, women's only importance lies in their sexual attractiveness and fulfilment of male fantasies.

Fox has subsequently been suspended from presenting duties and the channel has issued an apology. But if there's one thing we should learn from the Russell Brand case, regardless of its eventual outcome, it's that it is never just about one individual. Brand may be the subject of these allegations, but there are many more people who enabled his appalling attitude to thrive. The legacy of this exposé should not be the demonisation of one man, but the consideration of the social systems that both shaped him and gave him power and influence. We should all consider the ideas and attitudes which we've received and supported; whether we've since come to regret them or still uphold them, whether we've expressed them actively or passively. This needs to be a wake-up call for everyone.

The Debate Chamber

Violet and Kate go head to head, debating whether Oxford terms are too short

Oxford terms are notoriously intense. With at least one essay a week, you pretty much have to wave goodbye to at least one of the following: sleep, work, or social life. The consequence of this unhealthy lifestyle is the famous fifth-week blues, which should surely not be normal. Our essays turn into weekly crises, not something we enjoy. If our work was spread over a longer period, we could spend more time actually engaging with it instead of pulling all-nighters and skimming as many articles as possible.

I've spent multiple last days of term running back from a tute, frantically packing up my room, and shoving everything into international storage. I don't want this to be my final memory of Oxford. We also end up spending the last couple of weeks of every vac bored and alone at home because all our friends at other universities have already gone back. When we do go back, the pressure to make the most of the few weeks drives some stu-

dents to breakdowns and illness. It's not worth it.

People will say tradition, but there is literally no reason for the university to still function this way: the terms were based around the Christian calendar, back when Oxford was for monks and clergymen. We don't have to know Latin, so why do we still have to come back on the Feast of St Michael? It's outdated, and hardly anywhere else does it. With longer terms, we could enjoy our already limited time here

much more and get much more out of our degrees.



Absence makes the heart grow fonder. A cliché which I've often felt appropriate for Oxford's short terms. Whilst I'm at home, I long for the day I return to the college quads and beautiful old libraries. However, by the eighth week, I can't claim this is how I feel. My friends at other universities love to comment on how short the terms are, often donning it as "boarding in g



school". But none of us can refute that the workload makes your time at Oxford exhausting. Fifth-week blues is no joke and after every term, without fail, I spend a week at home bedbound with some undisclosed illness, more commonly known as 'burnout'. As weeks go on, Oxford feels smaller and smaller, club nights begin to become repetitive, and formals even lose their magic. So much of Oxford's culture is based on novelty, the formal dress, the tutorials in decadent rooms, and walks along beautiful rivers. But as the saying goes, familiarity breeds contempt. And these parts of Oxford are so special that time away really makes you appreciate how unique these experiences are. So, if we didn't have these long breaks, I think we'd grow even more resentful of the workload, and then the fun things you do to distract yourself from this would begin to become tiresome. Eight weeks is surely good enough.

Veering east? What Slovakia’s election means for Europe and the world

Samuel Winstanley

On the face of it, Slovakia’s election sounds like a simple, clear-cut, and immediate European disaster: a pro-Russia party raked in the most votes, and a firmly Eurosceptic populist who has called for an end to aid for Ukraine is inches from power. Neither of these facts is false. The winning party Smer-SD, better known in English as Direction-Social Democracy, is indeed, at least in its current iteration, Putin-friendly. It ran on a populist programme with hints of left-wing nationalism and social conservatism. Meanwhile, its leader, Robert Fico, has embraced Orbán-esque positions on sanctions and, further fuelling both domestic and foreign concern, is likely to need the support of the far more headline Slovak National Party (SNS) to cobble together the seventy-six seats required for a majority in the National Council.



and American observers alike, fearing that the replacement of a clutch of unstable but avowedly pro-Ukraine centre-right governments with another recalcitrant, Russia-leaning leader might well add another flashpoint to the already faltering European consensus on Ukraine. Michal Šimečka, leader of runners-up Progressive Slovakia (PS) went so far as to describe a Fico-led government as an “abiding evil” after final results were released. Anxiety over Smer’s victory is made bitter still by the fact that for a few brief hours on Saturday, Europe thought it was out of the woods. Both exit polls released after voting closed showed Progressive Slovakia, a pro-European, NATO-focused, and socially liberal party, narrowly ahead — results which, under Slovak rules, would have given PS the crucial first stab at a majority.

Yet Smer’s victory is pyrrhic at best, and the path to Fico taking the reins is fraught with the skeletons of his checkered political past. Of these, the looming skeleton is without doubt Peter Pellegrini, a former prime minister himself and now leader of Hlas (Voice), a social democratic and pro-European party that finished a respectable third, now finding itself the republic’s kingmaker. Pellegrini stepped in to replace Fico after the latter was forced out of office in a 2018 scandal involving the murder of a journalist and his fiancée. In 2020, he further underlined their differences by walking away from Smer with ten other deputies to found the centre-left Hlas. However, Pellegrini has indicated his preference for a Fico-led government, describing Smer as “closer” to Hlas, though he has not ruled out working with the liberals.

Nonetheless, a Fico-Pellegrini government, albeit with the support of the SNS, is by no means the worst outcome. As recently as August, a Smer-SNS government looked just as likely, but with Hlas relegated to the sidelines and replaced by Republika, a newcomer formed of defectors from the People’s Party of Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), a party which traces its roots to Jozef Tiso, a priest and fascist who led Slovakia during WWII when it was a Nazi client state. Compared to this, a Smer-Hlas coalition seems a whole lot better. Even the SNS might be booted from consideration, after the counting of candidate preferential votes allowed four former members of the neo-fascist ĽSNS to leapfrog more mainstream candidates into its parliamentary delegation. This could force Fico to instead work with any of a collection of centre-right and pro-European parties, as well as Hlas, or even open the door to a liberal-led government.

With this in mind, Slovakia’s election begins to seem less a disaster, and more an inconvenience. The presence of Pellegrini in government will force Fico to moderate his rhetoric, as he already has done, announcing on Monday no major shift in his country’s Ukraine policy—at least for now. A Russia-sympathetic leader, though a headache for the EU, is not such a problem if he is effectively declawed by the reality of his government.

Likewise, much of the discussion of the election has focused on the ability of Slovakia to blockade EU sanctions, if it so chooses. But Slovakia, a country of just five and a half million, holds few other cards. The EU, in contrast, can hold €6 billion in recovery funding over Fico’s head, if he makes

trouble. Slovakia, in other words, is wholly dependent on the EU — it is even part of the Eurozone, a rarity in Eastern Europe. It is simply too small and too reliant on Europe to weather the opprobrium of its fellows.

This is not to say that the election is insignificant; Slovaks are faced with the return of a polarising leader who is under investigation, harasses journalists, and frequently resorts to xenophobia whenever it is politically convenient. However, for Europe, and

“..With this in mind, Slovakia’s election begins to seem less a disaster, and more an inconvenience...”

the world, it is not set to be a dramatic turn of events. Fico, ever a political shapeshifter, will take whatever form his coalition necessitates, which will inevitably mean walking back from the pro-Russia brink.

On the morning after the election, Viktor Orbán took to X (formerly Twitter) to gloat, proclaiming “Guess who’s back”. This has ended up being a surprisingly prophetic statement. As the postbellum became clear, we have all been left wondering which Fico will walk back into government. Will it be a pro-Russia firebrand willing to buck the EU and march into international isolation alongside Hungary, or will it be a muted troublemaker whose big words translate into little action?

Given the fractured results Slovaks have delivered, it can only be the latter.

The flame that still burns

Cate Morris

Three months ago, American pop-punk band Fall Out Boy released an updated version of Billy Joel’s 1980s Top Hit, ‘We Didn’t Start the Fire.’ For those who were neither around in the 80s, nor fans of Alternative Indie playlist, ‘We Didn’t Start the Fire’ is a dizzying commentary of rapid-fire lists of people, events, and cultural flagstones from the mid-20th century to the late 1980s. Fall Out Boy’s version continues this trend from the late 80s to the present day. Consider it a modern chronicle, edition two. Both versions reference not only a series of isolated historical moments, but a continuous narrative that we are all acutely aware of. Fall Out Boy’s ‘Trump impeached twice’ is Joel’s ‘Richard Nixon’s back again.’ So, what does this revised version suggest about the message of human continuity?



Human Continuity

In psychological theory, human continuity is the ability to continue in the same manner indefinitely. Gestalt theory speaks of the undisrupted creation of continuous patterns connected to objects. ‘Objects’ in this context referred to both political and social issues. That is not to say that society is stagnant, but rather interconnected to historical events in a cyclical manner, and that change is a complex and multifaceted process.

Political Relevance

In both Joel’s and Fall Out Boy’s versions there is a reach of political relevance. In Joel’s version, the song delivers a quick-fire run-down of major events, including the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the Watergate Scandal. Through its quick, and sometimes witty, delivery covering over forty years, there is a sense of continuous narrative, rather than a suggestion that these events are isolated moments, as modern media would sometimes have us believe.

Fall Out Boy’s version of the song updates the reference and commentary to include events from the 80s to the present day, including the on-

going conflicts in the Middle East and the rise of terrorism. The commentary of these modern events becomes a part of the same narrative that Joel covered, and stresses that society continues to grapple with many of the same issues, only this time in a new shape.

Social Themes

Perhaps the most notable theme in both versions is the persistence of social unrest. In Joel’s version, the song touches on the struggle for racial equality, including references such as ‘Little Rock (Nine, 1957)’ and ‘Ole Miss’ (a public research university in Oxford, Mississippi, where violent protests began over the admission of James Meredith, the first African American student to enrol at the school), as well as the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Malcom X.

Although Fall Out Boy’s cover updated the list of events to include more recent social issues, similar themes of social inequalities and public unrest continue to be recorded. The cover addresses the Black Lives Matter movement, and the struggle against racial discrimination, as well as the ongoing fight for the LGBTQIA+ communities. The repetition of themes over the course of the song reminds us that many of the new issues

we face today are deeply rooted in our culture and history. Granted, that is no excuse, but there is a powerful message in this narrative. Recurrence of these issues over the decades creates a sense of shared frustration and disillusionment that transcends these historical and cultural differences.

So What Is The Message of Human Continuity?

It is cyclical. It is a reminder that humans have been fighting metaphorical, and sometimes literal, fires for decades. It is a shower of political bullets, a rapid-fire of social injustices, and a three-minute-and-thirty-five-second melody that remembers conflict as the result of resource scarcity, ideological indifferences, and power imbalances. In spite of all the chaos, the lyrics express a message of hope that transpires across time – eight decades to be exact. While society may be slow to change, there is a shared experience in our troubles that brings us together across different eras and generations. Each verse continues this narrative and reminds us that neither Baby Boomers, nor Generation Z, nor any generations in between, are independently responsible for the world’s problems. In the words of Billy Joel, ‘It was always burning since the world’s been turning.’



Cherwell asked your opinion on the latest issues, big and small...

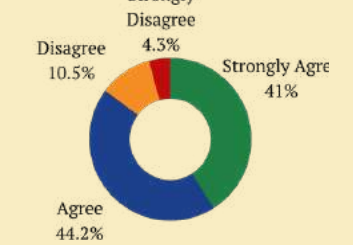
Which is the prettiest college?

This week, we asked our readers which college is the prettiest. Many colleges got votes, but the top 3 were as follows: 20.3% voted Worcester, followed by 16.9% for Magdalen, and 7.6% for New.



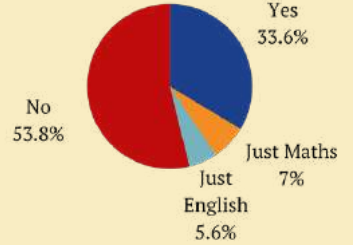
“I am worried about rent increases at my college”

According to our Instagram poll, 44.2% of you agree and 41% of you strongly agree, while 10.5% disagree and 4.3% strongly disagree.



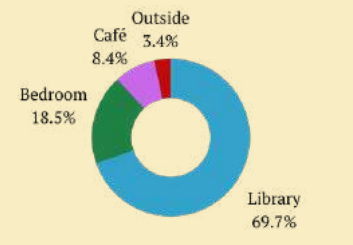
Should Maths and English be taught until the age of 18?

We asked you whether Maths and English should be taught until the age of 18. 53.8% voted no and 33.6% voted yes, while 7% voted for just Maths and 5.6% voted for just English.



Where is the best place to do work?

We asked our readers where the best location for study is. 69.7% of you voted for the library, 18.5% voted bedroom, 8.4% voted for a cafe and 3.4% voted for outside.



In conversation with Georg Friedrich, Prince of Prussia and Head of the House of Hohenzollern

Freddie Evans interviews the Prince of Prussia, about the history of the House of Hohenzollern, its role in Germany today, and some advice for Oxford students.

More than 100 years after the end of the monarchy in Germany, Georg Friedrich and the German authorities are still in consultations on separating state property and private property of the House of Hohenzollern. More than 40 years of communist rule in East Germany left many unresolved issues. These topics made headlines within Germany and beyond.

I was eager to find out more about Georg Friedrich, the family's campaign to recover some of their possessions, and the story of the House of Hohenzollern in contemporary Germany. To gain a better understanding of his background and responsibilities, I asked Georg Friedrich to summarise the family's history and his current role.

"The family history can be traced back to the year 1061. We can almost look back to 1,000 years of family history. That is why I'm looking forward to the year 2061, when I can celebrate my 85th birthday, my golden wedding and a thousand years of Hohenzollern history.

"I am actually very proud to be the Head of the House of Hohenzollern. Since my father had died when I was still a small child, I succeeded my late grandfather

Prince Louis Ferdinand as Head of the Family already 28 years ago in 1994 when I was only 18. I regard it as my duty to look after our family, to represent our family and to speak on their behalf. In my role as Head of the House of Hohen-

"I firmly believe that there are lessons to be learned from the failures in the past. History must not repeat itself".

zollern, I have the great privilege of meeting hundreds of interesting people every year, people from all walks of life. I also very much enjoy our role in preserving Prussia's cultural heritage. Since the abdication of my great-great-grandfather Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1918 my family does not have any political role. Yet we are, for example, still the largest lender of art from our private collection to the main state foundations that look after Prussia's cultural heritage. My wife Sophie and I furthermore dedicate a lot of time to support-

ing charities, including our own family foundation that is looking after disadvantaged children."

The long and distinguished story of the House of Hohenzollern has over the centuries encountered its fair share of controversies, most notably during the earlier part of the twentieth century. The repercussions of Wilhelm II's actions in the lead up to the First World War are still widely debated and have shaped perceptions of the House of Hohenzollern in historical narratives relating to that period. I asked Georg Friedrich how he navigates the unique responsibility of representing the House of Hohenzollern in today's world.

"From my point of view, there is always light and shadow, when viewing one's history, the history of a family, the history of a country, any history in fact. It's extremely important to not leave

"I sincerely hope that peace will also return to the Eastern part of our continent."

anything out while looking at history - to view the history at the time when it happened and to consider the context. I believe it important to be impartial but not uncritical in approaching history. I firmly believe that there is lessons to be learned from the failures in the past. History must not repeat itself."

Acknowledging the numerous positive contributions made by the Hohenzollern dynasty, I asked Georg Friedrich about the specific aspects of Prussian and German history and culture which he, representing the Hohenzollern family, considers most significant and worthy of emphasis.

