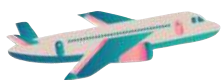


The nightmare visa: how (not) to prepare for your year abroad

Life > page 21



Driving towards a sustainable future

A green future for Formula 1?

Sport > page 23



Weird food combinations that just make sense

Ham and fruit, caviar and ice cream?

Food > page 22



The slow death of ASOS: a retail giant in decline

Will it recover from its post-pandemic slump?

Culture > page 17



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Corpus Christi stalking incident sheds light on inadequate handling of harassment cases in Oxford

Maggie Wilcox reports.

Two Corpus Christi undergraduates were stalked by a fellow student for over two years, despite frequent appeals to college authorities. The college procedure led to a confusing and frustrating process for the victims.

Mary and Sophie* were in their first year at Corpus Christi College, Oxford when a fellow student, Joe*, began giving them unwanted attention. By Trinity term of 2019, the situation had escalated. He made frequent advances, left many letters in their pidges and offered mysterious gifts, persistently following, messaging and staring at them. At times, he prevented them from leaving the college library by blocking them in the pews. He continued to confront and corner the women, attempting to see them multiple times each day and refusing to leave when asked. After the women appealed to the college for support, the Dean of Corpus Christi told Joe to cease contact with both women.

Over the summer and into Michaelmas of 2019, Joe continued to interact with both women, in person and online. Following continued conversations with Corpus administration, Joe was banned from the college site for two weeks at the end of Michaelmas and warned again to stop contacting Mary and Sophie. In Hilary term 2020, the ban was lifted and Joe resumed contact with the women. Reports of him persistently following Mary and Sophie around the college library ultimately spurred Corpus to hold a harassment panel.

One university, many procedures

Following Mary's official harassment complaint, the Corpus Disciplinary Committee held a panel to discuss Joe's behaviour and recommend further actions. Neither Mary nor Sophie were informed of the precise timings of the panel. Mary only dis-

covered the panel had occurred when she wrote to the Dean with concerns about Joe discussing her harassment complaint publicly, even though she had been told to keep this matter strictly confidential. The Dean responded by stating that he could not control Joe's actions, the panel had

happened the day before and the outcome had not been determined yet.

The two women were eventually notified in person that the Committee had banned the accused from the Corpus campus and activities "indefinitely". If Joe ever contacted them again, he could no longer remain a

member of the university. Mary and Sophie were not given the verdict in writing. Corpus policy at the time, as detailed in the 2021 non-academic disciplinary procedure (NADP), stated that a "verbal report" is all that needed to be given to the student who brought forward the complaint.

Continued on Page 5



Image credit: Yuan-Yuan Foo

Eight colleges to raise hourly wages to £13.15

Daniel Thomas reports.

Eight colleges are set to raise hourly wages in line with the latest measure to increase the living wage in Oxford by 10%. This is part of a series of measures by the Council to promote wage fairness in the local economy. The new Oxford Living Wage will be raised to £12.49 an hour, and be pegged at 95% of the London Living Wage, currently £13.15.

The Oxford Living Wage, first introduced by the City Council in 2008, is part of the broader Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership between local government and civil society, to promote equality and sustainable opportunities across the county.

Oxford's colleges have long been criticised on the grounds of labour rights. A student-led campaign for better wages and conditions in University employment, Oxford Worker Justice, has drawn attention to issues such as the lack of transparency over precisely how much non-academic workers at the colleges are paid, as well as over the use of zero-hour contracts and agency staff.

An annual ranking of colleges published by Oxford Worker Justice finds low pay, insecure contracts, and massive wage inequalities to be prevalent across most colleges.

Continued on Page 4

High Commissioner "disappointed" with Turkish society's platforming of Ersin Tatar

Jakub Trybull reports.

The High Commission of the Republic of Cyprus in the UK has expressed "serious concern and disappointment" with the pres-

ence of the elected leader of the Turkish occupied area of Cyprus, Ersin Tatar, at an event hosted by the Turkish Society. Concerns lie largely with language and symbols used to promote the event.

On Monday, the Oxford Uni-

versity Turkish society hosted an event with Ersin Tatar, branded as "a talk by [the] President of [the] Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," the "TRNC". As part of the event's social media marketing, the presidential seal and a link to

Tatar's website was included.

The High Commission was particularly concerned with word choice regarding Tatar's position as it implied that the TRNC is a sovereign state.

Continued on Page 3

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News Shorts

Oxford team rediscovers “bizarre, egg-laying mammal”

Expedition Cyclops, which explored the Cyclops mountains in Indonesia and included researchers from the University of Oxford, rediscovered Attenborough's long-beaked echidna—last recorded in 1961 and feared to be extinct. On the last day of the expedition, the team hit the jackpot with their now widely publicised footage capturing the mammal with “the spines of a hedgehog, the snout of an anteater, and the feet of a mole.”



Oxford music icon Osprey marks 40 years of music by backing new bands

Oxford's dedicated musician, DJ, and promoter, Osprey is celebrating 40 years in the industry by spotlighting local talent. Renowned for championing emerging acts, Osprey's initiative, “It's All About the Music,” has paved the way for countless artists. Marking this milestone, he is hosting the Oxford City Festival's 11th edition across venues like O2 Academy, the Bullingdon, and Port Mahon.



New Neapolitan food shop opened by Oxford student in Covered Market

Oxford doctoral student Frances Clemente and her family are launching Il Corno, a Neapolitan shop in Covered Market. The shop, situated between The Market Tap and Gulp Fiction, aims to showcase Neapolitan culture by serving street food, Neapolitan baba, and regional wines. The menu features panuozzi and taralli, with plans for Neapolitan cultural events. Clemente, passionate about sharing her Italian heritage, hopes Il Corno will contribute to Oxford's cultural landscape.

Oxford-led consortium secures £18 million in funding for doctoral studentships

Cayman Osei-Bonsu reports

A new award will back an innovative training programme and external engagement for students to become modern leaders in impactful social science research. Funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) will support 31 five-year studentships through the Grand Union Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). The DTP brings together Oxford, The Open University, and Brunel University London.

The extra funding by the universities and Oxford colleges means the Grand Union DTP from October 2024 will likely increase studentships to 45 per year, with 38 based in Oxford.

DTPs assemble a consortium of research organisations, offering tailored training for doctoral research students in interdisciplinary or subject-specific areas in the social sciences.

It will include data, big data, behavioral science, AI, and machine learning skills. It will incorporate professional development skills: leadership, project management, communication, and enterprise. Once piloted via the DTP, the courses will become more accessible to other research students.

Notably, the funding supports a “research-in-practise” element, enabling DTP students to practice their skills with external partners, both academic and non-academic. Studentships will be funded for

3.5 years, where all students will engage in a placement or internship in academia, policy, business, or a third-sector body.

The ESRC Executive Chair, Stian Westlake, stated the new opportunity will “enhance the experience for PhD students and boost the UK's capability.” It will “develop globally competitive

social science researchers” across a range of sectors with a “diversity of backgrounds and experiences.”

Associate Head of the Social Sciences Division and the Grand Union DTP Director, Rebecca Surrender, said it was a “fabulous result for Oxford and its DTP partners.” Oxford will pioneer

“enhanced methods training, external internships, and widening participation”. Additionally, she was delighted to have a strong basis to build the new DTP phase and looks “forward to helping to advance the next generation of social science leaders.”

Image Credits: Annie Spratt via Unsplash



Oxford Robotics Institute wins Queen's Anniversary Prize

Cem Kozanoglu reports

The Oxford Robotics Institute (ORI), a subsidiary of the Department of Engineering Science, was among the 22 UK educational institutions that were awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2023. ORI was recognised for supporting future sustainability and delivering fundamental advances in autonomous robotics technology, including RobotCar, the first autonomous vehicle allowed on UK roads.

The prize is awarded every two years by the Royal Anniversary Trust, which was established to mark and celebrate Queen Elizabeth's 40th year on the throne. The charity aims to “recognise and promote innovation by UK colleges and universities that benefits wider society.”

Sir Damon Buffini, Chair of The Royal Anniversary Trust said: “The Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education are an integral part of our national Honours system,

shining a light on the groundbreaking work taking place in universities and colleges across the UK.”

ORI's recent achievements include validating the safety and capability of robotics technologies in over 380 field trials in locations as diverse as Icelandic volcanoes, the Atacama Desert, Loch Ness, mine sites in the UK and US, and the surroundings of the JET fusion reactor. It was also instrumental in the adoption of safer, cleaner nuclear energy strategies for Sellafield and the UK Atomic Energy Authority.

The institute has published over 900 papers and gathered £40 million in funding, and their research has generated 22 patents, 70 intellectual property licences and four startups. Their teaching programme has trained over 120 PhDs, 40 postdoctoral researchers, and at least 60 Masters students.

Professor Irene Tracey, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford wished “[c]ongratulations to all those involved,” stating that “[ORI's] work is a fantastic

example of our researchers collaborating with industry to come up with cutting-edge solutions to the world's challenges, from supporting sustainability in agriculture to improving safety in manufacturing.”

The winners will be presented with a medal and certificate at a formal Honours ceremony in February 2024 doors.”