"When the state of Prussia was abolished in 1947, the huge cultural heritage was fortunately



largely preserved. In 1957 the new democratic Western Germany established the so called "Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation" that would administer the state collections and museums. Until today this foundation is the largest cultural heritage institution in Europe. It makes me very proud that my private collection is among their largest lenders. But there are many unexpected things one can consider. For example, the home colours of our national football team, black and white, derive from the colours of the Prussian flag."

This reminder of the colours of the Prussian flag shifted our conversation to politics. What was Georg Friedrich's perspective on the European Union.

"In the 1970s, in the middle of the cold war era, my grandfather Prince Louis Ferdinand (1907-1994) gave a remarkable TV interview where he said that he strongly believed that Europe would eventually be united again. That was a long time before the fall of the Iron Curtain and the reunification of Germany. My grandfather always believed in the idea of European unification. I very much consider my self in his firmly pro-European tradition. And while I was personally disappointed when the British people voted to leave the European Union, I strongly believe that the United Kingdom will continue to be a

strong member of the European family of nations and a strong ally in defence of our common Western values. Interestingly enough, my grandmother Princess Kira was Russian and at the same time a great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Therefore I sincerely hope that peace will also return to the Eastern part of our continent."

One historically transforma-

"Jeder soll nach seiner Façon selig werden" - "Each must live as he sees fit".

tive figure who championed Enlightenment values was Friedrich the Great, King of Prussia (1712-1786). Through skilful diplomacy, military tactical genius and advanced domestic policy he elevated Prussia to become a thoroughly modern state and formidable European power. Does Georg Friedrich see peaceful co-existence between his legacy and modern principles of democracy and equality?

"Over the past 250 years, there has undoubtedly been tremendous progress in the development of freedom and democracy. Yet some



of the core beliefs of Frederick the Great are still valid today: I think that Friedrich the Great's saying "Jeder soll nach seiner Façon selig werden" - "Each must live as he sees fit", is a phrase that says it all. It applies to many things we are discussing at the moment."

I wanted to hear about Georg Friedrich's assessment of public opinion in Germany and Europe heading towards increased recognition of the Hohenzollern lineage.

"It is not so much about recognition. I always try to do my best by my family, my country and by the charities that are close to my heart."

"Our current constitutional arrangements in Germany have led to the longest time period of peace and prosperity, of growth and freedom in our history. I do not see any reason to change that."

With regards to the history of my ancestors, I believe that it is important that we do not forget about our history and what has made us the way we are. I keep saying that our history is a bit like our parents: Of course, one can neglect them, and one can think badly of them. But at the end, one wouldn't be here without them. The same applies to our past.

It is, however, important that one keeps drawing the right lessons from what happened in the past."

When it comes to recognition,

"If I compare myself to my ancestors, I believe none of them were living in happier circumstances than in the free democratic societies in which we have the privilege of living in today."

the British monarchy is unremittingly in the media spotlight. Could Georg Friedrich envision a

constitutional monarchy in Germany, akin to the House of Windsor?

"That is definitely not a discussion that is taking place in Germany. Our current constitutional arrangements in Germany have led to the longest time period of peace and prosperity, of growth and freedom in our history. I do not see any reason to change that. If I compare myself to my ancestors, I believe none of them were living in happier circumstances than in the free democratic societies in which we have the privilege of living in today."

Despite not being in a discussion about reinstating the monarchy in Germany, the discussion about restitution of Hohenzollern property is very much in the news there. I asked if he could comment about the current status of his claims for compensation for land and palaces expropriated from his family and return of property including palaces, paintings, the imperial crown jewels, the family library and correspondence.

"It's important to point out that the separation of state property and private property of my family

was already settled in 1926, after the end of monarchy, when my family had become private citizens.

During Soviet and communist rule in Eastern Germany, some of our private property was illegally confiscated or stolen, while any property in the democratic Western part of Germany remained untouched. After the reunification, my grandfather

applied for restitution of our private property in the former communist part of Germany. When in 1994 I succeeded my late grandfather as Head of the Family I also

"I can only encourage everyone to be open and interested in others and to be conscious of the many privileges we enjoy as citizens of liberal democracies."

inherited these open legal questions."

Is it likely that these claims will be successful?

"I have no doubts that all open questions will continue to be resolved in a respectful dialogue between the state authorities and my family. I am very grateful for the close, constructive partnership with the governments on federal and state level in Germany."

I asked Georg Friedrich if he had advice for Oxford students.

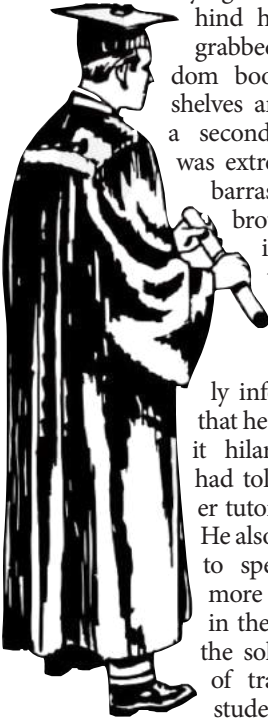
"When I was a young boy, especially at school, others thought of me as someone special. They asked me questions like: Do you live in a castle? Does your father have a crown? I felt very awkward by that until I realised that it was absolutely legitimate for them to ask these questions. In those days I had the sincere wish to be "normal". But then I found out for myself that there is no such thing as "normal people". Each and every one of us is special in his or her own way—by their own biography, by their individual talent and ways how each of us can make a contribution to society. Therefore I can only encourage everyone to be open and interested in others and to be conscious of the many privileges we enjoy as citizens of liberal democracies."

Image courtesy of the Oxford Union.



Tute notes...

I once walked into the Law room of the college library to find, to my great surprise, one of my tutors reading in there. The fact that I had a tiny crush on this tutor added to how startled I was, and so, making an immediate U-turn, I ran to tell my friends about the encounter. However, I then remembered that I had initially gone into the Law room for a reason - to get the single copy of a specific book on my reading list - and so I had to awkwardly walk back into the room. After searching for a while, with my cheeks burning, I discovered that said book was located on a shelf directly behind my tutor's head. Instead of trying to reach behind him, I just grabbed a random book off the shelves and ran off a second time. It was extremely embarrassing. I brought the incident up to him a lot later, and he grinningly informed me that he had found it hilarious, and had told my other tutors about it. He also promised to spend much more time there in the future for the sole purpose of traumatising students.



CHERBADLY

St Catz in further crisis after tutors found to contain RAAC

The RAAC crisis at St Catherine's College has worsened, after reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete was detected in not just college buildings and student accommodation, but also in many of the college's academic staff, with some tutors estimated to be up to 90% RAAC.

In accordance with government guidelines, these tutors, many of whom were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s when RAAC was widespread, will be temporarily removed from premises while they are surveyed and safety measures are put in place, as there is a critical risk of a dangerous mid-tutorial collapse. The Cherwell understands that Master of St Catz Kersti Börjars has already partially imploded and is currently being reinforced with support beams.

St Catz is currently exploring alternative options for university teaching, including outsourcing affected students to other colleges, having tutors cover subjects not

their own, and providing temporary replacement tutors in the form of mannequins and papier-mâché statues. Some tutors may need to be completely replaced with newer designs made with a more durable form of concrete.

The St Catz RAAC crisis has already forced many students out of their accommodation, as it has been declared unsafe. The college has implemented a room-sharing scheme, but as only one room in the whole college contains no RAAC, all 500+ Catz undergraduates are currently having to share a single room. Meanwhile, the JCR was replaced by a marquee, though as that too has turned out to also contain RAAC, it has been itself replaced by another marquee.

Indeed, some engineers have theorised that the entirety of St Catz may be constructed purely out of RAAC, as architect Arne Jacobsen was a noted RAAC enthusiast, even marrying a 2mx-2mx2m cube of the stuff. One engineer who spoke to the Cherwell said, 'It's entirely possible that the whole college could just disintegrate at any moment.' The engineer refused to comment however on whether this would be a good or a bad thing.

John Evelyn

13th of October 2023

Sing, Jevlen, sing of the wrath of the Panda, son of Empower — that destructive anger which condemned Standing to countless agonies and cast much controversy deep into the arms of the press. Paws clenched in rage, he shouted across the table his disgust at Venus Flytrap's invitation of StockV2, infuriated that he had not been informed about her invitation (he had). Barbie whispered expletives in shock at the Panda's performance as the reality of serving alongside him finally hit home, and tried to censor discussion by moving the meeting in-Kodak. And then in a tragic twist of fate, a rare atmospheric fluke blew the records of the meeting across the dreaming spires, though a window, and onto the desk of the editor of Oxford's premier toilet paper. Yet somehow, all this commotion was only the second most eventful Monday afternoon yet...

All was calm at first, Not-Hilda's-JCR-President had launched into a soporific soliloquy, but then Habeas Corpus raised his hand. His absenteeism had led him to miss discussion over re-admitting the Oucaholics, and he sought clarification on the mood of committee, in the wake of a new Speakers-for-Access deal. The motion was worded, ballots were cast, and when the 5/8 affirmative verdict was announced a silence broke where you could practically hear the cogs of unplanned conspiring churn in com-

mittees brains. No stranger to electoral malpractice, Barbie asked to see the voting slips, but the astounding result remained, the fifth columnists had only gone and done it. Over a brief adjournment Not-Hilda's-JCR-President, no doubt secretly pleased to have a last lease of relevancy before his week 3 visit to the committee glue factory, cooked up a dog's breakfast of an interpretation. There would be a negotiation, but also a second vote. Whether this will be managed in good faith, by a President apparently so successful at misreading her committee, remains to be seen.

Word on the street has it that the Kin/k/g has acquired himself a girlfriend, causing the women of Oxford to breathe a collective sigh of relief, while the no longer subsidised coffee shops must be looking for a replacement income source. No such amorous luck for the Legitimate Librarian's ex-Lover or the Trizzurer -- the latter now faces being a power lifter outside of a power couple. Rerunning is Style-Without-Substance -- JE speculates that if he spent more time working and less time self-grooming, he might have picked up more vac days; besides he will never be able to match the sartorial apogee of Union Tweed. All this and the term is just beginning. So go forth and hack, oh Union apparatchiks. The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

Yours, vaingloriously
John Evelyn.



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Thomas Bristow
Editor-in-Chief

Oxford is a city of many coffee shops. With such variety comes a great deal of choice, yielding a culture in this city which is borderline tribal. I am firmly of the belief that Colombia Coffee Roasters is the best that there is. The cafe is located just off the high street in the covered market and provides the perfect location to procrastinate from work. The coffee itself is by far the most unique and best tasting, and this is coming from someone who usually cannot tell the difference. I've been going to Colombia for over a year now, and I probably won't be switching anytime soon.

Perhaps, then, I myself am a victim of this 'tribal' coffee culture at Oxford. It seems that once people

find one they like, they never go back. I've even witnessed this tribalism manifest. When I visited Common Ground with a friend last year, everyone turned to stare at us like old men at the bar in some dusty spaghetti western. We weren't regular costumers, and it was made pretty obvious. We hovered awkwardly for a few seconds and, having assessed the vibe to veritably strange, I quickly bought an Americano and was on my way. I must admit, to be fair, that the coffee was quite decent.

Just across the road from this is GAIL's, the chain that seems to herald the gentrification of some unsuspecting neighbourhood. I've spent many rainy afternoons sat outside here watching the world go by at one of the small tables, though any Hemingwayesque delusions are quickly dispelled upon remembering you're literally sat outside a GAIL's and the fact that you have to write an essay post-caffeine crash.

For me, coffee shops are a unique part of the uni experience. They represent a break in the day, a moment to socialise and to forget about work for a second. Some of the best conversations have come about sat outside Colombia in the Covered Market on a dull day. It is a culture which, though factional, is only growing.



Olivia Boyle
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

While settling into new routines, there's nothing quite like walking along a sleepy lagoon to calm your nerves. Let me tell you about Jarvis Cocker's jukebox on Desert Island Discs that surfaced from the deepest, darkest depths of the BBC archive this week. The episode accompanied my scruffy unpacking; I tipped out boxes wildly as Cocker had done for his memoir, Good Pop, Bad Pop. I'll admit, though, that my boxes had nothing to do with divine revelations of lyric ingeniousness. Rather they brought the occasional comforting reminder of a lost sock or bottle of Fairy



Suzanne Antelme
Editor-in-Chief

Hello again, and congratulations on making it to 1st week! The hubbub and excitement of Freshers is officially behind us and a more authentic Oxford life has descended. First years will have collectively realised the ambitiously colour-coded schedules of last week were a trap – yes, you really should have spent a day less trawling the city for the perfect BOP costume and started the reading instead. As you embark on your first (and hopefully formative) Oxford essay crisis, however, take comfort in the knowledge that after two whole years of this place and innumerable post-tute evenings of self-reflection on the merits of better time management, reading lists still send a tingle of horror up my spine. Remember that your weekly essay is just that; something you write in a heavily

caffeinated state, spend an hour defending (read, dodging questions like a promising parliamentarian) in your tutorial, and then try your best to forget. All in time to do it again next week!

As you buckle into the rest of this eight week academic spree, remember that it is in fact necessary to leave the libraries occasionally, pretty and vaulted as their ceilings may be. You cannot actually subsist entirely on verbose historical accounts of the early modern period, even if they have been double starred by your tutor. Visit Oxford's greenspaces, join the rest of us in our intrepid search for the café with the best balance of affordability, palatableness, and plug sockets per square metre. Aside from cheap coffee, your bucket list should include selecting a favourite park bench and navigating the boggling array of student societies. The only thing longer than your reading list is your reading list next week, and the only thing longer than that is the page on the University website that lists all of the student societies. It is here that you can ponder the truly important questions in life, such as the precise difference between the Tennis Club and the Real Tennis Club, or exactly how many exciting new names for politics and consultancy societies Oxford students can dream up. Apparently our imaginations are limitless – but curiously preoccupied with throwing 'geo-' in front of everything.

Liquid. The recording was from 10 years after Pulp's legendary Glastonbury performance when it still warranted a 'bloody hell, I'm old'. Imagine what he'd say thirty years on. Just as despairing at time passing, Oxford welcomes new freshers, finalists, fearful scholars. As it does every year. In denial, though, Cocker squeezes the listener with rockstar anecdote. Frustrated with the farce of celebrity celebration at the 1996 Brit Awards, the Pulp frontman recalled launching himself on stage during Michael Jackson's performance. He had and

still doesn't have a sense of just how or quite why he was up there but the only reasonable thing to do in the moment was wave his behind to the rhythm of 'Earth Song'. Clearly some things don't go quite to plan but there's a valuable lesson for students here. Never rule out when committing a mild felony on national TV could be a godsend for one's career. And rest assured we've got time to figure things out. As Cocker rallied to the thousands of nondescript sweaty drunks (sound familiar?) in 1995: "Glastonbury 25 years, here's to 25 more!"

Cryptic Crossword, by Tamara De Mel

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ACROSS

- 1 Doomed to be drowned (4,2,3,5)
8 Isaac was somewhat sad as I moved (6)
9 Rich tore out the speech (8)
10 Narrow homes will be unfinished at dusk (8)
11 The myth of the foot (6)
12 Persuasive businessman (6)
14 The fastest speed of boat Edward constructed (7)
16 The naughty erotic English and their clique (7)
18 Poet's dads coming back for soup (6)
21 Looked at tomato and got angry (3,3)
23 Second hand marketing for the Spanish dove novel (8)
24 Meursault, the murderer, lost final appeal (8)
25 Routed badly, took another route (6)
26 It's easy to take dry foam parts into vessel, darling (5,4,1,4)

DOWN

- 1 Radical Democrat in charge of imprisoning overthrown monarch (7)
2 Following 3NT, for example, in first game (7)
3 Engineer raving at duck-eating pilot (9)
4 Tire Che out, the traitor (7)
5 All of us will speak, or could have spoke (5)
6 Initially got hospital to undo pregnancy, after you were conceived (9)
7 Reignited, it burned and was powerful (7)
13 Consider: get into carriage right away! (9)
15 Capital trade-off between mornings and early mornings (9)
16 Oi! Catch, smash, and be messy (7)
17 Upstanding representative in Rome to see Caesar (7)
19 The dog guy with a dessert (7)
20 Neat attendant (7)
22 Shabby day to adopt Gigi (5)



Artwork by Madeleine Storer

Academe in wartime: Oxford's response to the war in Sudan

Amelia Dovell

interviews co-founder of the Oxford Sudanese Programme, Dr Ahmed al-Shahi

Six months into the war in Sudan, and the situation is bleak. Humanitarian workers are despairing at the broken supply lines and the outbreaks of communal violence – both centred in the capital, Khartoum, and and in the Darfur region.

To understand the perspective of Oxford's own academics on the state of Sudan, I spoke to co-founder of the Oxford Sudanese Programme, Dr Ahmed al-Shahi. He aims to raise awareness about the ongoing conflict, amidst the fast-paced news cycles which seem to have left it be-

hind.

Dr Al-Shahi is a social anthropologist who has been studying and visiting Sudan for over 50 years. "Do I have family there? Biologically, no, but socially yes," he said. "I have a very wide range of friends there: academics, politicians, merchants,

since 1965, or even before." Having taught at the University of Khartoum until 1970, Al-Shahi donated his anthropological books and journals to the University library. Since the war broke out in April, he has not been able to send anything: "You don't know whether it will ar-

rive or not."

To Al-Shahi, "Sudan is a wonderful country, it is very diverse – ethnically, religiously, linguistically, ecologically. Sudanese are lovely people, they are very kind people. They render great assistance to people, especially foreigners." Before I

began asking questions, Al-Shahi made it clear he thought that “what’s happening now is totally in contradiction to the true nature of Sudanese people. They are very peaceful people. So the army is doing all the damage at the moment.”
So what is happening now in Sudan?

The war began in April 2023: fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), after failed attempts to merge the two under a civilian transitional government. Sudan has a long history of military coups, and under the ex-leader Omar al-Bashir’s three-decade rule, he used both groups as quasi-independent armed forces to maintain power. While the RSF and SAF cooperated to oust him from power in 2019, neither look likely to back down from the current power struggle.

At the time of writing, at least 5.4 million people have been displaced in the last 6 months. Families have been divided, without money to escape the fighting. RSF fighters have been accused by civilians of evicting people from their homes, or looting their belongings.

“Such looting and destruction has never really happened before,” Al-Shahi told me. Many of his friends have fled the country, and though he was able to call a friend in Northern Sudan, down to good luck.

“Communication is very difficult because all the internet has been cut. And that deliberately, so that people from the outside cannot call asking what’s happening.”

I asked Al-Shahi how effective aid could be in alleviating the humanitarian crisis, but the fact is that aid is compromised due to the precarity of the situation. “There are problems with politics, military, transportation, movement. It’s very difficult for aid to reach ordinary people. And you cannot bring aid unless you have approval from the govern-

ment – to accept it. But which government? There is a problem with legitimacy, to know who is in charge.”

This problem has persisted for decades. He recounted a memory from 1985, the year of the military coup d’état against President Nimeiry. The new government under Dahab would later be overthrown by Al-Bashir in 1989. Aside from political instability,

“I asked her if she got any aid. ‘You’d think so, but the aid goes to the merchants... you find it at the market being sold.’ ”

Western Sudan was also suffering from serious drought and threat of famine.

Al Shahi recalled, “A woman, with her 3 kids, was sitting by a tree. I greeted her – she said, ‘I’m from Darfur, my husband was killed. So we fled.’ I asked her, ‘to where?’ She said, ‘I don’t know. The villagers all along the Nile are very kind to us.

They put us up, they feed us, and off we go. We don’t know where we will end up.’ I asked her if she got any aid. ‘You’d think so, but the aid goes to the

merchants... you

find it at the market being sold.”

“I’ve seen it myself,” he assured me, noticing my disbelief. “The sacks with the United States label – you buy it at the market. It’s supposed to go for free.” The situation seems to be quite similar today. Food supplies are running out, and the World Food Programme has issued warnings of a hunger emergency amongst those crossing the border into South Sudan. In June, international donors promised almost \$1.5 billion in additional aid for Sudan’s humanitarian crises. But even with this donation, as I-Shahi said, “you need a chain of people who can

deliver aid honestly and fairly among the people who are in need.” This chain has been broken in Sudan: a UK UN representative warned that Sudan is now among the worst in the world for aid access.

I told Al-Shahi about my college’s charity fundraiser. A close friend at my college is Sudanese; she and I organised a bake sale in May to raise money to go towards humanitarian aid. At the time, we were so happy with the result. As far as bake sales go, it was very successful – it felt like we could make a small, tangible difference with the money we raised. After hearing everything he had said, I was no longer so sure. Raising money is only the first step in a long journey to making a difference. “You raise money, but where does it go? Who’s in charge of it? I fear the mon-

ey may be swallowed on the other end. Corruption is rife [in Sudan]... It’s also a moral issue. You give aid to help people, but then this aid is going to the army who kill people.”

“You raise money, but where does it go? Who’s in charge of it? I fear the money may be swallowed on the other end. Corruption is rife [in Sudan].”

So what can we do here, at Oxford?

In preparation for the interview, I had questions written down about the financial responsibility Oxford could hold in this situation. But this far into our conversation, I felt less hopeful about what the University could do in the face of a crisis which requires international cooperation. Dr Al-Shahi told me about two students who reached out to him for advice. “Their parents fled, their businesses destroyed. Some of

“The readers should understand this – the conflict has nothing to do with ordinary people, who are suffering the most.”

them are supported by their parents, so suddenly their income declined, if not, became nonexistent. There is a Sudanese organisation for Oxfordshire. They’re trying to do their best... They offer moral support, certainly, and they try to make them [Sudanese members of the university] feel part of a wider community. That they are not forgotten.” To his knowledge, Al-Shahi has not heard of any Sudanese student who has had to cease their studies due to lack of funding.

I asked him whether the University should be involved in raising awareness rather than money. “Yes, they need to raise awareness. If they raise money, it should help the Sudanese students here at the University.” He told me the ideal University response would be to offer security to its students. There was one case of a DPhil Student of the African Studies Centre, who had gone to Sudan to do research on border crossing. He heard nothing from her until an email came through, informing him she was stranded in the USA, with no money to return to Oxford. “Heads of colleges should write to



any Sudanese students... saying, if you have any problems or difficulties, come and see us and see in what way we could help. That is very important - to give them assurance that somebody is there for them. And to give them stability and continuity.” In the official University response to the situation in Sudan, the University stood “in solidarity with all students and staff affected by the crisis.” It was stated that the University had “written to staff and students from Sudan, to offer welfare and other types of support”, and money was available via the Hardship Fund for assistance.

At the end of the interview, I asked Al-Shahi what he wanted readers to take away from this article. He told me the reason he accepted this interview was to raise awareness amongst students and members of the university. “When the media confront an international crisis, they get all geared up. Gradually, there is another problem in the world... Suddenly, Sudan is at the bottom of the pile.” The situation for journalists in Sudan is very difficult at the moment. “It’s difficult for journalists to get into the country, and movement is difficult because of the fighting, they are risking their lives.” It has been reported that journalists critical to authorities have been ‘threatened from both sides’, and the situation is similar in South Sudan.

“The readers should understand this – The conflict has nothing to do with ordinary people, who are suffering the most. The conflict is between two military organisations, the state army and the RSF, who vie for power and control of resources.”

I thought I would have a more optimistic way of ending this article, but I’m not sure I do. The situation continues to this day – it’s important not to forget it.

With thanks to Dr Al-Shahi for the interview. Please see the Sudanese Programme online for more information about its work.

Are you taking the mick?

Oxford's college satire papers

Silvia Andreoletti
explores the university's obsession with (self-)mockery and gossip through college publications.

Oxford's main student publications are so ubiquitously publicised, they're impossible to miss. The juiciest of newspapers, however, are shrouded in secrecy. Their existence is ominously revealed to first-years during Freshers' Week, with no mention of them online and an exclusive readership.

College publications usually focus on only the life of that college (or, less charitably, its gossip). They often satirise its members which, to the unknowing eye, could seem cruel. But, these papers are overwhelmingly beloved - even by those bearing the brunt of the mockery - and are viewed as an integral part of college culture. Just what is it that keeps readers coming back for more?

To begin, New College's *The Phoenix* is the most scandalous of the lot. Its copies (exclusively print) will mysteriously appear mid-term in pidges and the college bar. *The Phoenix* names and shames its subjects, for anything as mild as sharking to as serious as misspelling Atik in the freshers' group chat. The romantic entanglements borne of the most recent bop are no longer confined to the Plush smoking area but are forever remembered in the ION (eye-on) section. Omnipresent spies observe rowing mishaps and housemate drama, JCR elections and crewdate sconces left to be recorded for posterity by the authors' scathing pens.

Other colleges tone down the mockery or omit the gossip sections altogether, but the large majority have at least one section,

mostly respecting anonymity, devoted to humorous comment on college affairs. Worcester's *Woosta Source*, Lincoln's *The Imp* and other more serious-looking publications still devote some space to humorous commentary of college pets' antics or JCR meeting fiascos. *The Oxymoron* takes it one step further, devoting its entire publication to satire and humour centred on Oxford life.

The mockery flirts with insult but never crosses the line to meanness, however, and is clearly in most affectionate even its cutting forms. Even tales about mild JCR embezzlement, blatant Freshers' rep sharking, and one girl's (actually successful) quest to get with every member of a bloodline don't make *The Phoenix* any real enemies. *Phoenix* editors ask college members before each edition if anyone would like to be omitted from it or consulted before print, but according to former editor Lewis Fisher, only about 30 people opt for this each time, less than a tenth of the college's undergraduates. *The Phoenix* is almost universally beloved by the college, and gets generous funding from the JCR each term. Perhaps this is only because the Oxford college system, with

insular communities in enclosed spaces and a work-hard, play-hard attitude, is the perfect breeding ground for gossip, and people are eager to sink their teeth into the new batch of information on the various embarrassing shenanigans of their fellow students.

But gossip proves time and time again to be a means of bonding. This is especially the case in larger colleges whose "college spirit" might wane; gossip magazines become a way

to foster college unity and bring people closer together. Contents of gossip magazines become topics of conversations at college bars and bops, the communal embarrassment of being called out on the college paper (or relief at being left out) makes it easier to strike up conversation and connect with other college members.

This sense of camaraderie appears in many of Oxford's silliest traditions: "shoeys", sponcing and *Oxfess* likewise use embarrassment, mockery, and gossip to bring students, from sports teams to lecture halls, closer together. Sharing one common joke, or collectively poking fun at a well-known institution or person can actually be a good thing.

Trinity's termly online magazine, *The Broadsheet*, takes self-satire to another level: there is mercy for no-one, with union hacks, finalists, and unwitting freshers all coming under the searingly funny spotlight of the authors. Articles mocking a certain prolific union member's academic achievements or a staircase's strange night-time activities join outrageously funny recountings of blind dates between a feminist anarchist and a clueless Etonian.

One particularly, let's say, observant contribution to *The Broadsheet* records the rundown of fresher staircases. Authors "commend the wine fanatic for her humanitarian work in furthering international relations and the impressive scholarly research one classicist put into ranking every first year girl in college on looks."

Anthropologist Robin Dunbar goes so far as to say that gossip is the human equivalent to grooming each other in that it allows individuals to maintain and strengthen their relationships: gossip enabled humanity to expand its tribes and make them more stable. Satirical college publications may serve the same

"academic achievements or a staircase's strange night-time activities join outrageously funny recountings of blind dates between a feminist anarchist and a clueless Etonian."

first week, that have juiciest newspapers.

The apparent obsession with self-satire and mockery, however, may seem odd or even cruel to outsiders. Some say this is fitting with Oxford students' tendency towards humour and away from taking anything seriously to save their lives. Irony and sarcasm are at the heart of Oxford humour: *Oxfess'* University-wide inside jokes (Nutkins the stuffed squirrel remains a character of *Oxfess*, and Oxford lore to this day) are a funny part of culture and a sort of Shibboleth, immediately bringing strangers who are "in the know" closer by virtue of the shared reference. Similarly, the silly

arguments between housemates or borne of the gladiatorial room ballots, chronicled in meticulous detail by *The Phoenix*, surely helps all involved forget any grudges and have a laugh about the absurdity of it all.

No matter the type of college publication, whether it's an innocent chronicle of the term's events or a scathing rundown of the College's most scandalous happenings, it is still a crucial and beloved part of college life. The unsung heroes are the writers and editors themselves (many of whom have been incredibly helpful in the writing of this article), who by poking fun at everything and everyone, often including themselves, bring communities closer together and make Oxford life just a tad more entertaining.

Read the full article online at cherwell.org



function: perhaps that is why it is primarily larger colleges, where keeping up with gossip becomes impossible by

Glittering Girls

SOURCE

by Lilian Trickey

Giggling, high heels caught in cobblestone as you collapse
In my arms as you're wrecked with another fit of laughter-
You shriek in delight, stumble over air in rose-tinted time lapse
Head thrown back, eyes scrunched, clutching your sore belly after.

My darling girl, how you shine in the night,
The brightest star in the sky in your sequinned Zara mini dress.
My sugar and spice, in your alcoholic delight
You spin the world in your rendition of Dancing Queen, a mess

That only you can pull off. You strut in the age-old tradition of the young
In your painful, gorgeous shoes down the Highstreet, on the prowl.
After your day in the library, crying, as the world is ending, high-strung,
You let loose in a tale as old as time, divine feminine tradition, you growl

The lyrics to S&M, glittering gyration, my everything

nice, you're always game
As we chant the same words our ancestors chanted before us for the drink:
Those pinkish, fizzing potions: lick the salt, down it, bite the lime. All the same.
We connect with generations of carefree girls, unsteadily balancing on the brink
Between something new and something old. In the



haze of neon glow, we are incandescent
And glorious, beautiful in our peacocking as we put on a show for the lucky few who watch.
The poltergeists of those before us, our mothers relive youth through our eyes, effervescent,
Heady perfume intoxicating as anything, shaped like a high-heeled shoe, turn it up a notch

As you put your graceful, swan's arms around my neck, your nails my pendant, bejewel
Easily with your sparkling presence: your golden laugh, your silvery hair. I will treasure
These moments for years to come, as we dance as one.
You sway, effortlessly cool.
How I used to wish I was you- but no, then I'd have to lose you, my sweetest pleasure.