Image credits: Alex Knight via Wikimedia Commons



High Commissioner “disappointed” with Turkish Society’s platforming of Ersin Tatar

continued from front page

In fact, it is only recognised by Turkey and not any of the other 192 UN member states, which consider it to be legally part of the Republic of Cyprus.

In a conversation with Cherwell, the High Commission said that they have informed the University and St John’s College of their concerns. They added that they “respect free speech” but urged any symbols and language used to be in line with United Nations Security Council resolutions. These called upon all states “not to recognise any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus” and “not to facilitate or in any way assist the aforesaid secessionist entity”.

Nicholas Kyriakides, the chairman of Oxford University Society in Cyprus, told Cherwell: “This terminology directly contradicts recognised international norms and is offensive to the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus.”

In response, Oxford University Turkish Society stated: “We were asked to host the event by the President himself and the Turkish Embassy, so we used the title that they asked us to use. It was not a political statement by our society but simply how the guest chose to identify himself.

“We recognise that Cyprus has had a challenging path to peace with ongoing international disputes and suffering on both sides. Tatar’s two state solution is one of the proposals for lasting peace and he is a democratic representative of the Turkish Cypriot community, he deserves to be heard

out on those grounds.”

St John’s College told Cherwell: “The College looked at the event carefully. We had a number of aims to consider, including both the wellbeing of all our members, and also our legal obligation to uphold freedom of speech within the law.”

“Having reviewed this, we felt that the event should proceed, but noted that hosting any speaker or society does not imply College endorsement of their views. We asked the organisers to make it clear that the invitation to speak comes from them, not from the College or University, and also asked them to ensure that the event was managed in such a way as to avoid distress or disruption to members of the College and wider community. The President did receive a letter from the High Commission and responded to it.”

In a statement to Cherwell, the High Commission said: “Being certain that Oxford University would have never agreed to hold at its premises any event that would have hosted a representative of an entity that the international community through UN Security Council Resolutions, has declared as illegal, null and void, and the sensitivity of the message and effect of giving a platform to Mr Tatar especially when he was listed in the invitation/poster of the event as the so called “President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, we respectfully urged the University authorities to reconsider their decision to allow this event to take place even so this was not an official University event.”

Ersin Tatar and the University have been reached for comment.

Image credit: Wikimedia



Oxford partners with IMF to predict disruptions to global supply chains

Cherwell News reports.

In collaboration with the IMF, Oxford’s Environmental Change Institute has launched ‘PortWatch’, an online platform monitoring and simulating disruptions to global maritime trade from external shocks including those caused by climate change. It was a winner of the 2022 IMF Climate Innovation Challenge, which fosters innovation and collaboration to tackle economic and financial issues related to climate change.

The platform uses satellite data to model actual and expected trade dis-

ruptions to maritime ports and assess subsequent spill-over effects on global supply chains. It also allows users to identify current vulnerabilities within the maritime trade network based on new climate scenario analysis developed by Oxford researchers.

Disruptions to global supply chains, including from Covid-19 lockdowns and extreme weather events, have lost the global economy billions in recent years. University of Oxford Professor of Climate and Environ-



mental Risks, Jim Hall said “Shocks to trade and supply chains can propagate rapidly around the world, leading to economic disruptions and real impacts for people”. He is hopeful that “using PortWatch, we can track shipping disruption at ports and in critical

shipping lanes around the world, providing up-to-date information for decision makers.”

PortWatch is available for public use online, but is intended primarily for policymakers and analysts. IMF Chief Statistician, Data

Brookes scraps maths and music courses

Bea Keady reports.

Students and academics have issued petitions protesting cuts planned by Oxford Brookes University including closing their maths and music courses.

Alongside the two department closures, the University announced that they were also considering reducing staff across several other subjects including Film, English, History, Architecture and Anthropology. According to a statement released to the Oxford Mail by the English and Creative Writing Faculty at Brookes, Up to 40% of the English and creative writing staff could be cut by the end of January.

Oxford Brookes announced that this year’s music and maths cohort would be their last, with current students seeing their degrees through to completion and the subjects being “taught out” with final closure when all students have graduated.

Academic staff for both departments will be gradually decreased until the final cohort has graduated, with maths professors largely transitioning into the engineering department. No transition plan has been created for music staff. The plan, as described by the music department, is for “the last member of the music staff ... to leave the university” in 2026.

The English and creative writing team’s statement stressed their concern with the recent announcement: “We believe that the humanities are the beating heart of any university... We have brought great prestige to Oxford Brookes University as leading researchers, ranked the 6th best English and Creative Writing unit in the whole of the UK for this. ... All [our work] is now under threat.”

Similarly, the music department said that they were not given the opportunity to develop alternative programmes to increase interest. They have urged the vice-chancellor, senior leadership, and board of governors to consider the complaints of staff and students.

The plan to scrap these courses was announced as part of Brookes’ publication of their cost-saving plan last week, with 48 staff at risk of redundancy. The University claimed that “financial challenges due to a range of external factors, such as inflation, flat

student fees for UK undergraduates for over a decade, and increases in staff pay and employer pension contributions.”

Music staff at Brookes also emphasised the national pressure on music degrees across the country with student numbers dwindling. They also highlighted the role of the University’s “decision to discontinue the combined-honours degrees” in the declining number of applicants.

Students and alumni have launched a petition and social media campaign to “Save music at Oxford Brookes”, arguing that the current plan to close the department would affect students across the university who are involved in music societies and groups or enjoy the culture of music at university, not just music students. (Especially as the university has only just opened a proper performance space).

The petition, which had amassed 3,677 signatures by Wednesday midday continues: “Participation in arts courses such as music contributes significantly towards students’ mental well-being [and] cognitive abilities”, leading to improved performance in all disciplines.

Other groups within and outside the University have also responded. This included the Independent Society of Musicians who urged the University to give staff more time and shared their “disappointment” at the cuts.

Similarly, in response to the plans to cut the maths and music courses, the University and College Union branch at Brookes met on Friday November 17. The motion: “This Branch has no confidence in the financial management of the university by the vice chancellor, which is causing staff to be put at threat of compulsory redundancy” was passed almost unanimously. MP for Oxford East, Anne-liese Dodds has urged the University to “consider the impact of this on staff in both subject areas, for whom this must be a very worrying time.”

Oxford Brookes University finished their statement by stating: “Redundancy is, and will always be, our last resort, and we will always seek to identify savings through other avenues where possible” and said they “remain committed to all our current students, and will ensure that changes to staffing do not interfere with our students ... programme of study.”

Officer, and Director of the Statistics Department, Bert Kroese said that “the platform’s innovative data sources and visualization tools are designed to help facilitate international dialogue and inform policy decisions.”

Other collaborators on the project include the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), the United Nations Global Platform (UNGP), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). It received initial funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

Image credit: Marcel Crozet / ILO via CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IGO DEED

Cross-Campus

Eco-activist group deflate another 150 SUVs in Bristol

Eco-activist group Reclaim Our Community has admitted to deflating 150 SUVs in affluent Clifton, Bristol this week, escalating from a similar October protest. They insist protests will intensify until demands for more bicycle lanes, free transport, and home insulation are addressed, arguing SUVs drive climate change. No convictions have been made yet.



‘Doxxing truck’ targets Yale, Harvard students on day of The Game

A conservative group’s “doxxing truck” has targeted Yale and Harvard students, rotating through the names and photos of students whom it deems “leading antisemitism” on its digital billboards. Over 100 Yale faculty denounced the harassment and intimidation, pledging support for students. Yale denounced the “cowardly act.”



Presidency unopposed as Union candidates begin campaigns

Candidates have begun campaigning for this term’s Union elections, which feature an uncontested presidential race. The elections, for roles to be served in Easter 2024, are uncontested for three out of the five positions on the Standing Committee. This follows last year’s vote-rigging scandals and former president Max Ghose’s resignation. Neha Pauly, the Union’s incumbent Equalities officer, is the sole candidate for President, to succeed Lent term’s Nick Davis.



Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil held in Radcliffe Square

Sloane Getz reports.

Oxford students, staff, and community members gathered in Radcliffe Square last night for a Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil, organised by the SU LGBTQ+ Campaign to “honour the memory of trans lives lost to violence, hate crimes, and transphobia.”

This observance marks the fourth vigil held in Oxford for Transgender Day of Remembrance, an annual memorial founded in 1999 to commemorate Rita Hester and Chanelle Pickett, two Black trans women murdered in Massachusetts.

Standing next to a memorial tied to the Radcliffe Camera’s fence that listed the names of trans victims of violence, speakers shared memories, recited poems, and performed songs.

One speaker, Chrissie Chevasutt, an outreach worker for the trans, intersex, and nonbinary community at St. Columba’s United Reformed Church in Oxford spoke about the “hate” perpetuated by many churches and media outlets as a major driver of transphobic violence.

In statements made before the event, they also praised the

decision made by several Oxford colleges to fly the trans pride flags in observance of Transgender Day of Remembrance this week, saying “my whole soul and body breathes a deep sigh of relief, to know that many of Oxford’s colleges are flying the flag.

“This is huge, in the immediate, it sends a message of hope, that culture and society is changing.”

Speakers also addressed the ongoing conflict in Israel-Palestine, reading out messages from queer and trans Palestinians posted on the website “Queering the Map.”