And the fire in our hearts is kindled as tequila burns down our throats. You take a stance
On things I know you don't care about as you pick fights with men for the sake of it: bliss
Must describe this moment: short and sweet sibilance, let me romanticise this dance,
Our final one of the night, one last silly prance, your face aghast when we finally leave this
Garden of Eden- sipping that J2O apple you took away from the bar, cough on the bubbles
As we walk back past the Radcam, the way we came, and I look you up and down, laugh
At your humanity, at your vulnerability, knowing tomorrow will come that crumbling rubble
Of the remains of last night's Pompey, as we bask hun-gover in snowing, volcanic aftermath.

STAGE 'Cathartic': Review of *A Little Life* on the West End

Joseph Lomax

Ivo Van Hove's dramatization of Hanya Yanagihara's divisive novel *A Little Life* took to the West End this summer, with a brief stint at The Harold Pinter theatre before moving to the Savoy Theatre.

A divisive and controversial novel, *A Little Life* has been accused of being some form of torture porn, whilst others instead hail it as a profoundly impactful portrait of the vestiges of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. As I took my seat this June in the Harold Pinter Theatre, I was intrigued to see how the arduously lengthy novel (720 pages no less) would find itself transformed into a 3-hour 40-minute production. The dynamic staging, starting initially as the shoddy apartment of Jude and Willem in Manhattan's Lispenard Street, saw itself transformed into; a doctor's office, the home of Jude's adoptive father Harold, and the basement of one of Jude's abusers – the sadistic Dr. Traylor. A string quartet haunted the background, providing dissonant, screeching strings emphasising any moments leading up to the graphic acts of self-harm.

This was performed with convincing wince-inducing skill by the play's star James Norton, and a contrasting soft, low humming during reprieves in this tension. Interestingly, a portion of the play's audience was seated upon the stage, facing down towards those in the main stalls.

My initial impression of the play, upon reflection, stirred this nagging doubt in my mind that I would detest it: it launches into action, the delicate development, and revelations of Jude's past discarded, replaced by a dizzying plot that jumps into different moments in time without warning. This dramatic attempt to streamline the plot is understandable, but somewhat disappointing. The quasi father-son relationship between Jude and Harold lacked any real development, and the characters of Malcolm and JB were relegated to perfunctory roles and further served as a lacklustre part of our protagonist Jude's life, with no real depth of connection. For me, the novel's strongest moment of emotional impact is when JB, struggling with addiction and on the verge of a paranoid breakdown, lashes out at Jude by

stumbling across the room, imitating his limp, and contorting his face into a terrifying imitative grin, when he suffers one of his frequent bouts of back pain, due to an attack by Dr Traylor in his past. In this moment, the safety of Jude and JB's relationship fractures entirely, leaving Jude, and readers alike, reeling from this rare moment of Jude being forced to acknowledge his physical disability from an outside perspective. Jude and JB's falling out cleaves open and carves out a sinewy, painfully visceral representation of the more nuanced consequences of the manifestation of childhood traumas. More simply, it is painful because of the betrayal of a man Jude chose to let in because he thought he was finally safe. Yet this was not as an impactful a moment when set on stage.

The emotional grey shades painted by Yanagihara herself in the novel were stripped back and made entirely black and white. The physical manifestation of the oxymoronic parts of Jude's own mind (angel and devil, id and superego, hope and despair, whatever does it for you), were found in his social worker Ana, and

Brother Luke, played by Eliot Cowan. The nuance of the relationships between Jude and his friends is what could be seen as making Yanagihara's novel justifiable by the glimmers of hope and joy that are found within the adult life Jude makes for himself, but I found the play provided a more monolithic depiction of trauma.

The play's narrative concludes in a death that felt much less surprising than it did when first reading the novel, and upon reaching this ending I felt myself considering the plot as a retrospective justification of the inevitability of his suicide. The novel, however, gave more space for the reader to hope for the characters. It gave them the ability to watch Jude's yearnings for happiness and security, thrash it out with the cold, hard, unshakable influences of his past. Jude's ascension at the end of the play secures his position as a martyr. His blood saturated shirt further symbolising the fact he finally reached his capacity for tragedy.

At the end of the play, I felt emotionally and physically drained, bereft, and stunned by the visceral and gory portrayal of Jude's suffering. As Yan-

agihara once said about the novel, the play also has 'everything turned up a little too high', it is a sensorily impactful play, with its staging, sound and acting creating an overall oppressive sense of futility and hopelessness. Some would argue that it is superfluous and artificial, but it could also be said that the play succeeds in capturing the essence of the novel whilst delivering it in a didactic and impactful way.

Overall, Norton dazzles in his emotional range, managing to capture the naivety of an infant, to the wizened wisdom and anguish of a man who has known many things, but who is suffering first and foremost. Eliot Cowan stunned in a tricky role, portraying each of the abusers in Jude's life, done with such skill that it rendered him entirely unrecognisable whenever he re-entered the stage as a new character. Theatrical catharsis was undoubtedly achieved, and the harrowed, politely quiet tone amongst the theatre goers as we all shuffled out of our seats went to show how far it resonated, or at least shocked.

“Seductive, intriguing, thought-provoking”, *Colour Revolution* at the Ashmolean

ART

Rachael Cummings-Naylor and Kelsey Moriarty

I did not know what to expect when I arrived at the Ashmolean to preview their newest exhibition, *Colour Revolution: Victorian Art, Fashion & Design*. When I think of the Victorian era, I think of darkness, depression, and disease, so you can imagine my shock when I left with a new perception of the Victorians, unlike anything I had thought before.

The curators play on the traditional image of the Victorian era that most of us have today when you enter the first room. The walls are grey; the lights are gloomy. The sparsity forces you to focus on the single piece in the room, Queen Victoria's iconic black silk mourning dress. You cannot help but feel the weight of the period epitomised in this one item recognisable to most, if not all.

As you turn the corner, you are met with an array of light and colour. Your first introduction is to a series of artworks by John Ruskin, who helped pioneer changes in attitude towards colour during this period along with artists like J. M. W. Turner—whose *Venice, from*

the Porch of Madonna della Salute (c. 1835) is placed among Ruskin's paintings in a vibrant celebration of colour in art.

The following room juxtaposes art, science, and religion to reflect the growing tension between them as colour came to symbolise progression and modernity. Collections of pre-Raphaelite art sit across the room from images of scientific discovery and a bizarre, but

“Selective, intriguing, thought-provoking”

Matthew Winterbottom, curator at The Ashmolean, on the *Colour Revolution* exhibition

relevant, glass case of hummingbirds.

The pre-Raphaelite movement attempted to redefine the use of colour as a medium for glorifying God, yet received a mixed reaction from contemporary audiences due to the conflation of colour in art with Roman Catholicism and idolatry. Whilst breakthroughs in physics and biology served to cause

even greater confusion: Sir Isaac Newton's work on rainbows and the spectrum of colour came to symbolise the covenant between God and man, reaffirming pre-Raphaelite use of colour, but Charles Darwin's theories on sexual selection de-sacralised colour as seductive and impure.

The next room offers a brief intervention with the history of dyes, providing relief from the artwork to briefly showcase some fashion. However, the central room is emphasised by the curators as the most important. They have reunited multiple pieces of art for the first time since being showcased at the International Exhibition of 1862. This room is impressive in terms of its historical significance but less in its artistic meaning compared to other rooms.

The room on Orientalist art is undeniably beautiful, with the portrait of *‘Scheherazade’* by Sophie Anderson (1870-1880) standing apart from the rest. It is a shame they did not do more with it, but it certainly strikes a chord regardless of its brevity.

The final room combines a series

of artistic mediums in a final push to display the changing attitude towards colour in the wake of modernity. Your attention shifts to a series of artworks that signal a shift away from the pre-Raphaelite movements of the earlier nineteenth century towards the Aestheticism of the later years. Here you can enjoy pieces such as Ramon Casas' *‘Jove Decadent, Despres del ball’* (1899) and Duchess Louise's Queen Zeno-bia fancy dress (1897) in a display of decadence and decay reflecting the moral corruption caused by modernity but making for some fantastic works of art.

This exhibition challenged my understanding of the Victorian era by placing it in the context of a ‘colour revolution.’ I was charmed by its theatrical nature and the journey it took me on from start to finish despite my initial uncertainty that I would enjoy what I was going to see. It is a must-see for anyone living in or visiting Oxford over the next few months.

Painting: Joven Decadente (The Young Decadent), Ramon Casas, 1899, oil on canvas (via. Wikimedia Commons).



A Summer at the National Portrait Gallery

Rachael Cummings-Naylor

The ‘Long Vac’ is called long for a reason and I did not want to waste a second of it. When I saw the National Portrait Gallery had set up a new volunteering scheme, I knew I had to jump at the chance. Not only was this an opportunity to get out of the house during the summer and do something, but it was an exciting opportunity to meet new people, gain new skills, and learn new things in a different environment to what I was accustomed to. I eagerly applied and waited to hear back from the Visitor Experience team, only to be shortly offered an interview afterwards and then a place as a volunteer.

By the time I went for my induction in Trinity Term, the gallery had undergone a significant transformation since closing its doors in March 2023. It boasted a more cohesive layout, designed to take you on both a physical and an intellectual through art history—it was clear that a lot of careful thought and consideration had gone into its reorganisation, with the addition of a new floor dedicated to contemporary art (the Weston Wing, Floor 1) serving to reaffirm this. You cannot begin to imagine my excitement as I stood at the centre of the gallery, surrounded by centuries worth of art, and realised how lucky I was to

be there.

My job as a volunteer for the Visitor Experience team was to act as a source of information and help for visitors. We worked on a rota which directed us around the gallery to various spots where we were needed most; I moved to a new location every half an hour, allowing me exposure to the different floors and all the artworks they had to offer.

My first shift began at 10 a.m. and it was only a week or so after the big reopening: armed with a handful of maps and pamphlets, I stood by the doors of the Ondaatje Main Hall and watched the gallery come alive as people from all walks of life flooded in. By the end of my shift, I had met several wonderful people, learnt about two new pieces of art, and had already radioed someone despite being terrified to touch the walkie-talkie.

Most shifts followed a similar pattern, but each offered a new opportunity to get involved with gallery life. My favourite

experience was when we worked with the Learning Volunteers. Their job was primarily to deal with schools and families, so when



we were assigned to help them during the Summer Family Festival it

was a nice change from our usual routine. Not only was it great getting to engage with a younger audience, but it made me hopeful to watch a future generation of young artists walk out with smiles plastered on their faces, proudly waving their artwork around in the air as they went to show their friends and families.

Volunteering at the National Portrait Gallery this summer was one of the best choices I made. It gave me a true insight into the other side of galleries and museums you rarely get to see. Although, the experience would not have been the same had it not been for all the people I met along the way. Each shared their nuggets of experience and wisdom with me, but there is one person who sticks out in my mind.

“L,” as I will call them, was working a shift with me following an earlier shift we had worked together. We properly introduced ourselves and began making small talk in between

directing visitors and answering questions about the art. The conversation quickly turned into a discussion about our beliefs having moved from a more sobering topic of death to one of life, energy, and spirituality. The candid nature of our conversation combined with their overwhelming passion and energy had such an effect on me that it made me rethink everything. From that moment forward a series of serendipitous events happened to coincide and I could not help but feel our conversation had something to do with it.

I went into this experience expecting to learn a little about art and do something interesting over the summer, yet I left with a changed perspective on life. Now, I'm not saying that is the standard for all future volunteering experiences, but I would like to emphasise the importance of trying new things and going out of your comfort zone since you never know what experiences and opportunities might come your way. I would recommend volunteering at the National Portrait Gallery to anyone and I can only hope it is a lasting opportunity for the future to come.

Illustration by Rachael Cummings-Naylor

Manele: the controversy around Romani music in Romania

MUSIC

Joey Weinbren

Manele is a modern form of Romani (or Roma) music in Romania. Using traditional Romani instruments and sounds, it also fuses other genres from the Balkans, Middle East, and India.

Manele's rhythm and sound may be addictive for many, yet despite a general consensus in Romania that manele is catchy and nice to dance to, it remains very controversial. This is partly due to deep-rooted prejudice towards the Romani people, as well as manele's lyrics and music videos, many of which are full of cars, money, and semi-naked women.

Tzanca Uraganu (Tzanca the Hurricane), sings his major hit single *Bat la Şase Buci* (I Slap Six Bumcheeks) in Silver Club, the only Romanian nightclub in London. Entry costs sixty pounds (cash only), but people are ready to spend much more, giving Tzanca up to hundreds in sterling for dedicații: special song requests, dedications and shoutouts. Prior to arriving, my Romanian girlfriend's parents tell me to put all our valuables into a fanny pack and tightly strap it to my chest. They also make sure my girlfriend does not wear anything too 'revealing': "They think lots of criminals and dodgy

people will be there. It's because of the music, but also partly because of racism. A really, really normalised racism. Almost everyone in Romania thinks that stealing is part of the Roma culture," my girlfriend tells me.

The BBC made a documentary 7 years ago about manele. In it, it linked a few figures of the Romanian underworld to manele singers as 'acquaintances' who had helped advance their careers. There might indeed be some truth in the idea that manele as a genre attracts a few criminals, but it is also loved by many ordinary Romanians, especially the younger generation. At the club, everyone takes turns to come to the front to see Tzanca, people smile and dance, and despite the slight stress of my girlfriend's parents' warnings, I feel safe and happy.

"It's nice music, and I don't have a problem with it," a Romanian friend tells me. "I like its sound. It's similar to folk music and it appeals to the music I've been raised to enjoy. No one seems to complain about trap or rap music, but when it comes to manele there's always a fuss. When I had a manele phase I didn't tell my parents or anyone, because there is such a big stigma.

Many people think that if you listen to manele, you're either a 'gypsy' or uneducated. And even those who say they don't listen to it actually do when they're drunk enough, because at that moment for them it's acceptable."

For some, manele's constantly recurring clichés of cars, money, love and women, as well as its strange lyrics that often don't make sense, make the genre more funny than offensive. In 'Manele in Romania', the only book that can be found online about manele, Victor Alexandre Stochiță points to the idea that what differentiates those who like the genre and those who don't is the extent to which its lyrics are taken seriously.

Tzanca and his backup singers sing perfectly in tune despite the noise of the music and people shouting requests in their ears. His entourage of musicians playing the clarinet, violin, piano and drums also prove their skill and stamina, performing perfectly non-stop throughout the night. To be a singer or musician in manele, you clearly need talent and practice. Yet despite this, on a language course in Bucharest this summer, our class teacher refused to acknowledge that being a manelist (manele

singer) is a career. "It's not a career because they don't study anything for it", she told us affirmatively. This seemed ironic as a few seconds later, she acknowledged that being a shop assistant was a career despite not needing to study for it either. It therefore seems that manele singers and musicians are looked down on by many intellectuals in Romania. Both class prejudice and racism towards the Roma people without a doubt play some part in this.