The vigil concluded with a

moment of silence commemorating the lives lost to anti-trans violence in the past year, following a poem by the co-chair of the SU’s LGBTQ+ campaign, Joel Aston, who expressed their “grief and anger” at transphobic violence.

Commenting on the vigil, Addi Haran Diman, president of the Oxford LGBTQ+ Society, said “on [Trans Day of Remembrance], we are rightfully saddened and enraged by losing so many community members. May their memory give us the power to continue fighting another year.”

Image Credit: Sloane Getz



Eight colleges to raise hourly wages to £13.15

continued from front page

An annual ranking of colleges published by Oxford Worker Justice finds low pay, insecure contracts, and massive wage inequalities to be prevalent across the majority of colleges. Past investigations by Cherwell, meanwhile, have brought light to exploitative labour practices and stressful workplace conditions among University housekeepers in the “scout system”.

Additionally, the City Coun-

cil’s employer recognition incentive, that encourages employers who pay the Oxford Living Wage to accredit so they can get wider recognition, indicates that less than 25% of Oxford’s 38 colleges have been accredited. From a list of over 120 accredited employers, only Magdalen, Merton, New, Somerville, St. Cross, St. John’s, Wadham, Worcester Colleges appear, in addition to local businesses frequented by students, such as Common Ground Cafe & the Old Fire Station arts hub.

As an incentive, the Council argues that providing a living wage

may help businesses “improve both recruitment and retention.” Research from the Living Wage Foundation backs this up; 75% of surveyed employers reported that paying a living wage had increased workers’ motivation and retention rates, while 94% felt that it had benefited their business overall.

Set to come in from April 2024, all businesses will be accredited through a recognition scheme, operated by Oxford City Council and the nationwide Living Wage Foundation.

Image credit: Nils Lindner via Unsplash



Oxford residents complain about South Park damage following bonfire night

Bea Keady reports.

Residents have complained that the fireworks display left South Park damaged, possibly for the entire winter, as vehicles used to set up the display churned the turf in the wet conditions. Some people who live near the park complained to the city council that Oxford Round Table, the organisers of the fireworks, failed to protect the ground with sheeting. About 40 complaints were lodged with the City Council.

The display was the 55th Annual Charity Fireworks Display and was viewed by more than 20,000 people inside the park. All profits are donated to charity and over the years more than £1 million has been raised for charities through these displays. Last year £85,000 was donated, according to the Council.

Members of the Round Table who have organised this charity display told the BBC that they are “absolutely heartbroken” at the complaints as, while most people enjoyed the spectacle, they feel “bombarded constantly by a small number of residents”. The fireworks were organised by unpaid volunteers.

The City Council has said that the heavy rain in the preceding week meant the ground was more saturated and so the heavy footfall also caused damage to the turf during the event. They also identified the role of climate change in delaying frosts and resulting in

wetter autumns each year, resulting in a wetter ground and thus more damage.

Ground rectification works can not be done until the ground has dried out but Oxford Roundtable are hopeful that the park could be “recovered by Christmas” and stated that there won’t be lasting damage because the areas affected will be rolled by council staff at the first opportunity.

Christian Petersen, a representative for Oxford Round Table said: “This happens every year – we plan for the council to undertake rectification works.”

The park has suffered similar damage in previous years. 2012 saw much more extensive damage after hosting the Olympic Torch event following a very wet summer. As a result, Oxford’s city council stated that they have “every confidence” that a prompt return to normal “will be repeated on this occasion”.

Moreover, Chewe Munkonge, cabinet member for leisure and parks, recognised the concerns but said that they had to be balanced against the huge popularity of the event and the significant fundraising role that the display plays in supporting local charities. He also reiterated that the council will investigate what further steps can be taken to reduce the impact and take financially viable steps.

The City Council has said that Oxford Round Table will fund the repair work and discussions are taking place to investigate what can be done to reduce this impact in years to come.

Analysis: the show must go on

Tosin Olusoji comments.

As dear as we hold our green spaces, there exist worthy causes for which one can sacrifice a park for a month. The 55th annual South Park fireworks display attracted more than 20,000 spectators this November, but also encouraged around 40 complaints to the city council. “A small number of residents”, according to the Oxford Round Table, “bombarded” the organisers with complaints about their failure to protect the park’s ground with sheeting, leading to damage to the turf from vehicles employed to set up the display and footfall from spectators. The city council has explained that the damage to the park’s turf during the display was a consequence of the ground’s saturation following a week of heavy rainfall, rendering the turf more vulnerable to damage from heavy footfall. The result, which is a temporarily damaged park turf, is an unattractive inconvenience,

but I believe that a charity event constitutes a worthy cause.

While the display has raised over £1 million for various charities over the years, those behind the 40 complaints question its sustainability. Current ground rectification efforts have still not taken place as the Round Table wait for the park’s turf to dry out, and local residents may have to wait until Christmas to see the local green space’s recovery. Ultimately, however, as the cabinet minister for leisure and parks asserts, we must weigh this damage against the event’s tremendous charitable benefits and popularity. Despite the complaints of a small minority, the display offers Oxford dwellers an opportunity to celebrate bonfire night and raised £85,000 for charity alone last year; if residents can find a different green space to walk their dogs each December, then I propose that the show must go on.



Corpus Christi stalking incident sheds light on inadequate handling of harrassment cases in Oxford

continued from front page

The University of Oxford Harassment Policy by contrast and the majority of Oxford colleges stipulate that the outcome of investigations and disciplinary panels should be provided to the reporter and the accused, including in some cases in writing.

The central University Policy includes a detailed procedure for dealing with harassment issues between students. Last updated in March 2019, the procedure stresses the importance of a timely process, continued communication and support for the accuser and the accused. The procedure also suggests strict penalties for non-compliance with penalties imposed under this procedure.

However, Oxford colleges are not required to follow the exact University policy. Instead, the University encourages the resolution and punishment of harassment

"Oxford colleges are not required to follow the exact University policy."

cases "under appropriate college procedures while reflecting the principles of this Policy". A university spokesperson told *Cherwell* that the University "has no role in advising colleges on complaint handling procedures". The University as a whole addresses reports of sexual misconduct under Statute XI and the Student Disciplinary Procedure, and is also undertaking a review this academic year "to identify scope to improve its processes".

Whilst many Oxford colleges have similar procedures dedicated solely to issues of harassment, Corpus Christi is amongst the minority of colleges which group all non-academic disciplinary offences under one common procedure. The college has guidelines for the treatment of harassment cases, but ultimately formal action is taken under the standard complaints procedure and NADP. The Corpus NADP, contained in the Junior Members Handbook at the time, states that a student can be summoned to the panel for offences ranging from "contravention of the College's Information Technology Regulations" and interference with fire alarms to criminal conduct and violence.

"Appropriate action has been taken"

In Michaelmas 2020, Mary and Sophie complained to the college again. Joe was still involved in college football and had begun to harass Sophie's boyfriend. In a subsequent meeting with the Dean and Dean of Welfare, the two women were told that Joe's activities were not in violation of the rules, as football occurred off Corpus' campus and Joe was targeting Sophie's boyfriend, not Sophie herself. Mary

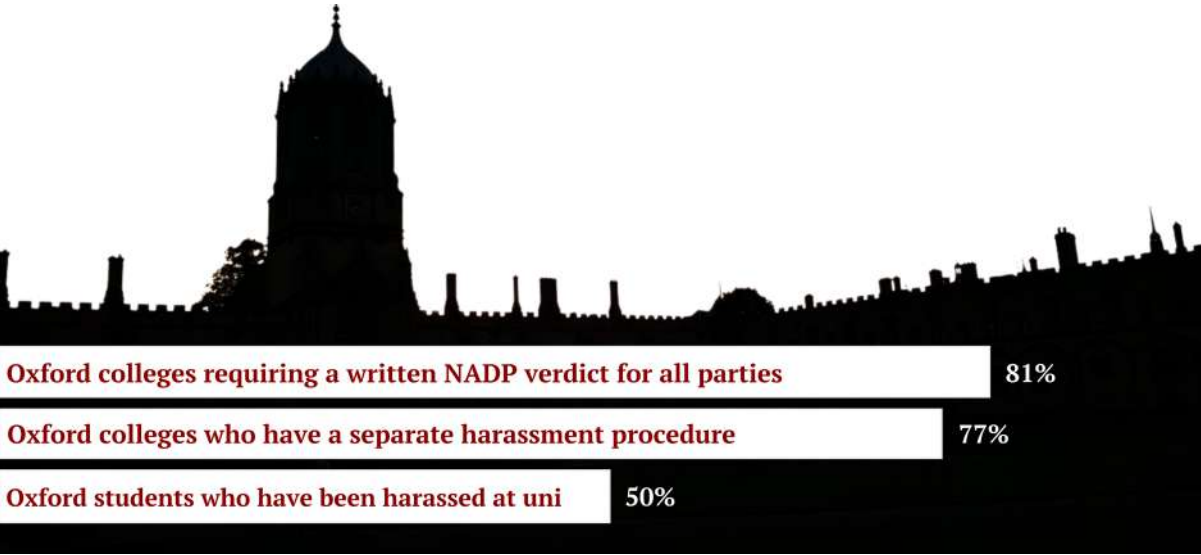
and Sophie added in the meeting that the disciplinary verdict they had been verbally informed of barred Joe from participating in any college activities.

However, Mary told *Cherwell* that since "we had nothing in writing when questioned on this, [the Deans] just said that we misunderstood and that was never said". The women were frustrated by this lack of clarity and believed that "the point of the harassment panel outcome was to not just separate us, but also to provide punishment". No action was taken by Corpus against Joe at that point. The women heard nothing from Joe for months during pandemic lockdowns.

When Joe resumed contact with Mary in the autumn of 2021, following her through the streets of Oxford, she notified Corpus Christi, worried about his behaviour. Mary had since moved colleges, as she had been "feeling unsafe at Corpus", due to the continued harassment and the college's handling of the case. The Corpus Dean initially recommended she utilise the resources of the welfare team at her new college. Mary sent multiple emails, pleading to hear what steps had been taken, as she believed Joe had clearly breached the disciplinary panel's ruling. After over a week of emails, the Corpus Dean responded to Mary. He stated that Joe had been "dealt with under the college disciplinary process" and "appropriate action" had been taken. When Mary pushed for clarification, Corpus officials informed her that Joe had been warned that further contact with her or Sophie was banned and repeat offences could lead to him being sent back to the Disciplinary Committee, effectively returning to the beginning of the disciplinary process.

Mary told *Cherwell* that this experience was frustrating. This new warning negated "the whole point of the harassment panel in the first place". She reiterated that she and Sophie were under the impression that "if he contacted us again that was it - no more warning, he was kicked out".

Following the Dean's response, Mary wrote to the Corpus Academic Registrar to obtain the results of the Hilary 2020 disciplinary panel in writing. In the November 2021 email she wrote that without the "exact terms" of the disciplinary findings, she couldn't be sure of what behaviour "constitutes a breach". The Academic Registrar quickly responded with some of the outcomes from the panel, which included that the accused could not "make any contact by whatever means with either of the female students" nor be in the same "non-teaching environment, room



or social space with either female student". The college did not specify restrictions in teaching settings and Sophie had to talk to instructors herself to ensure that she could be separated from Joe in teaching spaces. The Academic Registrar added that the Dean had "reminded" Joe of these stipulations and stated that further breaches would send him back to the Disciplinary Committee. This email was the first time in nearly two years that either Mary or Sophie had received any part of the terms of the panel in writing. Mary wrote in a reply to the Academic Registrar that she was "utterly dejected" that the terms of this panel had not been maintained.

All invited to the Scholar's Dinner?

A few days later, Corpus held a Scholar's Dinner to celebrate all leavers who had achieved a First in Finals. Mary was amongst this group, but due to "space issues" linked to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, was uninvited from the dinner about a week beforehand. The college later told the women that "no invitations were revoked". Mary had also been told that since she had switched colleges it was "no longer appropriate" for the Corpus to "enter into correspondence" with her about the dinner since it was a "College event".

She and Sophie learned from friends in attendance at the dinner, however, that Joe was present, despite his college site ban being extended, as per the Academic Registrar's most recent email. A friend at the event immediately expressed their discomfort to the Dean at the event but was told that this was not an appropriate time to have this discussion. When Sophie's boyfriend wrote to the Vice-Principal that he was uncomfortable to have been at the same event as Joe, given his past actions, the Vice-Principal responded

that this was a "large gathering" with "varying levels of personal relations between attendees". He insisted that this was "after all an academic function".

Sophie wrote in an email that night that she was "alarmed" and alleged the college displayed "apathy" towards vulnerable members. She and Mary persistently emailed Corpus to request to speak to the Dean regarding these infringements of the Disciplinary Committee. The women were informed that college administration was discussing the matter and would be in touch soon, as "the number and tone of emails exchanged on this subject over the last week suggests that there is a need for further clarification and closure on this matter."

Sophie, who was still a member of Corpus Christi College, was informed that she should not contact the Dean without communication from him first, despite having effectively "no one else to turn to". She also later received an email stating that her tone to the Dean had been unacceptable, as he has "worked hard to ensure that the disciplinary procedure has been followed and all students are treated fairly".

Help beyond the college

Concerned that college and university measures were not substantive, Mary filed an official criminal complaint against Joe in late 2021. It was however dropped due to an administrative error on the police's side which led the force to suspend the investigation to the 6-month time limit between filing and ruling. Moreover, Joe's contact within the statutory time limit for stalking offences of 6 months was sporadic. Police have since apologised to Mary for the delay and errors made in the handling of the case. An inspector added that the initial instances of stalking in 2019/20 "could have been considered and investigated as a stalking/harassment offence," however since these actions were not reported within six months, they could not be prosecuted. Sophie and Mary were advised that if they had been directed to the police sooner, the case could have likely been dealt with within the six-month limit for evidence.

Mary states that before she switched colleges, she was not made aware of the harassment supports that existed outside of the collegiate system, including the Oxford Student Sexual Harassment Support Service, nor was she encouraged to speak to the

police by Corpus Christi. Sophie told *Cherwell* that they were "given the impression that the college procedure would give a similar result to a police report, like a no-contact order" and had thus not wanted to endure the further emotional upheaval and lengthy process of a criminal filing. Mary added that her new college's disciplinary proceedings encourage severe cases of sexual harassment and assault to be referred to the police.

Indeed, details of individual college harassment procedures vary greatly. In Trinity 2022, the Conference of Colleges provided colleges with a Non-Academic Discipline Procedure Template which "had been tested as to compliance with law, regulatory obligations/guidance and good practice". This new model allowed "for colleges to adopt/adapt to their own particular constitutional arrangements and circumstances as they see fit." Implementation was thus varied.

The majority of colleges have a specific procedure for dealing with harassment complaints and ensure written communication with all relevant parties, with over a dozen including nearly identical procedures specific to harassment investigations and discipline between students. These colleges also included stipulations that the complainant can directly appeal the case if they are not satisfied with its treatment. Only Corpus and five other Oxford colleges admitting undergraduates do not require both the complainant and the accused to be informed in writing of the verdict of their NADP or dedicated harassment proceedings.

A not-so-new NADP

In Hillary 2022, Mary and Sophie sent a formal complaint to Corpus describing their displeasure with Corpus' conduct and the NADP as it stood at the time. The Corpus President answered them in April, acknowledging "the distress that [their] experiences in relation to this case caused, both at the time and since the complaint and hearing". The President added that issues concerning sexual harassment were "under active review in committees and bodies of the University, Conference of Colleges, and individual Colleges," and that it "is obviously important to keep procedures and good practice up to date".

Read the full article online at [cherwell.org](https://www.cherwell.org)



Does the Varsity trip have an accessibility problem?

Highlighting financial inequality

Raghav Chari



Yes! It costs £349 upfront to buy tickets, but this masks the massive hidden costs that Varsity organisers expect people to put forward in addition to this. These can be several hundred pounds in themselves, with total expenses being closer to £800-1000. This is an exorbitant amount for any normal person. Yes, ski trips are expensive, and perhaps it's not feasible lower the prices by a lot. Many among us might have enough of mummy's money to not think twice about it. But, as it stands, Varsity is far out of reach for the average student.

Inexperience: a handicap



Violet Aitchison

For just under one thousand pounds, partying and skiing in the mountains for a week seems like a great deal, right? Perhaps if you've grown up going to chalets every winter perfecting your technique it would seem like a bargain. However, if you are like me and have never as so much placed your foot in a ski boot: not so much. Intrinsically, the trip is inaccessible. Whilst they claim you don't have to have skied before, it doesn't sound like much fun flailing around in the snow for seven days, desperate to pick up the sport, just to be rewarded by seeing Sammy Virji in a sweaty, overcrowded sports hall.

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

Adam Saxon



I've never been skiing in my life. However, from what I've heard, the Varsity trip is a good value-for-money experience, especially because you get so much more than just the skiing. Realistically, how many chances in your life will you get to go skiing, with mates, AND have the opportunity to let loose on plenty a night out at the same time? Sounds like a bargain to me. If you've got a grand burning a hole in your pocket, (unlike me) I'm honestly not sure there's a better place you could be spending the first week of December.

Let it be?

Violet Aitchinson

The last month has too frequently left me wondering what the obsession with revivals and reunions is all about. We know that die-hard fans beg for reboots or prequels, and arguably this is a fine enough justification, but what is interesting is that far too often they end up being disappointing. For me, the nail in the coffin was the failed revival of two parts of pop culture that I hold in high esteem: *The Hunger Games* and The Beatles.

I've always slightly cringed at band reunions and movie remakes. After a while, you wonder how many more *Star Wars* movies can be released, or how many times The Spice Girls can go on a reunion tour. There are countless examples of media reboots that have flopped and failed to add anything to their franchises, even when it wasn't necessary. Just a few include the 2019 *Charlie's Angels* movie, the 2011 *Mean Girls 2* sequel, or the band All Saints 2006 reunion wherein the band members soon after claimed (falsely) that they would never reunite again. You might think I sound cynical as these releases seem to be in good taste or 'for the fans'. But when historically these revivals never live up to the original, you're left thinking: who or what was that really for?