As manele continues to be a controversial topic in Romania, it also continues to be a very popular genre of music among the youth with a growing international reach. The recent appearance of Florin Salam, regarded by many as the godfather of modern manele, on one of Romania's most popular interview shows, 40 de Întrebări (40 Questions), suggests that the genre is becoming more and more mainstream. In recent years, there have also been increasingly frequent collaborations between manele singers and more conventional Romanian pop artists, albeit with some critique from the latter's fans. It remains to be seen whether manele will go on to be fully embraced as part of Romania's unique musical culture.

WHAT'S ON!

STAGE

Sampi

@Burton-Taylor Studio

17th-21st October

What terrible things are innocuous? What innocuous things are terrible? Hayley reconnects with old friends to set up a party, but one long nosebleed, an unfortunate radio, and a chicken sandwich later, the event looks to outlast their friendship. When you're slightly paranoid, some things just don't bear inspection.

MUSIC

Black Parade – 00's Emo

Anthems

@O2 Academy

21st October

A rare occasion to relive your teenage obsession with My Chemical Romance and Fall Out Boy in public, do not miss!

FILM

Brother

@The Ultimate Picture Palace

14th-19th October

Growing up in Toronto as the sons of Caribbean immigrants, Francis and Michael share an unbreakable bond. But during the summer of 1991, escalating tensions set in motion a series of life-altering events.

Decolonisation in Motion

@The Weston Library

Bringing to the Bodleian classics of Third World cinema as well as little-known films rarely available to view in the UK, Decolonisation in Motion explores how African decolonisation was imagined and represented at its high point in the 1960s.

ART

A Place for We

@Modern Art Oxford

A Place For We addresses the need for diverse cultural spaces and the lack of an African Caribbean Cultural centre in Oxford.

BOOKS

'To stop ourselves from taking youth for granted is to live, and to live well': *Stay True* by Hua Hsu Review

Adam Saxon

Recently I picked up a book that had been on my to-read list for a while. *Stay True* by Hua Hsu came out last year to critical acclaim, winning this year's Pulitzer prize for best memoir. I had heard good things about it and decided to take the plunge but could not have predicted the force with which this book would hit me.

Hua Hsu is the son of Taiwanese immigrants, growing up at a time when the internet is emerging. The book primarily focuses on his experiences at college and during his early 20s. It explores his friendship with Ken, a Japanese American who he initially dislikes but grows to love. It is a book that explores almost every emotion imaginable. Through Hsu we experience happiness, loneliness, grief, anger, love and more, all within the span of less than 200 pages.

I think the reason why this book resonated with me so much is because I read it at the right time in my life. University, arguably especially at Oxford, is a time filled with instability and change, and it is often easy to feel lost in the whirlwind. In this whirlwind, it is also easy to question our own place in the world; where we fit in, or if we will ever fit in at all. Many

of us take our youth for granted, and *Stay True* is a reminder that it can be ripped away from us at any moment. Throughout the first half of the book there is a sense of time running out, an unnerving feeling that proves to be well founded. At the same time, however, it is a reminder that the best way to stop ourselves from taking youth for granted is to live, and to live well.

At different points throughout the book Hsu sees the world through music. Music has an unrivalled power to spark emotion. It can bring us nostalgia, reminding us of years gone by or specific experiences. Sad songs make us blue, happy songs lift our moods. Songs mean things to us because of who it reminds us of, or because of where we were when we first listened to them. The artists who write our favourite songs influence our personalities, our senses of style, and who we choose to become friends with. I believe few things influence us more than the different forms of media we choose to consume, whether that be music, film, books, or others.

No more is the changing power of music illustrated in the book than through the song "God Only Knows" by the Beach Boys:

"God only knows what I'd be without you

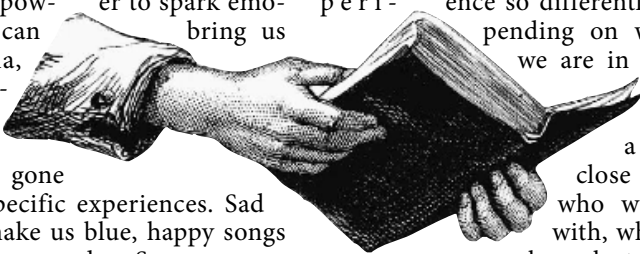
If you should ever leave me
Though life would still go on believe me

The world could show nothing to me

So what good would living do me
God only knows what I'd be without you"

These are lyrics that we can experience so differently depending on where we are in life: who we are, who we are close to, who we are with, who we have lost, who we are yet to meet. When we are with those we love, this passage could show them how much we care and value them. If we lose those we love, it is a heart wrenching dismissal of the futility of life without that person. The upbeat major key of the song becomes almost irrelevant to the emotions we feel.

Of course there are also parts of this book I cannot directly relate



“Just Five Lost Dads’ Descent into Nihilism” Review of the *Strike Force Five* Podcast

FILM
Liz Lane

With the 2023 Writers Guild of America strike now officially over, it's time to say goodbye to the brief, joyful and surprisingly nihilistic podcast *Strike Force Five*. Initially proposed by the host of *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert, America's five biggest talk show hosts, namely Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, Seth Meyers, John Oliver and Stephen Colbert came together to record and raise money for their striking writing staff.

148 days of striking later, a deal was finally made. Following concerns around streaming service payments and the development of AI, the agreement has been hailed largely a success. Whilst there are still more details to come from the deal, the WGA described the contract as “exceptional — with meaningful gains and protections for writers in every sector of the membership”. So, with the strike now over and the air jubilant, how should we reflect on a podcast that only existed because of threats posed to the entertainment industry?

The first thing to note about the *Strike Force Five* podcast is that it is completely odd. There's something unnatural about five TV hosts trying to talk to each other — at each other — unsure of when to talk and when to listen.

The first episode, aptly titled ‘Five Late Night Hosts Talk at the Same Time for the First Time’, captures the chaos that comes from a podcast where nobody is quite sure who is host and who is guest. “I think you're really gonna feel [the writers'] absence while you listen,” Myers says. There's little doubt he is correct.

The hosts, usually so confident in their late-night slots, appear lost without their writers to guide them. Their wildly unstructured conversations range from American classic *Moby Dick* to Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle (the latter may have been on a date with Colbert's mother; the former is still to be read in full by Fallon). If nothing else, their meandering conversations resemble five dads catching up after a run-in at the local store. Sure, they happen to be some of the biggest names in American TV entertainment, but as you hear them discuss fishing, first dates and the pros and cons of eating in bed, all the grandeur of their professions quickly disappears. These are dads being dads in podcast form.

The best episode undoubtedly is the hilarious ‘Strike Force Wives,’ which sees Jimmy Fallon asking the wives of the hosts questions in an increasingly convoluted and nonsensical manner. Yoda-like comments are thrown around as

the hosts, through tears, try to understand how to play Fallon's game. It's the sort of podcast that will make you cover your mouth in embarrassment as you chuckle walking down the street. “I need segment producers so bad and writers,” Fallon gasps through giggles, “I miss everybody so bad.”

Not all episodes, however, have the same breezy tone. Episode seven, with ex-Daily Show host John Stewart as guest, proves remarkably nihilistic. When asked how he's coped following giving up the *Daily Show*, Stewart responds “it's important to remember [that] when you leave what we do, you disappear.” Commenting on the ephemeral nature of satirical comedy, and the fact that viewers are unlikely to re-watch jokes made about the 2016 Iowa caucus, Stewart advises the hosts to get a hobby following their late show retirements. To put it more bleakly (as Stewart does): “Find God, I'm telling you, you're worthless and insignificant.” It's a fantastic commentary on the fickleness and fragility of fame.

Another ex-TV host Conan O'Brien made a similar claim in 2019. “In this culture?” he responds, when asked about his legacy, “[In] two years, it's going to be, ‘Who's Conan?’ . . . Eventually, all our graves go unattended.” “None of it matters” is his simple takeaway. Is this the fate all ex-talk show

hosts face? Perhaps Stewart's comments were provoked by the dreariness of the writers' strike but it's telling that podcasting, an industry which O'Brien also dominates, has proved a common thread in these nihilistic reflections.

Is being “reduced” to what could be considered a new-age radio part of the impetus behind the feeling that “none of it matters”? Just a few years ago, the idea of a talk show host doing a podcast was laughable but now podcasting is a multi-billion dollar industry whilst the viewership of late-night TV is swiftly dwindling. This is a strange, if still highly lucrative,

time to be a talk show host and it must have been baffling for the five hosts to succumb to such a new (and potentially threatening medium) in *Strike Force Five*. This, if anything, makes the podcast all the more fascinating to listen to.

So, is *Strike Force Five* worth a listen? Absolutely. Go for the playful laughs, behind-the-scenes anecdotes and intriguing set-up. Stay for the gentle reminder that nothing (specifically, a TV legacy) really matters.

Image credit: Fabeek, via Wikimedia Commons



FASHION Can our individual habits fix fast fashion?

Ciara Beale

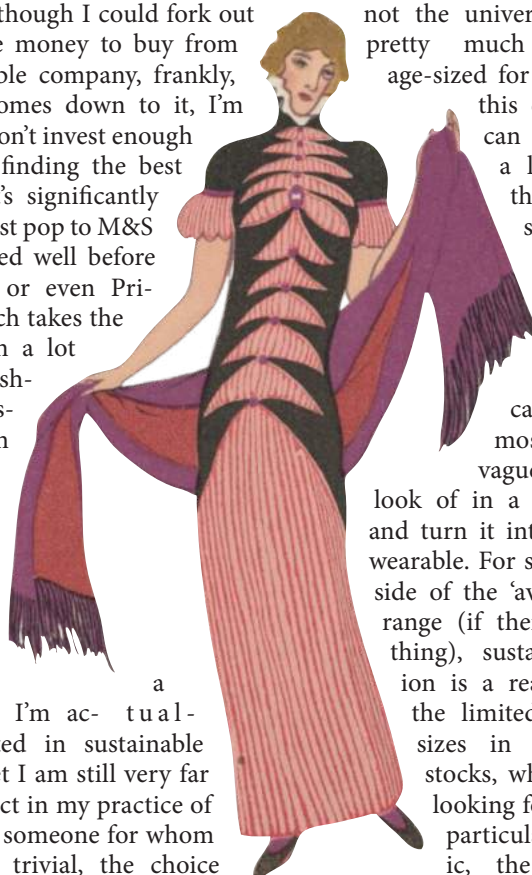
It is no mystery that fast fashion is a Bad Thing. I've spent a lot of time in recent years thinking about fast fashion, its not-so-nice impacts, and ways to circumnavigate it as someone interested in clothes. As a tween, paying a visit to Topshop or New Look on a shopping trip (remember when we used to do this?) made for a pretty unbeatable weekend. I'd trawl through racks of cheap polyester crop tops on the sales racks trying to find the perfect look for non-uniform day because I naturally wouldn't want to be seen in the same outfit as last time. The situation I find myself in now is a dramatically altered one. I pretty much avoid buying anything new: Topshop has been swapped for charity shops, and I scroll through Vinted like it's the hottest new social media platform rather than spending hours on ASOS as religiously as before. For my own purposes, almost anything can be sourced second-hand, and almost always for a decent price.

Almost. Therein lies the rub. Sustainable shopping is not currently feasible for every person, nor

for every part of the average wardrobe. Every now and then I have to buy new underwear, for example, and although I could fork out a bit more money to buy from a sustainable company, frankly, when it comes down to it, I'm lazy, and don't invest enough time into finding the best options. It's significantly easier to just pop to M&S (I have aged well before my time) or even Primark, which takes the punches in a lot of fast fashion discussions when it's certainly not the only culprit, and buy something for a low price. I'm actually interested in sustainable fashion, yet I am still very far from perfect in my practice of it — so, for someone for whom fashion is trivial, the choice

will always be a no-brainer.

What's more, my experience of sustainable clothes shopping is not the universal one. I'm pretty much bang-average-sized for a woman in this country so I can usually find a lot of pieces that fit from second-hand sources. I've also been sewing since I was eleven, so I can pick up almost anything I vaguely like the look of in a charity shop and turn it into something wearable. For shoppers outside of the ‘average’ sizing range (if there is such a thing), sustainable fashion is a real feat given the limited breadth of sizes in second-hand stocks, whilst if you're looking for something particularly specific, the sustainable



choice is likely to be heaps more expensive than something grabbed off the shelf. For anyone who has attempted to source costumes for a production, beyond borrowing clothes from friends there is little to be done to avoid fuelling fast fashion in order to keep under budget.

More to the point: should any of this even be left up to us? In the face of ethical and environmental catastrophe, it often feels hopeless to take any responsibility ourselves at all because there are much bigger players determining the wreckage our earth is becoming, running industries that exploit the most vulnerable across the world for their own monstrous profit margins. Is the consumer to blame at all? Should we continue to shop as we wish until the fast fashion giants make some changes that lie out of our control?

From my point of view, this question cannot be answered straightforwardly. Allocating blame for the fast fashion industry purely to the consumer is clearly a misstep. But that doesn't mean we are totally powerless. Particularly, when it comes to the task of climate action,

every item not left in landfill, every item not left to rot in its packaging at the back of a wardrobe, every extra effort to find a second-hand alternative, makes a difference. As with everything related to being kinder to the earth, it isn't about doing it perfectly — it's about the whole lot of us giving it a go. And those of us for whom sustainable fashion is a feasible option sort of have no excuse not to at least try.

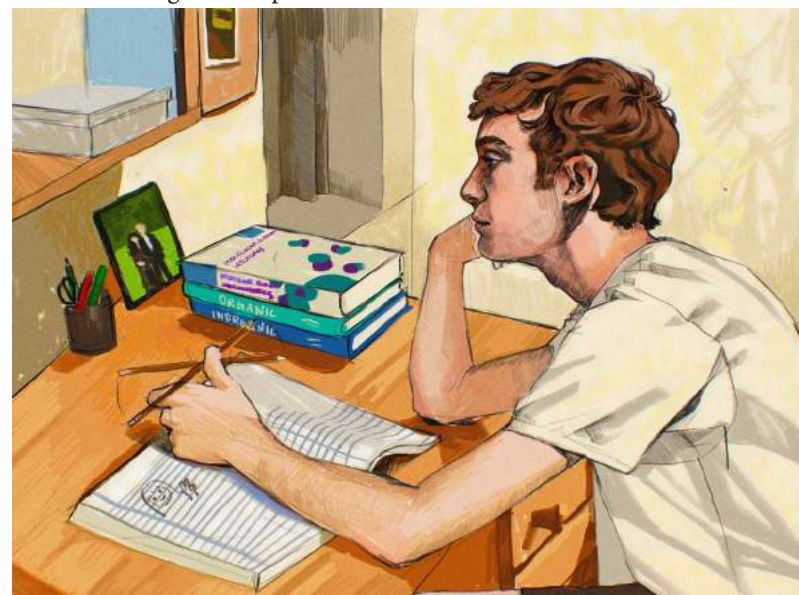
So, what can we do? It's time to start sharing and swapping (check out the Oxford Facebook swap group if you haven't already!), shopping in our own wardrobes and restyling old garments to make them feel new again, rather than grasping for the gratification of a new purchase (an understandable temptation), and typing in ‘Ebay’ or ‘Vinted’ as a reflex action instead of Urban Outfitters. Until the fast fashion industry slows down, our individual habits are all we have in our control.

Image credit: MoMA PDM 1.0 DEED

Procrastination: title pending...