When thinking about it, most of my favourite shows or movies have been the ones that didn't milk their potential. Whilst it's painful we'll never get another season of Phoebe Waller Bridge's *Fleabag*, or Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant's British edition of *The Office*, their brilliance partially lies in the fact we are left wanting more. We don't

know everything there is to know about all the characters, and their storylines are not tightly wrapped up. This makes returning to them even more enjoyable, as it feels like you are constantly learning something new about beloved characters. But what a prequel like 'The Ballad of the Songbirds and Snakes' or a song such as 'Now and Then' does, is it ruins their sacredness. Too much is revealed, and we lose interest in its legacy. We are let it on John Lennon's private demos, and the question as to whether revolutionary music was left unreleased is partially resolved. Equally, when the origins of *The Hunger Games* are over-explained, our excitement or intrigue is pacified. And so, the franchises become less interesting, despite the fact the intention is the opposite.

Considering The Beatles are the bestselling artists in history and *The Hunger Games* trilogy is the third highest-grossing movie based on a young adult book of all time, I have felt further confused about the motivation for the revivals. Clearly, there is no argument that either of the brands would need something to keep up interest or lengthen their legacy. On top of this, both are avidly critically acclaimed. It's not then as if there was an undiscovered masterpiece that would change the whole perception of either's reputation. So, what we are left with is two majorly mediocre pieces of work that are not only distasteful for the lack of artistic integrity and poor quality but also clear examples of greed.

Also, on a simpler level, it was hard not to feel offended by how bad both revivals were. Whilst contrasting in content, The Beatles' 'Now and Then', and *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* represent the same issue. They fell

into the trap of being lazy and underdeveloped. What happens is we see money-grabbing studios and producers convinced that the brand's legacy and loyal fanbase justify them releasing anything as long as it's new; regardless of the quality. And, to an extent, they aren't wholly wrong. I still bought tickets to see the movie, and I still streamed the song. But the difference was I came out of both experiences confused by what I had just seen and heard. I came out having lost respect for both franchises, knowing how brilliant the work that had come before had been, and knowing that this is how a new generation would perceive both things. And I'm not the only one to think this.

Before George Harrison's death in the '90s, The Beatles had already attempted to release 'Now and Then'. However, the technology at the time wasn't good enough, and Lennon's voice could not be separated adequately to clearly hear the lyrics. In the twelve-minute documentary released about the making of the song, Paul McCartney revealed Harrison said the original attempt at the demo was "fucking rubbish" and that he hoped "someone does this to all my crap demos after I'm dead – turn

them into hit songs". McCartney's case for releasing the song was that it was in memory of his friends. However, when one of said friends, who is now dead, actively challenged its release, you've got to wonder how true this is. Not only does this comment made by Harrison confirm my lacklustre feelings towards the track, but it also poses a moral question about releasing work by someone who can no longer consent. Whilst it isn't for me to decide, it does add another layer of discomfort in knowing we can't be sure that this is what George Harrison or John Lennon would have wanted.

Of course, there will always be examples that break the mould. *Toy Story 4* was a beautiful homage to the original movies, and ABBA's 'Voyage Show' continues to receive rave reviews. But this doesn't make up for the countless awful remakes, sequels, prequels, and revivals that tarnish what once were remarkable pieces of work. Because ultimately, what the half-baked reboots do is leave you wondering if the thing you so cherished to begin with, was ever really that good.

Image Credit: orionpozo / CC BY 2.0 Via Flickr



The Debate Chamber

Oliver and Kate go head to head, debating if scholars' privileges are justified

When I started writing this, I had to ask my friends if we even have scholars' privileges at Balliol. It turns out that we do, but they don't consist of much more than a single grant (£150 for an Exhibition or £200 for a Scholarship) and a celebratory ceremony.

I can only hazard a guess at which of my friends or cohort received firsts in their Prelims. I suppose this is because we've already got rid of most of the things that would reveal it. In Balliol, we don't wear gowns; I can see how scholars' privileges would seem more relevant if you were confronted with your first-year performance at every formal.

As somebody who is not a Scholar, I don't have a problem with people who did better in Prelims being rewarded for it, but perhaps it might seem more unfair if they continued to receive mon-

ey, free meals, and other privileges throughout the rest of their degree, as they do at other colleges.

Balliol's system seems like a good compromise: I don't think there's anything wrong with offering a prize for academic performance, but it probably shouldn't mark students out as different for their whole time here.

It does seem like opposing scholars' privileges is a strange hill to die on when Oxford itself is so academically selective. Are we only OK with benefiting from being 'the best' until we're the ones who don't?

There are more glaring examples of the reinforcement of inequality here than a reward for doing well in exams.

If Oxford is to be the democratising academic institution it strives to be, scholars' privileges are wholly unjustified.

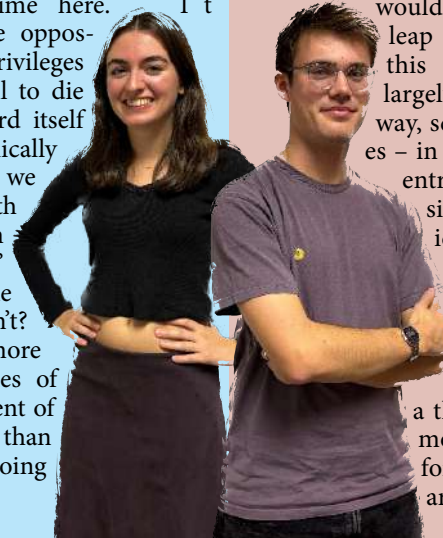
In their October 2020 *Cherwell* investigation, Rachel Muir showed that "Prelims favour private school students." Though the piece uses data from 2015-2019, it wouldn't be too great a leap to assume that this pattern is still largely true. In this way, scholars' privileges – in any form – only entrenches the divisions still very evident in Oxford today.

Whilst scholars' privilege in room ballots are thankfully a thing of the past, monetary prizes for Prelim results are still com-

monplace in many colleges. In Somerville, for instance, Scholars are awarded £500 a year whilst Exhibitioners are awarded £200, with both prizes including an additional £60 to pay for the scholar's gown. Many colleges follow a similar format, with some (such as Keble) also providing scholars with a number of free meals per week.

Whilst some argue that these prizes may fund book purchases or other academic endeavours, scholars are free to spend their money as they wish. Moreover, many colleges have funds to request reimbursement for book purchases or other grants which everyone – no matter their Prelim results – can access.

That is not to say that scholars don't deserve to be rewarded for their academic excellence; but surely there must be another way than (partly) funding their Varsity '23 trip.



Why we might not beat climate change

Louis Johnson

In an interview with Kate Raworth, author of Doughnut Economics, Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell critiqued their guest's rejection of economic growth. While Raworth maintains that a new model is necessary to build a sustainable eco-economic system, Stewart and Campbell argue that the idea is simply politically infeasible. Both views are right. A model along the lines of the sustainable 'doughnut' that Raworth advocates is necessary if we are to avert the horrifying culmination of our 200+ year industrial experiment, yet is also impossible to implement in our current political system. A candidate or party advocating for such solutions simply opens themselves up to electoral annihilation.

Is replacement of our current political and economic model really necessary? Surely substantial progress has already been made? Case in point, the Inflation Reduction Act. Passed by the Biden administration, it was a landmark piece of legislation that transformed the American response to the climate crisis and provided a beacon of climate leadership for countries all over the world. China, the world's largest carbon emitter, has made pledges for reducing their emissions and is rapidly investing in renewables. Yet while major countries continue to talk about slashing their emissions, and endless COPs promise the final turning point for climate action, global emissions continue to rise and rise.

But even the current terrifyingly threadbare climate action may not last. The impassioned prayers

of climate scientists were delivered with Biden's victory in the 2020 US election on promises of substantial climate legislation. But with Biden's popularity flailing, and deepening polarisation meaning that the Republicans are intransigent in their denial of climate change while the world burns, any GOP victory will lead the world's largest democracy in a fossil fuel boom that will guarantee that any chance the human race has to avoid the worst is snuffed out. In Britain, the ruling Conservative Party, for example, set out the goal of net zero by 2050, including a provision for no new petrol or diesel cars to be sold by 2030, yet already the influence of pressure

“The Western economic and political system is patently unable to accommodate the complete transformation that adapting to climate change would require...”

groups and right-wing outliers occupying the climate sceptic policy space have led the Conservatives to weaken their goals. Across Europe, right-wing parties are leading a backlash to green policies that threatens to undermine EU emissions targets.

Therefore, consider this thesis: the Western economic and political system is patently unable to

accommodate the complete transformation that adapting to climate change would require, having developed through the industrial revolution and the use of fossil fuels. The consumption of fossil fuels, which is destroying the environment, is also baked into national and global systems of governance. Campbell and Stewart both made this connection, the former referencing a 'gulf' between what needs to happen and 'the political realities in democracies'. An increasingly apparent pattern is that the necessarily radical climate policies prove politically unpalatable, or that their cost is exploited by ideologues and cynical opportunists alike for electoral gain. Infrastructure projects like implementing renewable energy generation are hugely expensive and are scrapped or shrunk by recession-hit treasuries. Attempts to curb individual emissions like 15-minute cities are portrayed as attacks on individual liberties (obscuring real problems to be solved like their effect on low-income families). Degrowth and similar ideas are seen as simply further impoverishing already impoverished working people, and thus lie beyond the political pale. These are all changes that we need if we are to stand a chance against climate breakdown, yet are all changes that are unthinkable.