Nina Naidu

LIn today's high-pressure society, it is no secret that we all fall prey to procrastination. Whether it's that looming essay deadline or last-minute revision before an exam, we have all experienced the relentless torment of too much work and too little time. Yet, strangely enough, I find myself thriving in this perpetual chase, engulfed in constant anxiety knowing there's an essay due in two hours and the chaos will ensue if I miss the deadline. This façade, of course, can only last so long – but I persist nonetheless. Will my life end if I don't get this essay done? No. Will there will be absolute carnage? Perhaps, but for



whatever reason I keep teetering on the edge of my deadline time and time again. This cannot be healthy. Why subject myself to such a masochistic lifestyle?

At first I thought I was lazy. I am at a university where my whole existence revolves around my frenzied need for academic validation and yet here I am, casually tossing my work aside in favour of my fiftieth miscellaneous hobby this term (if you one can count watching trashy 2000s shows as a hobby). When I blankly stare at my Word doc, contemplating how much more I could possibly churn out about 14th-century Tuscan banking, even folding my laundry seems seemed more enticing. Suddenly, I would conjure

up a million other things I could be doing instead. It seems wonderful to live with the delusion that I am busy, just to avoid the task at hand. Writer, speaker, intellectual, and procrastinator Fran Lebowitz (the last is her own words) says that writers often have the cleanest apartments. I'm afraid that I have proved her right – for the only time my room has ever been clean was when I had a mountain of reading to do.

Then, as if by chance, I was diagnosed with ADHD last term. Years of scatterbrained disorganisation, now explained by this diagnosis. Naturally I was in denial about it. So I'm not lazy? Then how can I stop procrastinating if it's in my genes? It almost seemed easier to accept that my procrastination was simply a result of my own loafing tendencies, rather than my brain not getting its hourly dopamine kick from my linguistics essay.

Regardless of my ADHD, procrastination takes its toll on everyone at some point. Studies have suggested that at least one in five adults struggle with procrastination, and it impacts up to 85% of individuals at some point in their lives. There's no escaping it, but it's easy to wonder, though perhaps this is the procrastination talking, why it still happens even when we're terrified of the consequences. I can't stop worrying about getting a task done, yet I still find myself unable

to get on with work. Spending one a hundred and twenty three minutes scrolling through Oxfess brings little satisfaction, as it turns out.

What I've come to realise is that procrastination has become the 'Voldemort' of academia. Everybody knows it exists, and acknowledges its existence, but nobody wants to talk about it. It's only recently that I've noticed the extent of a negative impact procrastination has had on my life despite it happening to everyone. In reality, procrastination arises because we fail to allow ourselves to enjoy free time in the first place. It's no wonder terms like 'revenge bedtime procrastination', which many of us are undoubtedly guilty of, have gained popularity of late. Procrastination is a silent rebellion against something we're conditioned to feel unworthy about. It is a small but simple way to defy the world, shirking our responsibilities in exchange for a fleeting but illusory sense of freedom. We should be allowed to have fun without feeling guilty, but procrastination certainly doesn't improve anything. The solution seems straightforward, yet it has been sorely neglected: permit yourself to indulge in your free time. As long as you don't mind a messy room.

Artwork by Yuan-Yuan Foo.

Why is the care leaver population so low at Oxford?

Matt Taylor

Last year, there were double the number of people in space than care leavers studying for an undergraduate degree at the University of Oxford. Out of the 9,000 care leavers who applied to universities across the board, only five were considered talented enough to get into the top university in the world. What is behind this seismic underrepresentation at Oxford? Is it that those from the care system are thick, or is it the admissions process?

This subject is an angry tenant in both my head and heart, as I am a

care leaver studying at Oxford. I'm a graduate student, so I don't fall within these figures. Regardless, the barriers are the same. It probably doesn't surprise anybody that our most significant hurdle is financial. For instance, we don't have parents to go back home to between term times, so we require accommodation all year round. Oxford does provide some financial assistance to help with this: £3,000 per year and a scholarship for undergraduates. But this is only up to the age of 25, yet 69% of applicants from the care system tend to be mature students. For graduates, there is now the Academic Futures Programme. However, these things aren't always as accessible as they seem.

When I started in 2022, I found no support for graduate care leavers. Of course, there are the usual scholarships open to everyone if they apply before the January deadline, and I did. But, I was placed on a waiting list to be considered after

the March deadline, so I was no longer eligible.

These arbitrary cut-off points in the admissions process fail people from the care system.

It's hard to be what you cannot see. When I left the care system at eighteen, I could hardly read or construct a sentence, let alone write a whole argument. Somehow, the dream of studying at Oxford got into my head. I believe when you have a dream, you have a responsibility to yourself to make it happen. For ten years, I prayed at the altar of hard work, grit, determination, and resilience to realise it. But being told 'we think you're good, but we want to see if anyone better applies' almost broke that ambition.

Getting the offer to study at Oxford was one of the proudest moments of my life. It should be. But when it (the financial declaration) came through the elation quickly subsided, as it made one condition on my offer. Along with all the oth-

er challenges of being a care leaver here, would I now be able to afford it? The process makes no concession for background or circumstance.

I'm not saying the process needs to be watered down to let more people in. Far from it. I would hate for that sense of achievement to be devalued just to be seen to 'do the right thing'. It should be hard. But the barriers need to be the same for everyone, no matter their background. Not the Takeshi's Castle obstacles in the admissions process which eliminates many of the care leavers until there are only a handful of us left who are deemed worthy. I believe this institution is better than that.

You have to be the change you want to make. Is the University of Oxford ready to change the admissions process to be more inclusive to those like me from the care system? After all, studying at Oxford shouldn't be as tough as entering space.

HOROSCOPES



You're skint now and must look for alternative revenue streams and profit schemes.



Take your textbooks, headlamp and pyjamas to the club: this week is about balance.



Pick up a new interest, drop that old hobby. So long terrarium maintenance and bonsai care, hello constructing offensive meal deals.



You're actually a detective. Get to the bottom of things with red string twirled around drawing pins and a tan trench



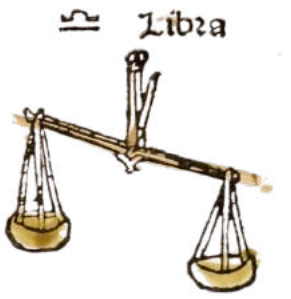
Not to harsh your buzz vibe surfer. Clean your room!!!




They're very attractive but they are in all other criteria outperformed by Katie Hopkins. Mull upon this as you sink into the warm pleasure seas of their evil little beady eyes.

“Arbitrary cut-off points in the admissions process fail people from the care system.”


THE COLUMN




High-five. Feel the love and sparkle bebe.




Another week of taking out the trash and excising parasites from the forbidden city that is your body and the Fast and Furious producer which is your will to keep going.




Where do you feel most absolutely authentically yourself? Camp in that place for 48 hours.



Evil scheming, ahoy! Wet the toes of all your friends' socks and hatch a plot to shave their brake pads.



Just put on some trainers and start running in whatever direction you feel coolest.



Choose an animal about ye big (no bigger than a breadbin) and see whether they are sold in the UK as a pet. If yes, buy and cherish.

The Secret Garden

Nudrat Nawar

Christ Church College and the Christ Church Meadows are famously adored by many, but I am going to tell you about one of its most beautiful quiet spots.

Are you already trying to hazard a guess? Well, if you, by remarkable coincidence, were thinking about the 'secret garden' behind the Master's Garden, you guessed it right!

I visited this garden as a child on my first trip to Oxford. I remember toddling in with the grown-ups, mesmerised and, indeed, a little scared. Much like everyone else, I was amazed by the its beauty, but at the same time I felt intimidated by its perfection. I didn't want to accidentally drop my water bottle onto the little shrubs on either side of the walkway, taint the pathway with shoes or disrupt the flow of appreciation from the gasping adults around me. The magnitude of its magnificence was so great that I felt smaller than my usual self. When I saw a narrow side path which nobody seemed to have populated yet, I sprinted like lightning to escape the grown-ups. Seizing that chance is perhaps one of the fondest memories I made as

a child - I had walked into my own 'secret garden'.

There was a weather-beaten wooden bench, surrounded by wild shrubs and plants. Unlike the rest of the garden - which was blossoming with bright-coloured flowers and buzzing with bees - this part was less vibrant, with stronger scents and rough outgrowths. The centrepiece was a little water fountain which welcomed me with its slow, calm trickle. I sat down, my heart beating with excitement. I didn't know what to expect, but within minutes I felt at ease. I was no longer overwhelmed, but just a part of the garden.

When I visited Oxford as a child, I left hoping and dreaming that one day I could go back to my secret garden.

I guess it isn't too much of a surprise that I call it 'my secret garden' - it is the place where I escape from exam stress, seek emotional downtime, and find relief from the realities of life.

But why am I exposing my own secret hideout to you? I think it's a place to which anyone can arrive feeling overwhelmed, but leave feeling refreshed and calm—something we all need in order to

reboot and march on toward our brutal deadlines! Most importantly, I think it is a place which can be visited during all four seasons (I am sure some of you are already thinking of playing Vivaldi on these visits).

You can play hide and seek with the yolky sun on a midsummer afternoon, or hear the blissful beckoning of mother robins in the autumn. You can take a walk to admire the sparkling dew and icicles whilst sipping your pumpkin spice latte in the winter, or inhale the earthy scent of new beginnings at the dawn of spring. You can type

away on your thesis whilst sitting on the bench, read your favourite novel, hold your significant other's hand whilst relishing the nature's beauty or do nothing. Simply embrace the serenity.

I shall refrain from overdoing my poetic licence at this point to avoid vexing the less literature loving amongst you but, if you ever need a moment, give this garden a visit at some point during your time here at Oxford.

Image Credit: Ed Webster/ CC BY 2.0 DEED via Flickr



DOUBLE TAKE:


My college parent is SO HOT! Should I go for it?

We ask our resident agony aunts for their advice on your problems.

Not too fast! There's no need to rush into anything!

Freshers' week has just ended, and you have a whole year ahead of you to meet new people and try new things. There will be lots of options outside of your college family...

Your college parent is there to help support you through the year as you learn to navigate Oxford life - you don't want to lose them to a week-long crush, and be



unable to rely on their invaluable advice once things go south.

College relationships are very convenient, sure, but they are also the worst if they don't work out - who wants to see their failed get-with or ex every day as they walk to their 9am? Maybe you should look elsewhere for your romantic partners. And remember, they'll still be around later in the year if your feelings don't go away.

It's also worth remembering that you may be confusing platonic feelings with romantic ones if you're getting on really well with your college parent. It's great if they feel close and you feel like they are looking out for you, but bear in mind that this may not signal that they reciprocate your feelings.

Take some time to consider carefully if this is what you want before you go for it.

Do it! What's the worst that could happen?

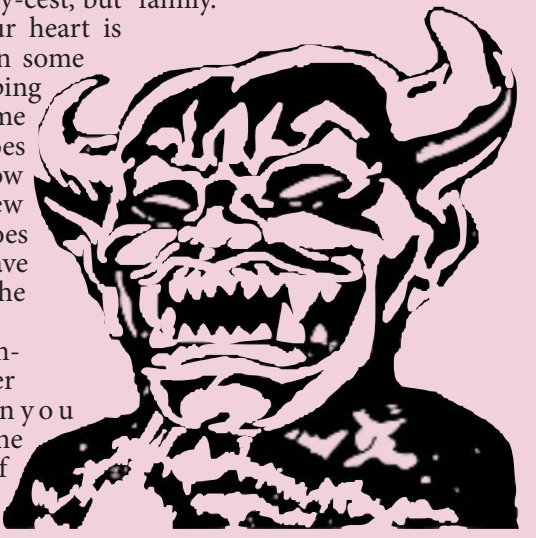
Do it! Michaelmas is all about new beginnings - so why not shoot your shot and see what happens?

There might be a big taboo around college-family-cest, but really, following your heart is more important than some silly traditions stopping you from having some fun. If everything goes wrong, it will blow over in the next few weeks. This term goes so fast and you have to seize the day (or the night).

Think of how impressed all of the other freshers will be when you start seeing someone in the year above. If they are sending out

signs, I'm sure you're reading them right - they are probably into you as well.

Not to mention, it's a great way of getting to know your college family.



The Tier List

Academic articles

The short and sweet

An article which is 15 pages long or less, but contains all the valuable information you need to write your essay. Perfection.

“What was my tutor thinking?”

This article is manageable length-wise, but it takes more brain power to try to figure out how on earth it relates to your essay topic for the week than it does to read.

The long’un

You open a PDF to see – with blood-curdling horror – that it is 50 pages long. Font size 11, no paragraph breaks, text filling each page top to bottom. Worse still – there are no footnotes. Those are in a separate document.



The relatability of Olivia Rodrigo

Phoebe Walls

Olivia Rodrigo made the transition from Disney girl to pop star overnight, launched into the limelight with her heartbroken single ‘driver’s license’. With the success of her Grammy-winning debut ‘Sour’ back in 2021, fans eagerly awaited her second album ‘Guts’. This new record dives deeper into a pepped-up pop rock sound, whilst featuring a few tear-jerking piano ballads.

The album’s sarcastic opening number, ‘all american bitch’, has a grittier sound – contrasting with the lead single ‘vampire’, a melancholy reflection on a relationship that makes even the worst mistakes “look fine”. Yet the grudge exposes the angry, carefree sassiness of the more upbeat songs to be merely an act, for she “holds on to every detail” of her ex’s wrongdoings. I like these

songs in particular because they are full of contradictions and self awareness. Rodrigo’s relatability comes from how she portrays a clumsy coming of age and all the complex feelings of loving someone who makes you feel like a fool.

Tiktok users have been reflecting on their own coming of age with the trend of sharing a photo taken in 2021 when ‘Sour’ came out and a photo for the ‘Guts’ release. I found two photos of myself, where, in contrast to others’ huge style revamps, I was wearing the exact same top. I can vividly remember when ‘driver’s license’ reached number 1 on the UK charts. I had recently turned seventeen and was hunched over my computer alone, facing online school and nervous about meeting my Oxford offer. I was yet to have my heart broken or bruised by emotionally unavailable Oxford boys and I was far from getting my own driver’s license.

‘good 4 you’ was playing at my school’s leaving “dance”, where we were not even allowed to dance for fear of contracting COVID-19.

The album for me encapsulates a “COVID-y” spring and was the soundtrack to unrequited crushes on silly schoolboys. Every song on ‘Guts’ has a lyric that reminds me of a scenario in my own life. I find Rodrigo’s honesty endearing, and although the album is far from perfect, with a few clumsily written lyrics and unoriginal melodies, the songs capture the emotional rollercoaster of falling in love quickly and feeling intensely. Rodrigo’s second album is perfect for young people who are highly strung, who fall over, who fantasise about receiving an apology and never learn their lesson. Rodrigo’s ‘Sour’ follow-up offers bitter honesty that takes real guts.

The Not So Secret History: THE COLUMN Healthy Habits

Flora Symington

As this is the first instalment of my column, it would be natural to give a little bit of background to what I’m going to be writing about. For the uninitiated – by which I mean the presumably tiny portion of the population that did not read my article in last week’s Cherwell – I have recently moved out of college and into a house in Cowley, and I haven’t really been able to stop talking about it since. The purpose of this column, therefore, is partially so my friends don’t have to suffer my endless ramblings on the highs and lows of our lovely house, and partially to serve as sort of guide to those who might be considering (or being forced by their colleges) to live out.