Of course, Western democracies are not the world. But the West clearly has an urgent duty to reduce emissions, due to having both some of the world's highest per-capita emissions and because of the historical contribution to climate change. Cynical electioneering may lead liberal democracies to abandon their efforts to tackle climate change,

a death sentence for any hope of meaningful and direly needed global action. The complex systems sustaining human civilisation cannot withstand the radical transformation that climate change will bring (see the paper by Steffen, Will et al. 'Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene.' Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS 115.33 [2018], which explains the multiplicity of earth-systemic tipping points that, once reached, further accelerate climate breakdown in a feedback loop). The current equilibrium of the Earth system is at breaking point and yet global political leaders delay, ignore and frustrate the action that is necessary. We need political actors to overturn the same system that has installed them in the first place.

I would strenuously clarify that I do not have a vision of an alternative political system, and I certainly do not believe in an 'eco-dictatorship'. I strongly and passionately believe in my country's system of liberal democracy yet it may be totally unsuited to our era of entirely unprecedented and existential crisis. The truth is that I don't know the answer. I can offer a diagnosis but I am at a loss for a treatment. The only rational response to this two-headed paradox may be doom-erism, an acceptance of the inevitable entailing giving up any attempt to stop runaway climate change. But this, too, is surely the wrong answer. It is our duty to not only the rest of humanity, but our descendants, and our forebears, to do everything in our power to preserve the Earth system that has fostered our species. If there is even the smallest, barest chance that we might yet save these things, then we must try.

The Countdown to 2024: abortion rights may be Democrats' saving grace

Oliver Smith

In a week where Republicans tore chunks out of each other in a bruising primary debate, the clear frontrunner, Donald Trump, was in New York, battling to save his crumbling Manhattan Empire. Meanwhile, Biden has come under increasing scrutiny from his own party, seen as more of a liability than an asset. Biden is trailing Trump in the polls, with his age leaving uncomfortable questions for Democrats. The stage is set for a tumultuous 2024.

As GOP presidential hopefuls gathered in Miami on November 8th, the real race seemed to be for second place. Perhaps they are holding out for a vice presidential consolation prize, or desperately clinging onto the possibility that they may be able to take over the reins should Trump not survive his 90+ felony charges.

Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley fought tooth and nail to claw away support from Trump's protégé turned chief adversary, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, brandishing her hawkish foreign policy credentials – a hangover of the bygone Bush era. DeSantis once represented a credible

challenge to the former president, but his support has since plummeted, now just 14% to Trump's 57%. Haley is ascendent, reviving her stagnant campaign to a 'respectable' 8.7%. The other candidates on stage seemed to have lost their raison d'être. The provocateur Ramaswamy was the only unifying force on stage, drawing the ire of all his competitors. Haley labelled him 'scum' under her breath in one particularly heated moment. As the candidates wrangled about who had cosied up closest with Chinese businesses and who does or does not use TikTok, one could not help but think of the farce of it all. Where was the real leader of the Grand Old Party?

In fact, Trump was a mere 10 miles away, already campaigning for the presidential election. Earlier that week, however, the former president was testifying in New York. The man who built his identity around being a successful billionaire businessman now faces the prospect of losing control of his empire. The presiding judge has already ruled that Trump regularly lied on his financial statements and exaggerated his net worth. Trump – despite decrying the 'witch hunt' – voluntarily appears in court,

conscious that every time he is indicted, the campaign donations come flooding in, and his popularity rises with his core base. Judge Engoron has lambasted the former president's political posturing, ordering his lawyer to control his client, stating: "This is not a political rally".

Trump faces mounting legal difficulties across the country, with his greatest peril in Georgia, where he is being pursued by the state, not the federal government. If convicted, he would not have the ability to pardon himself as president. The racketeering (RICO) case centres on the 'fake electors' plot and the infamous phone




Georgia Secretary of State, Brad Raffensperger, where Trump asked him to "find 11,780 votes". In recent weeks, Trump's co-defendants have been peeling off, one by one, mafia-style, to save themselves, pushing Trump

further and further into legal peril. Trump faces the genuine prospect of either prison or the presidency – a cell or the Oval Office come the end of next year.

If Trump does find himself imprisoned, the GOP will find itself at a dangerous crossroads - they can either rally around another candidate or they can follow their leader into the abyss. The guardrails of American democracy were badly damaged by Trump's election denialism in 2020 and the country has only grown more divided. In a recent speech on Veterans Day, Trump was widely accused of echoing fascist rhetoric as he centred his vitriol on the "vermin" who "lie and steal and cheat on elections". If Trump were to lose the next election, he would surely cry foul. If Trump were to be imprisoned, his chokehold on the Republican Party could lead his followers to take up arms. And if Trump were to win the next election, we would likely see a further erosion, or indeed the destruction, of the democratic norms that have come to define the United States. There seems to be no eventuality that does not further divide the nation.

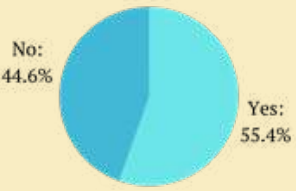
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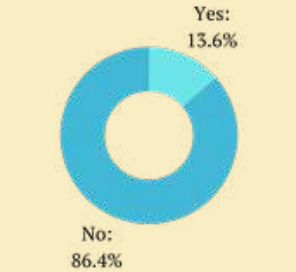
Are you a member of the Oxford Union?

A majority of our readers are indeed members of the Oxford Union, with 55.4% voting yes. Budding hacks and those coerced into buying membership in freshers week alike.



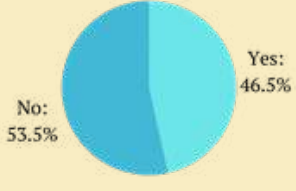
Is the Varsity trip accessible?

Following on from the debate of our very own editors, a huge 86.4% of our readers believe that the Varsity trip does have an accessibility problem.



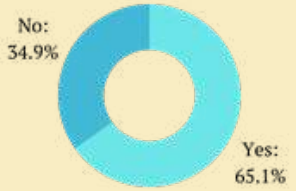
Have you ever attended a protest?

Protests are in the news a lot at the moment for a variety of reasons, so perhaps it is little surprise that a fairly large share of our readership has previously attended a protest, at 46.5%.



Did you experience 5th week blues this term?

Possibly unsurprisingly, almost 2/3 of our readers said they had experienced 5th week blues this term. This seems like a good point to remind everyone to look out for each other! And remember if you are struggling there are places you can turn for help.



“Understanding and appreciating those of other cultures is the number one tool we have to respect”

Sophie Magalhaes speaks with travel influencer and entrepreneur, Kacie Rose about navigating social media fame and how we can expand our horizons through travel.

I sit in my room on a sunny Tuesday afternoon, scrutinising my face on Zoom as I wait for Kacie to join the call. I have followed Kacie’s instagram for months. Whilst studying Italian in Florence over the summer, my feed flooded with restaurant recommendations and ‘La Dolce Vita’ captioned videos. Kacie’s skits stood out to me the most. Her funny and relatable ‘culture shock’ series on TikTok are what brought her social media stardom, but she is adamant that navigating her new online presence was not effortless. ‘Nobody writes a guidebook of what to do when you go from having zero eyes on you to millions. It’s so beautiful in one way. I was suddenly connecting with people all over the world ... but after the culture shock series, I was getting 50,000 followers overnight.’ Hate comments were overwhelming. ‘I cried everyday for a week.’

Kacie was a stranger to social media stardom until moving

to Italy in 2021. Having grown up in Michigan, she moved to New York City at age seventeen with the dream of dancing professionally. ‘The Midwest is known for its innate kindness, in the sense that people are very humble. Then you get to New York and people are

very blunt and direct.’ I ask which region had more influence on her. Launched head-first into a new pace of life, Kacie thrived off NYC’s multicultural bustle. Her adventurous online presence comes from a decade of building a career for herself in one of the world’s most frenetic cities. ‘New York is a city where anything can happen, and it’s beautiful in that way. You go from zero to a hundred very quickly.’ This intensity however, coupled with the toxicity of the performing arts industry, pushed Kacie to the edge. Marketability can compromise creative expression. As Kacie says, ‘an industry run by those with numbers in mind.’ Enveloped in dance and five other jobs to support herself, Kacie

“I made a promise to myself early on that I didn’t want to curate anything. I gradually realised that I was never going to please everybody.”

was burnt out. ‘I’d grown to hate the industry so much that I was starting to lose my love of dance.’

Covid-19 was the silver lining. With theatres shut down and audition rooms empty, it was a time of re-evaluation. Having met her boyfriend Dario whilst travelling in Italy, moving to another country was on the cards. She is passionate about taking on challenges, taking yourself out-

side your comfort zone. ‘I believe in myself that I can do hard things. Life is too short not to do scary shit.’ It was within her first week of living in Italy that Kacie picked up TikTok. What started as a fun pastime in mandatory quarantine grew overnight into an influential platform, sharing cultural differences and travel tips. Yet online hate is inevitable. Many comments attacked Kacie’s intelligence because she was American. ‘I made a promise to myself early on that I didn’t want to curate anything. I gradually realised that I was never going to please everybody.’