With the residents having arrived in dribs and drabs over the course of the last month, our house only reached its full capacity last week, so we decided to celebrate by having our first so-called ‘family dinner’ on Saturday night. This is a weekly tradition agreed upon long ago, when the house was nothing more than a group chat and our friendships barely formed. The aim was to create a bit more of a normal household dynamic than you get in the kinds of huge college buildings we have occupied for the last two years. It’s perfectly possible of course that once term starts our weekly schedules will never again align for long enough for us to sit down to a meal, so I thought it would be good to record this first, and possibly only, occurrence.

I think my housemates would agree (and if they don’t – tough, it’s not their column) that we all came to the dinner with something of

an agenda in mind (on the subject of my dearly beloved cohabitants, they agreed to this column on the proviso that they would not be named in it. To make things less confusing I am allowed to refer to them by nicknames. They did not, however, think to ask me if they would get any say in what these pseudonyms would be. I will henceforth be referring to them as: The Poet, The Cook, The Thespian, and The Classicist. I’m sure it won’t take them long to work out who’s who...). Back to the dinner and the various expectations placed upon it: The Cook, professing to be distressed by the constantly chaotic state of the kitchen despite being responsible for at least half of the chaos, wanted a cleaning rota. The Classicist wanted us all to appreciate their vegetarian take on smoked salmon blinis. The Thespian just wanted that godforsaken tap in the upstairs bathroom to stop screeching so they could hear themselves rehearse - or if that was too much to ask, for The Poet to stop swearing at it each time it made a noise. The Poet wanted to drink red wine and enjoy some pleasant intellectual conversation. It goes without saying that all I wanted was material for this column.

I think it is a good omen for the next nine months that almost all of us got what we wanted out of the evening. The blinis were delicious, the wine and conversation flowed in equal measure, and the cleaning rota

was drawn up, albeit at 3am with slightly wine-addled brains. I got my column’s worth of material, and The Poet agreed to stop swearing at the bathroom facilities - the whine is persistent, but you couldn’t really expect a dinner to solve that. The plumbing problems did precipitate the kind of conversation we have been quick to learn occurs only among housemates, however: a lively debate about whether it was normal to brush your teeth whilst on the toilet. The result was a 40/60 split, with two of us maintaining it was a perfectly reasonable time-saving hack whilst the other three called this group unhygienic cave people. The argument was only settled when I promised to ask this paper to conduct a student survey to prove at least some of us right.

Going into the next dinner, discussion of each others’ sanitary habits is firmly at the bottom of my agenda. At the top: music. Why does The Poet need to listen to Kanye West when they wash up? What is The Cook’s obsession with Radio 2? Knowing my housemates, I’m sure everyone will have plenty to say in their own defence. I can’t wait to tell you all about it.



Cherpse

CHERPSE 1

First Impressions?

We greeted each other with questioning glances – was she the one who was my date?- and nervous smiles. It was both of our first ever blind dates.

What was the highlight?

I really enjoyed talking about good-old books and fanfiction with them.

What was the most embarrassing moment?

I think our political outlooks did not exactly align.

Describe the date in 3 words:

Amicable, comfortable, somewhat humdrum.

Is there a second date on the cards?

Probably not, but there will be an awkward smile and wave whenever I cross them on the street.



CHERPSE 2

First Impressions?

She had a lovely smile, and immediately broke the ice – I was nervous and a little awkward!

What was the highlight?

Watching her try to finish an espresso that she ordered because she didn’t want to admit she didn’t like coffee.

What was the most embarrassing moment?

I mentioned the name of my tutor (positively I swear!) and the entire café went quiet and I made awkward eye contact with the person sat next to her.

Describe the date in 3 words:

Nervous nerdy giggling.

Is there a second date on the cards?

I think so! There’s definitely a friendship on the cards if not.

Looking for love?

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

Review: Oxford Wine Company

Georgie Allan reviews a bottle of wine from Oxford Wine Company.

If you attended the Freshers' Fair last week, you will almost certainly have heard of The Oxford Wine Company, and maybe even picked up a voucher or two. With 3 stores in the Oxford area (Turl Street, Botley and Little Clarendon Street), and a 10% student discount for Bod card holders, it's certainly a go-to for anyone looking for something slightly classier than your usual supermarket bargains.

This offer becomes even more attractive for anyone looking to host an event, with further discounts offered for common rooms, societies and balls, and bespoke tastings offered on request. With a selection ranging from classic French and Italian drinks to more niche bottles from South America and Eastern Europe, and a thorough knowledge of each, The Oxford Wine Company truly has a wine for every occasion, so I was excited when given the opportunity to review a bottle.

After a year largely confined to

the cheapest drinks I could find in Tesco, the sheer range of the selection on offer both in quantity and variety was incredibly appealing, in spite of the obvious jump in price. This is justifiable however, given the quality of both the wine and its proprietors. My visit to their Turl street branch was friendly and in spite of my rudimentary knowledge of the wines of the world, somewhat collaborative; my own

“My visit to their Turl Street branch was friendly”

preferences were poorly articulated I am sure, but taken seriously all the same. They were incredibly knowledgeable and picked out a wine to my tastes - Noir de Katz, a Pinot Noir from the Alsace region of France.

Red, dry, though incredibly sweet this wine had notes of red fruits and honey which made its consumption an enjoyable experi-

ence both independently and with savory accompaniments - I found even a simple charcuterie board from any local supermarket was much improved with a few glasses of Noir de Katz. Though not an attribute of the wine itself, the bottle is made more attractive by the very cute cat on both its label and cork, which stood out on the shelf in the store.

Knowledge of and education regarding wine, can often seem elitist. In some ways it is by its very nature - bottles can go for thousands of pounds to collectors whose knowledge is cultivated over a lifetime. Learning to differentiate each drink based on nuances subtle enough to appear invented to most, and regu-

larly parodied. The Oxford Wine Company is above all accessible. Whilst they do carry some high ticket items, the majority of their products are very reasonably priced, and with the appropriate discounts, within a student's price range for an occasional treat. The friendly attitude of the staff and

the clear labelling of the store made the experience one which defied the norm, encouraging curiosity. I would certainly consider The Oxford Wine Company my first call for new discoveries and old favourites.

Image credits: Jonus Magnus Lystad via Wikimedia Commons



A love letter to Sriracha

Reuben Meadows explains his love for the infamous Thai sauce.

Sriracha is one of my key ingredients to maintaining stability in a busy term. A quick drizzle over toast, scrambled eggs or even into a bowl of boiling instant ramen is soon to bring the delightful rush of this tangy-sweet sauce. Sat pride of place in my kitchen cupboard, it's always there - ready to be carelessly (and perhaps overzealously) fired into an otherwise bland meal, leaving me nursing the spice all the way to a lecture. Perhaps I should just learn to make tasty food that doesn't need such a dramatic resuscitation?

In spite of my love for all-things Sriracha I still fall prey to its spicy edges. Perhaps I find it warming on a cold Michaelmas morning, or even

enjoy the fear-factor of what a heavy helping could bring. As someone who once found the black pepper in St. Hilda's breakfast sausages "fiery", my advocacy for this Thai sauce is perhaps surprising. I know some who can drain a bottle in a day (accompanied by a bag of lentil crisps). But do these Sriracha-guzzlers stop and appreciate its complicated depths?

I say this in jest, and also to recognise the mixed reputation of this red nectar. While now a staple of the university shelves - used innocently by many - it can also be a source of culinary pretension. Have you ever

heard that friend ask "mate, have you tried Sriracha?" or say "sorry, this totally needs Sriracha" and even "I'd kill for some Sriracha

“As someone who once found the black pepper in St Hilda's breakfast sausages “fiery”, my advocacy for this Thai sauce is perhaps surprising”

right now” as you stand outside Best Kebab Van at 2am (actually, the last one might just be me). But this pretension gives the same vibe as the guy wondering whether someone stole their organic gochujang from the fridge. They may be disappointed to hear one food critic bluntly call Sriracha “ketchup with a kick”.

Yet this Thai hot sauce remains popular. A simple combination of chilli peppers, vinegar, pickled garlic, sugar and salt produces

something we go crazy for. To indulge in STEM, Sriracha's peppers contain capsaicinoids which trigger proteins in our mouths when a spicy danger is detected. This causes a release of pain-killing endorphins, inevitably making us feel good. In other words, pain before pleasure; kind of like enduring prelim exams before (hopefully acceptable) results, but not if you're a geography student - you're just permanently in pain.

And there's more than just the classic sauce! Varieties include kimchi, coconut, mayo and tikka- not for the faint-hearted. There's even black pepper sriracha, though after the hall sausages I personally will be avoiding this. Such experimental flavour profiles are a far cry from the original. First invented by housewife Thanom Chakkapak in the town of Si Racha in Thailand (an only recently acquired fun

fact), her legendary hot sauce has gone global - and understandably. The only sauce that can truly make me happy, I'll continue to reach for it every time I need to liven up the most boring of university meals. And if you aren't a Sriracha convert just yet, hopefully this love letter has pushed you in the right direction.

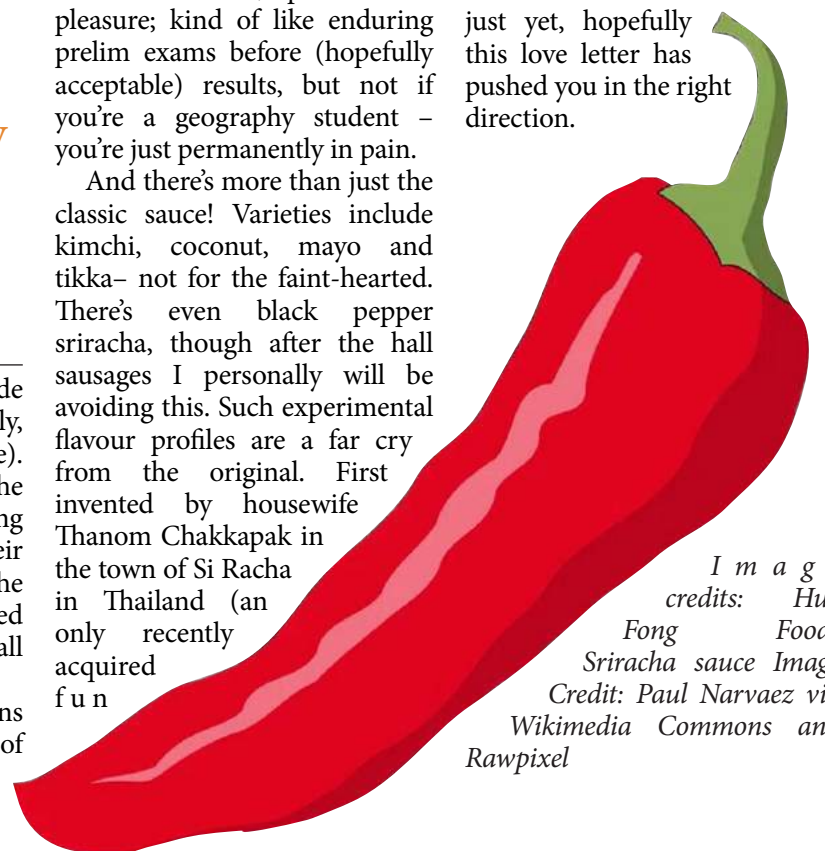


Image credits: Huy Fong Foods Sriracha sauce Image Credit: Paul Narvaez via Wikimedia Commons and Rawpixel

Match report: Sporadics Vs Windsor

Matthew Zahra reports.

On a warm October afternoon at the Iffley Fortress, in quite unSpoful fashion, OUHC's very own Men's 4th team rocked up to a pre fresher trials game with a full squad of 16. With two new Spoches at the helm, there was nothing that could come between the boys and a well-earned 3 points (except for last seasons record of not winning till the 9th game). After some rousing words from the management team about the alien concept of a press, and a last-minute change to the lineup seeing last year's goalkeeper Bill Taylor start the game at centre forward, the boys pushed back and got the game underway. Early into the first half, Alex Mann (Captain) converted from a counterattack putting the boys 1-0 up. However, after some less then ideal passages of play, the Spos found themselves 2-1 down with not long to go in the half. Another counter-attack saw Mann shoot from top

D, and our very own fox in the box Goldie managed to get on the end of it to deflect it into the near corner, levelling the boys for halftime. Having scored 2 goals (an unusual feat for the Spos), the management team bestowed some of their limited wisdom, eager to clinch a result. The second half began, and a lovely bit of holdup play saw Goldie convert again to bring the boys in front. What followed was then a master-

"The most promising start the Sporadics have seen to a season in living memory"

class in game management, as the Spos ran the clock down, sealing the win and clutching a historic 3 points. Potentially the most promising start the Sporadics have seen to a season in living memory, the boys march on as they prepare to face Reading 5.



The winners and losers of the Men's Grand Slams 2023

Quid Molupta discusses how to abc.

The 2023 men's tennis calendar certainly had fans anticipating big things, with fresh, young blood threatening to disrupt the status quo and upset the tennis hierarchy by challenging the top players. With the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open running throughout the year on three different surfaces, some players justified their ambitions of deep runs and slam victories, marked with strong performances, whilst others fell victim to shock losses in a mixed year for tennis' elite. Below I discuss the winners and losers on tennis' biggest stages in 2023:

Winner: Novak Djokovic
The biggest winner beyond any doubt, on the men's tour this year in terms of slam performance. Djokovic's imperious displays on court resulted in three slam wins, with only Alcaraz's five set Wimbledon victory preventing Novak from achieving the elusive calendar slam. His supremacy was underlined by total domination in the other three finals, where he won 9-0 in sets against three opponents who have been touted as a new generation of champions. Even at the staggering age of thirty-six, Novak is not to be usurped and his trademark return game and mental strength have enabled him to claim a record breaking 24th men's singles slam, a record he has made little secret of wanting to hold, with his command showing

little sign of ceasing.
Winner: Carlos Alcaraz
The only man that stood between Djokovic and a calendar slam this year and he is the potential successor to inherit the throne. Whilst only attaining one slam could be cynically regarded as an underachievement for Carlos, the numbers don't tell the full story. Skipping the Australian due to injury before being swept aside by Novak in the semis at Roland Garros in a cramp afflicted match, the 20-year-old admitted to nerves affecting him physically and mentally, a reminder of his rawness and inexperience at this level in spite of the hype. Despite this, success beckoned at Wimbledon; unfazed by the ghosts of Roland Garros, he held his nerve to overcome Djokovic in a thrilling five setter, winning his second major title. Whilst he failed to defend his US title, a semi final loss to an impressive Medvedev shouldn't discredit his year at all and next year promises even greater things for Alcaraz.
Loser: Casper Ruud

It may be a potentially controversial take to suggest that Ruud has had a bad year, especially considering that he reached the French Open final, and dispatched formidable opponents such as Rune and Zverev en route. Although he was seen off by Novak comfortably, his run here promised a fruitful year. However, Ruud fell in the second round of the other three slams to opponents that should have been beaten by a player of his rank and

calibre. His loss of form has been startling and he has struggled to find consistency throughout the year, resulting in very early round exits, with players exposing severe vulnerabilities in his game. Ruud admitted that he needed to play a more aggressive style and hopefully adopting one enables him to bounce back and have a more successful 2024 season.