Kacie describes moving abroad as learning how to ‘do’ life all over again. Simple things that you wouldn’t think twice about doing in your own country, suddenly become overly complicated. ‘I didn’t know how to schedule a doctor’s appointment or where to buy a birthday card.’ Transparent with these struggles on social media, Kacie makes them opportunities for humour. Living abroad is not all excitement and novelty. Homesickness often comes with a good dose of guilt. There looms an expectation that one should always be ‘grateful’, Kacie tells me, which is unrealistic.

‘Do the shit that scares you’ is now the catchphrase of Kacie’s travel business, *Kacie Rose Travel*. A far cry from the Broadway stage, Kacie now hosts group trips, taking people from all over the world through various regions of Italy. I ask which trip has been the most memorable. ‘My first ever group trip. I was so nervous, I felt so much anxiety. I thought it was a mistake. They knew it was my first group trip and they embraced it, they ran with problems and they were so kind and supportive. At the end of that week everyone was standing in the hotel lobby crying whilst saying goodbye to each other. I was shown such beautiful support by people I

didn’t know a week beforehand.’

I was interested to ask Kacie how she feels her brand combats negative stereotypes of Americans being insular and untravelled. ‘If you live in the middle of America, to get to the East coast it can cost \$400. Let alone travelling overseas. Most Europeans don’t understand what life is like for the average American. What I aim to do is open up those doors and share another perspective. Understanding and appreciating those of other cultures is the number one tool we have

“It’s ok to pursue multiple things. As humans, we all want the same things, we just achieve them in different ways.”

to respect.’

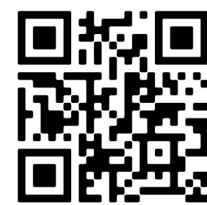
Kacie’s career versatility is a perfect example of embracing the unexpected. I ask her for any advice she may have for students wanting to expand their circles and discover life in other countries. She says that we shouldn’t become wrapped up in one sole ‘purpose’. The world is too wide to settle in one place with the same job your whole life. ‘You’re allowed to have other hobbies and interests. It’s ok to pursue multiple things. As humans, we all want the same things, we just achieve them in different ways. And you will never understand that until you travel.’

Kacie Rose is online on Tiktok at kacierose4, and on Instagram at @kacierose_. To find out more about Kacie Rose, visit her website. Images Courtesy of Kacie Rose.





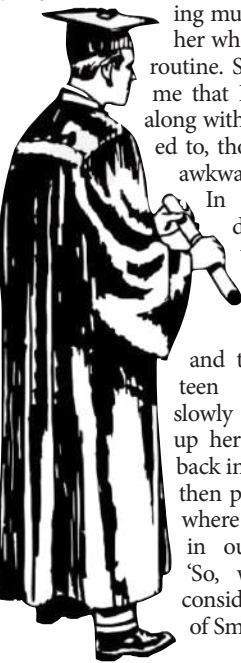
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Tute notes...

You may have heard of the tradition some tutors maintained in the 20th century of offering port or a similar beverage to students whose tutorials happened to fall at either lunchtime or after 6pm. Well, one of my tutors has stuck to this tradition - though in quite a different way. She is very interested in things like yoga and meditation, and is keen to keep a balanced and peaceful mind and body, which I admire. I'm also aware that she is a lady who sticks unwaveringly to a specific schedule. I was to soon discover the extent of her punctiliousness. One of our tutes this term fell at 11:30, as it had to be rescheduled from a previous week. As it happens, every day, at mid-day sharp, she engages in a routine of meditation and yoga. During this tute, I was treated to the entire affair - as soon as it hit 12pm, she started rolling out a yoga mat, turned on some calming music, and began her whole meditation routine. She gently told me that I could follow along with her if I wanted to, though I felt too awkward to join in. In silence, she did her yoga, while I sat there trying not to look too much, and then, after fifteen minutes, she slowly got up, rolled up her mat, and sat back in her chair. She then picked up right where we had left off in our discussion; 'So, what do you consider is the value of Smith's theory?'



CHERBADLY

Magdalen deer announce plans to form own college

The deer at Magdalen College have announced plans to break away and form their own college. Tentatively named 'Grove College', it will accept only deer as students.

The move comes amidst rising tensions between the deer and the college, which hit a critical point last Trinity after several deer attempted to flee Magdalen and claim asylum at St Catz. The deer have long complained that being restricted to the Grove deer park is a violation of their freedom and their right to education.

'We're treated like second-class students, just a spectacle for humans,' said the deer's current president, whose name can be transliterated as Stag Hammarskjöld. 'Many of our younger fawns cannot even read or do basic maths. It's like the College don't even care about deer education. Why even have deer here if you're not going to teach them?'

Grove College will be located on the current deer park, and unlike most colleges will be principally based outdoors, including Oxford's first open-air JCR and a ground-level library. The blueprints also include a sectioned-off area of land labelled 'the human park', though Ham-

marskjöld is yet to clarify exactly what this means.

The college will offer its deer students a cervid-centric approach to traditional Oxford courses. The Deer Philosophy course, for example, will study the theories of deer philosophers like Pladoe, Albert Camoose, Jacques Deerida, Judith Rutler, and Munt-Jacques Rousseau. Deer Chemistry will study the discoveries of Buck-minster Fuller, Deer Literature will read the works of Antlery Burgess, and Deer Theology will cover the life of venerated saint St Rudolph the Red-Nosed.

If the plans go ahead, Grove College will be the first college to accept a non-human student since 2006, when Regent's Park accidentally admitted a swarm of bees to read Classics. However, Magdalen College have strongly objected to the plan, calling it 'dangerous separatism'. They have also received support from Hertford, who fear their college crest may lose its uniqueness. Yet despite this opposition, Hammarskjöld has promised to press ahead with the plans.

Interestingly, human students at Magdalen are predominantly in favour of Grove College. One student, who has asked to remain anonymous, remarked to *Cherwell*, 'They deserve it. I mean, they're such majestic, sleek, beautiful, sexy beasts, with their powerful hooves and their enormous hind muscles. I'd happily be put in that human park.'

Meanwhile, the Magdalen rowing captain merely commented, 'Well, at least they'll be easy to bump at Torpids.'

John Evelyn

25th of November 2023

Beware the Ides of Michaelmarch.

The lamps are going out across Frewin Court - I do not think we will see them lit again in our termtime. Don't worry - it will all be over by Oxmas...

The Stormclouds of Anticyclone Hartmut, brewing for a year, have broken, where are Brutus and Cassius when you need them? Caesaraea and her officers (the four horsemen of the Annespocalypse) led their troops over the top - donkeys led by donkeys - someone in the war room seems rather #CHALLENGED. Whether Caesaraea's astonishing Reverse Midas tendency, seen in her events, turning all she touches into shit, will come back to bite her, remains to be seen - at least her Librarian, the Amateur Dramatist, knows how to run a (festive) social. Her Treasurer needs no horizontal hacking, after all she's a Head Girl, while Habeas Corpus's Secretarial bid sets up Hillary's thrilling: Three Boys - One Throne.

Captain Jack is going #BACK to the warzone of electoral politics. The Iceberg of opposition he will face, of which Caesaraea's large PV is but the most visible, will likely doom him to go down with his ship. For all of his ego out-of-control, at least Captain Jack is giving this election some choice: Caesaraea challenges the Status quo in the way that Rishi is the "Change" candidate with Cameron as Foreign Minister - and JE thought distaste for the proles was their only commonality.

Battles rage over Standing placement - an election where there will be more bloodletting than on the Librarian's neck - what will happen, JE can only speculate. Unprecedented turnout as the members join the cult of Fallon-gong? Can the Brasenostriil, another binned JCR contender, after breathing down the neck of TSC for several weeks, win favour? Kid of committee - will the detestable Goody-Toosy-Loosy? Lovers of ba-

nanas might be persuaded by Curious George's bid, while ACSscs will also be trying to access the halls of power. Every election needs an errant Etonian, thusly the man more ache than human will be trying to take the day. Youth really can't be spent any better than running for election - can it?

Nick Fuentes, along with a self imPOItant seccie and #REFORMist notions is running, the question: will he find Victory? Mimicking Spanish Christ, the stigmatas have emerged on the Corkist with a #COMEBACK, trying to crawl out of her dozen-vote-deep electoral grave. Acorns will lightly fall on un-verdant electoral soil, while JE wonders if Union Tweed, for all his talk of putting #MEMBERSFIRST, still has a working member - given his age. JE hopes that in such a contested race they will remember: Dulce et decorum est pro slateia hacki.

Credit where credit is due - Venus Flytrap has presided over a successful term with events that were practically permanently packed (when not cancelled). As the term wilts into its final act, perhaps she can follow the model of graceful retirement, and switch out flowers for cabbages. Scrutiny was living proof of Zeno's Paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise - a Groundhog Day Night of the living Dead. However, happily (for the circadian rhythms of the Cursus RO-norum), there is no such scrutiny for the CCC's election. Ginny Weasley is backing (no bias) the Kebabarazzi to replace her, up against Posh Spice; however, should the Janissaries take the day, JE hears Posh Spice can fall back on an Officer offer from the Kin/k/g. And so, the term draws to a close - Evelyn looks fondly at retirement. Much that once was, will be lost, but with sparkly eyes JE will remember it. The Unions future: only the fates can know - but the path of free speech did never run smooth.