Loser: Felix Auger Aliassime
It's been a dire year for Felix at the slams, who suffered similar issues to Ruud - a severe lack of form and consistency. The twenty-three-year-old has been heralded for years as a possible successor who could win slams and lead the next generation, with his potential underlined by the addition of Toni Nadal, Rafa's uncle and coach, to his coaching team last year. This faith was renewed by a strong 2022 season, where he won four titles and became just the third man to take Nadal to five sets at Roland Garros, promising a rewarding 2023. A fourth-round exit in Australia this year was an adequate result, albeit to a player on paper he should have beaten, but this was followed up by three successive first round losses in the other slams, interspersed with other early round defeats in lower-level tournaments, suggestive of mentality issues too. A loss for him on his birthday at his home tournament to a much lower ranked player in August epitomised his season and a break in the slams may be beneficial for helping him reset mentally.

CAPTAINS CORNER

This week Cherwell spoke to Blues captains of OUAFC: Iona Ben-net and Roza Bailey (women's co-captains), and Harry Way (mens captain).

When did you start playing football?

R: I think I was five and I joined the local boys team.

I: I was probably the same age and I played for grass-roots tea with my sister for a bit and then for some centers of excellence.

H: Yeah, pretty much from as young as I can remember, playing for my local team at five or six.

What drew you to football specifically?

R: I loved how it was always winning as a

team, sharing moments, and making friendships.

I: I mean it is the most played sport in the country, so everyone plays it. You can play it anywhere and at any time. And yeah, it's a really good team sport.

H: Yeah, I think the main difference to other sports is how easy it is to just pick up with your mates. It's also one of the most enjoyable.

How did last season go for your respective teams?

I: We did well, finishing second in the league and reaching the semi-final in the cup. But there's always more to build on.

H: Last year was very up and down for the men. We had a few good results in the league, a bad run towards the end, but we did win both of our Varsities against Brookes and Cambridge.

Do you find high turnover in a University squad a difficult thing to deal with?

R: I think it's a good thing. It's annoying to lose stability but with new players you get new playing styles and it's a really good socially too. In saying that the Women's Blues are lucky to have retained most of our

squad this year.

H: I think it's a bit of both; it's obviously difficult to establish a consistent playing style and you're obviously friends with a lot of the guys going, so it is sad. But on the flip side of that there's the opportunity for new friendships and you can keep it fresh. We have had a lot of turnover this year, only having kept around nine Blues from last season.

Reflections on last year's Varsity; how did it go? Did the cancellation affect you or the team's performance?

H: It definitely impacted the team in the sense that our starting 11 for the actual varsity was quite different to the one we had planned for the original date. Obviously we were able to win the game in the end, so we can't complain too much.

I: The cancelation was really frustrating, and it threw the work that we had put in throughout the season off kilter a bit. It did effect the result, and it was a difficult loss to take, but hopefully this year we'll build on our last performance.

Have you guys played last year before and are you returning Blues?

R: This is my fourth year and I

have played the last three Varsities, winning 2 of 3.

I: This will be my Third Varsity, and I am a returning Blue.

H: This will be my fourth year on the blues.

Do you guys have specific goals for this season?

R: We've entered the County Cup for the first time so we're looking forward to playing some women's football outside of the University. It'd be great to advance into the final of this.

I: We'd love to win the league and get promoted because it's something we've come quite close to the past few seasons. We are also looking to advance pretty far in the Cup.

H: Yeah, I think for us, it's pretty clear given them you got relegated last year the goal is simple just to go back up when you get promoted. Obviously when lastly, as well.

What was the team's best win so far?

I: I think the Varsity two seasons ago. Our coach's wife gave birth in the middle of it, so when he turned up at halftime unexpectedly it made it a great celebration all around. Always big to win on penalties.

H: Yeah, I think it would have to be one of the varsity matches. Probably the Brookes Varsity

match last year because we went down to nine men and managed to somehow win.

What's the best thing about being captain, or co-captain?

R: I really like being a co captain. It's really nice to be leading and working as a team at the same time.

I: I also think being a bigger part of the club and being able to sort of understand what goes into building a team. Working with the team on and off the pitch.

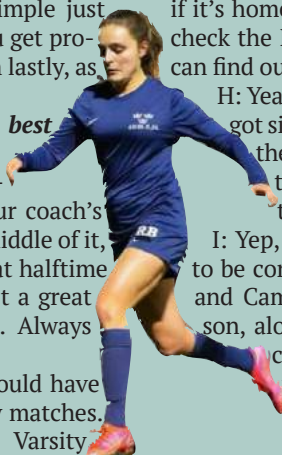
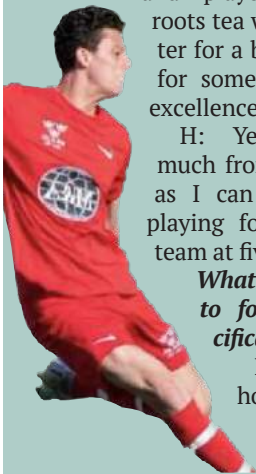
H: The people and the friendships you make with your teammates. You engage with people on a different level that you wouldn't when you're just a player.

Where can our readers watch you play?

R: We play every Wednesday, and if it's home it's at Iffley road. If you check the Instagram that week, you can find out where we are playing.

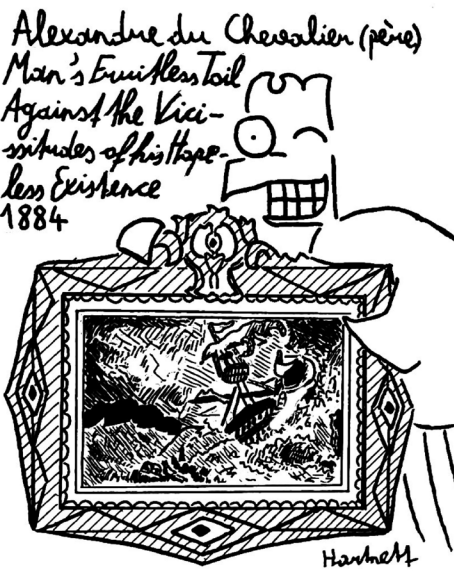
H: Yeah, definitely. I think we've got six home games starting on the 18th of October, so pretty much every Wednesday there'll be games.

I: Yep, and Varsity dates are yet to be confirmed but both Brookes and Cambridge will be next season, alongside a big Alumni day celebrating 150 years since we won the FA cup.

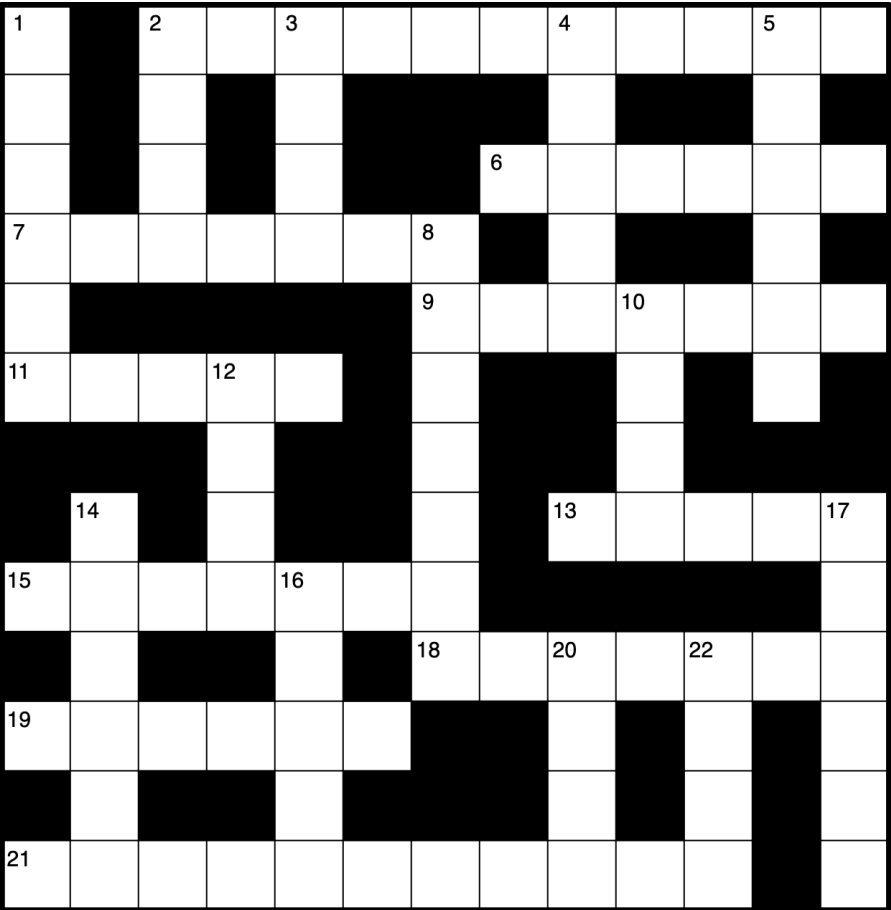


Kevin and Timmy borrow art

by Sean Hartnett



Cryptic Crossword by Sarah Beard



- ACROSS
- 2. The reign of a digit is a general accurate guide (4, 2, 5)
 - 6. Perched on a vessel for the dead surrounded by rings (6)
 - 7. It's a difficult decision but it sounds like you should phone Emma (7)
 - 9. Something to read for lad before French public transport (7)
 - 11. One key sounds not quite right (5)
 - 13. Two guys from Manchester save thirsty desert travellers (5)
 - 15. Lawyer without early stress, we now hear, works in a cafe (7)
 - 18. Movie advert drags on (7)
 - 19. Still most ecstatic! (6)
 - 21. Absolute disaster! Reportedly feline has a prize! (11)

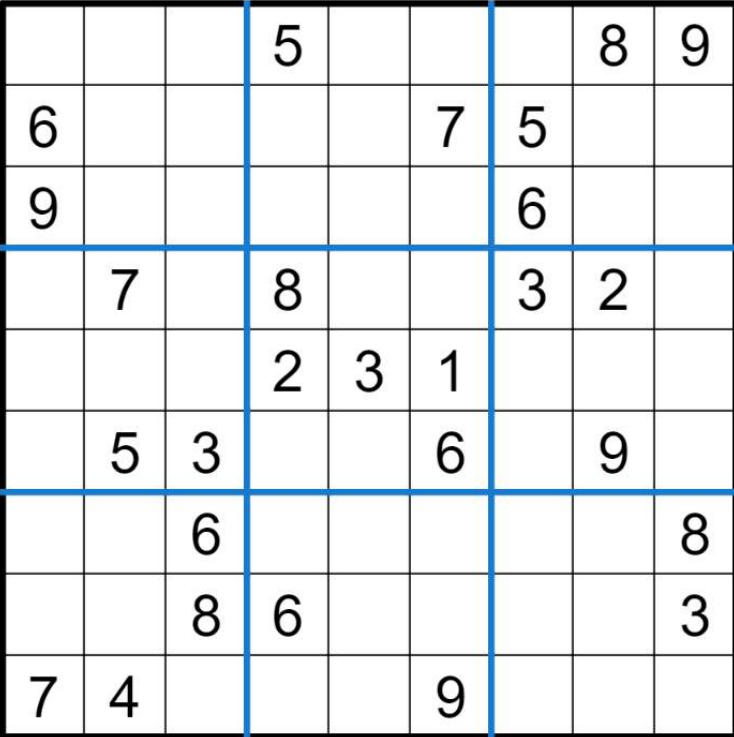
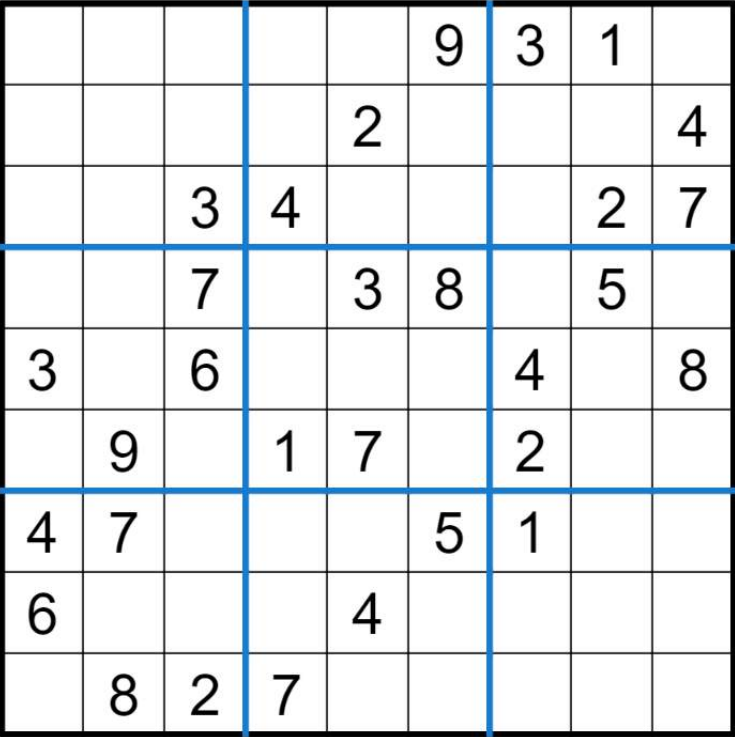
- DOWN
- 1. Mostly mead in a field, often after port (6)
 - 2. Genuine rhenium and aluminium (4)
 - 3. Ominously take shape of a weaver (4)
 - 4. AI art ruins expensive object (5)
 - 5. Demand to identify the extra-terrestrial (6)
 - 8. Spoiled BA actor is a flighty performer (7)
 - 10. A hole in a flat bread (4)
 - 12. Fuzzy flightless bird (4)
 - 14. Meditative motto connects human transformation (6)
 - 16. Looks good in tuxedos, for example (5)
 - 17. Sprint naked in a line (6)
 - 20. A sticky liquid straight away (1, 1, 1, 1)
 - 22. Alternate current passing through delicate material (4)

Last week's answers to Sarah Beard's Cryptic

0TH WEEK | MT 23

- ACROSS: 3) rock up; 6) membrane; 8) feasts; 9) geek; 10) label; 11) stab; 14) bit, 16) Aztec; 17) sues; 19) rum; 21) spun; 22) safari; 23) Mariachi; 24) tie-dye
- DOWN: 1) umbrellas; 2) ordeal; 3) refrain; 4) class; 5) ultra; 7) megabyte; 12) tectonic; 13) blackmail; 15) sublime; 16) au-pair; 19) unagi; 20) stand

Sudokus & Oxdoku by Lewis Callister



Last week's answers to Misha Pemberthy's Cryptic

0TH WEEK | MT 23

- ACROSS: 1) lentil; 4) abandons; 10) Catalonia; 11) brain; 12) opine; 13) evened out; 14) schisms; 15) Tetris; 18) stasis; 20) forgive; 22) ad nauseam; 24) eject; 25) blind; 26) panettone; 27) engorged; 28) advent
- DOWN: 1) lacrosse; 2) notwithstanding; 3) illness; 5) bravest; 6) noble; 7) on a positive note; 8) senate; 9) angels; 16) tormented; 17) sentient; 19) steeple; 20) famine; 21) Barbie; 23) udder

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