Acta est relata, plaudite.

John Evelyn



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‘Is there a woodcut of that?’ & ‘Wunderbar’

Deputy Editors-in-Chief

Cold shower freak, “IS ANYONE COVERING THIS EVENT?!” Longest pull quotes ever, Inifinte Content Glitch, Biggest Choffice fan (not), Big Coat + Scarf typa guy & The Arty One

News and Investigations Editors

Breaking blues, OutDesign, The outlaw, Gum guardian, Canvaledictorian, The (not so) visionary, Foregin correspondent & RoR-y Gilmore

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The CEO, Warwick Business whisperer, Stylish graphic designer, MIA, Saved by the Standing Desk & The Wolf of High Street



Thomas Bristow
Editor-in-Chief

In the distant past of First year, I applied to the Books section of *Cherwell*. My interview was terrible (I was still drunk from the night before), and I was understandably rejected. As you can imagine, it’s a strange feeling to be here now, in Fourth year, signing off as Editor-in-Chief.

After that interview, I went on a stropo hiatus for a couple of terms before I was hired as a columnist (to the paper’s own detriment). I was then a Films editor for the Culture section, and for whatever reason found myself at a press viewing of a Cézanne exhibition at Tate Modern that term. I walked around the gallery, not really sure what I was meant to be doing there, and then hastily got the train back to Oxford. After that I did Music, Culture and then found myself where I am now, to my

own astonishment.

Having been involved with the paper for five terms now, I can honestly say it has been a pleasure. Even as a section editor, you have the opportunity to engage with different people who all bring different, often very insightful, ideas to the table. To see so many students keen to write about all manner of things is amazing. I’ve learnt an enormous amount as an editor, not only content-wise and with InDesign, but also in terms of how different people see the world. People may not always agree, but opinions matter. *Cherwell* has been independently facilitating the voice of Oxford’s students since 1920, and to have played a small part in its history has been a real privilege. I’ve had the opportunity to work alongside some extremely talented individuals, and to have read some truly exceptional pieces of journalism.

Thank you to everyone who’s edited and contributed this term, you are what ensures that the paper keeps going, and we could never have done this all without you. Hopefully many of you will return to *Cherwell* next term. We leave this paper now to Bintia and Anuj, whom we know will do an excellent job in Hilary. Thank you also to our readers, who are the life-blood of our paper. We hope you’ve enjoyed reading it this term. And for anyone who is wondering whether to get involved, just do it.

Cherwell has existed for over 100 years now. Here’s to many more.



Anuj Mishra
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

When Suzanne reminded me that I had to write this, I had just gotten back from watching Saltburn. The film appears to have made waves in Oxford, and basically nowhere else. It has garnered tepid reviews all around, most of which call the film a rehashed Brideshead Revisited strung along with thriller elements. But this is not a review.

Instead, I wanted to write a little on the Oxford-canon: the media which defines the place and (probably) made you want to apply here. Saltburn was the first piece of Oxford-themed media I have consumed since having come to Oxford, and it was deeply discon-



Suzanne Antelme
Editor-in-Chief

Since joining Cherwell’s news team in MT22 I have enjoyed intravenous Oxford gossip, some rather serious, some less so. On one bright and windy day last Hillary, for example, I was tasked with confirming the alleged closure of crewdate staple Temple Lounge, which rapidly became a prolonged side quest. Phone calls to the restaurant, the sister branch in London, and the Oxford Mail journo who had mentioned the closure yielded nothing.

Egged on by the prospect of avoiding my reading list for the rest of the afternoon, I finally turned up outside Temple Lounge. The building was boarded up and surrounded by rubbish. After doing a lap of the block and loitering on the pavement for long enough to look slightly suspicious, I

certing. Each character had a real-life corollary, and, quite frankly, I shall never look at Brasenose in the same way ever again.

It is quite often said that there are no original experiences: nothing reaffirms this more than a film which enacts the spaces you move through daily, the tutorials you turn up late to, the essays you reurgitate, and the interactions with people you not-so-secretly hate. That being said, I wasn’t convinced by Jacob Elordi’s character claiming he had a tutorial on Iffley Road, also by him referring to a tut as a ‘tutorial’ in conversation.

I am sure this uncanny valley must have entrapped students a

was ready to admit defeat. But passing the front one last time, I caught the faint chatter of a radio, and mustered the courage to knock. A man in dusty overalls at last dragged open the door, but when questioned shook his head and said, “Arabic.” We held a stilted conversation as I typed things into google translate and held the phone up for him to read. Eventually he ducked back into the cloud of plaster dust and re-emerged with the owner’s phone number scrawled in permanent marker on a torn off strip of cardboard. Essay neglected but clutching my cardboard trophy I returned home.

With the end of my time on Cherwell in sight, I know this spontaneity is something I will particularly miss. On other occasions I’ve dragged my very patient flatmate away from our lunch to photograph counter-protesters trying to dodge police, been to one too many SU Student Council meetings (e.g. one), and received some very questionable emails. Some things I will miss less include google two factor authentication, FileZilla, the angry red face of WordPress SEO, and the actual devil incarnate that is Creative Cloud.

Throughout I’ve had the pleasure of working with a really wonderful bunch of fellow students who’ve valiantly sacrificed sleep and portions of their own reading lists and problem sheets to ensure Cherwell trundles on – thank you, all of you. I am delighted to pass the baton to Bintia and Anuj, with whom the paper certainly has a bright future.

couple generations prior reading Maurice, or Brideshead, perhaps even Jude. Even though actual narratives are obviously fictional, the nuggets of real-life they bear are overwhelming. It is probably useful, nonetheless, to watch something that makes you realise just how ridiculous everything about this place is.

I’m not sure if Saltburn was a good film or not. I know I’m biased. It was worth the overpriced Curzon ticket though, if only for the self-scrutiny it inspired. I will probably come back to it again in years to come, just to make sure that I haven’t gone too far with the whole Oxford thing.

This knock off masala chai is not meant to be authentic. I’ve devised this recipe for the purpose of spicing up (ha ha) my regular tea routine at as low a cost (of effort and money) as possible. Before we get brewing, a bit of context: masala chai is a spiced tea that typically combines strong black tea with milk, water, lots of sugar, ginger and crushed cardamom pods. It’s ubiquitous in the Indian subcontinent, with chai wallas – street vendors of tea, being a fixture on bustling street corners across the nation. It is a relatively recent invention – an Indian response to the British colonial invention of black tea combined with milk and sugar, which is itself also a relatively recent invention in the grand history of tea. Though tea plants have been grown in the Assam region of modern-day India since antiquity, recreational consumption

of tea was relatively uncommon in the region. Instead, the plant was grown primarily to be used in ayurvedic drinks – herbal remedies to soothe a variety of ailments.

I actually didn’t grow up drinking chai. I am South Asian but not the chai-drinking kind of South Asian – our family is Tamil, and my parents grew up drinking locally grown Ceylon tea, milky with ‘heaps of sugar’ (my mum’s words), though having moved here they’ve grown to love an English breakfast routine. One chai-adjacent drink we do make in the summertime is a spiced iced coffee- rich, creamy, spiced with cardamom pods, vanilla and cloves, sweetened with condensed milk and served over crushed ice with a dash (or more) of brandy.

For me, this quick, cheap chai has little hints of these flavours from home as well as just being

delicious. I’m not sure how true to the chai tradition this hastily brewed concoction is but I like to think it does preserve some of the sustaining and healing powers of its originator. So, if you’ve got a few minutes to spare and are seeking solace from a cold, deadline-filled world, this chai-ish cardamom-ginger brew might just be the thing for you.

Lazy Method 1: first heat your milk of choice in a pan and then, to the pan add half a teaspoon of cardamom, slice of fresh ginger and a spoonful of sugar or condensed milk to taste and finally transfer to a mug or keep in pan if you so wish! Lazier Method 2: First to your mug of choice add a tea bag, cardamom, slice of ginger. Next add boiling water. Finally stir and add milk and sugar to taste or condensed milk, depending on your preference. And Enjoy!



Kobi Mohan
Deputy Editor-in-Chief



Where does war according to Russia's West leave its East?

Cherwell Features

reflects on the impact of the more widely known state of Russia's West on the treatment of Russia's East

“It's not for nothing that they call Pevek the city of romantics and daisies”, local resident Irina Shuvalova tells the camera. She is wearing both a puffer coat and hoodie in a living-room-cum-greenhouse in the Soviet-built former port town she describes, which is nestled cosily within the Arctic Circle on Russia's north-eastern coast. Panoramas of the city showcase characterless flat blocks, dilapidated industrial enterprises, and – to Irina's credit – patches of daisies battling against

the brutal winds from the East Siberian Sea.

The discovery of uranium and tin deposits in the 1940s made Pevek's position in the Chaunskaya Bay perfect for the delivery of equipment, but once the mines were closed and the gulag workers had left, industry in the town dried up. Optimism returned when Pevek became the home of Russia's first floating nuclear power plant in 2020. The New York Times said it could be the ‘power plant of the future’, claiming it would employ

300 people which – although figures are currently unclear – would constitute a significant proportion of Pevek's population.

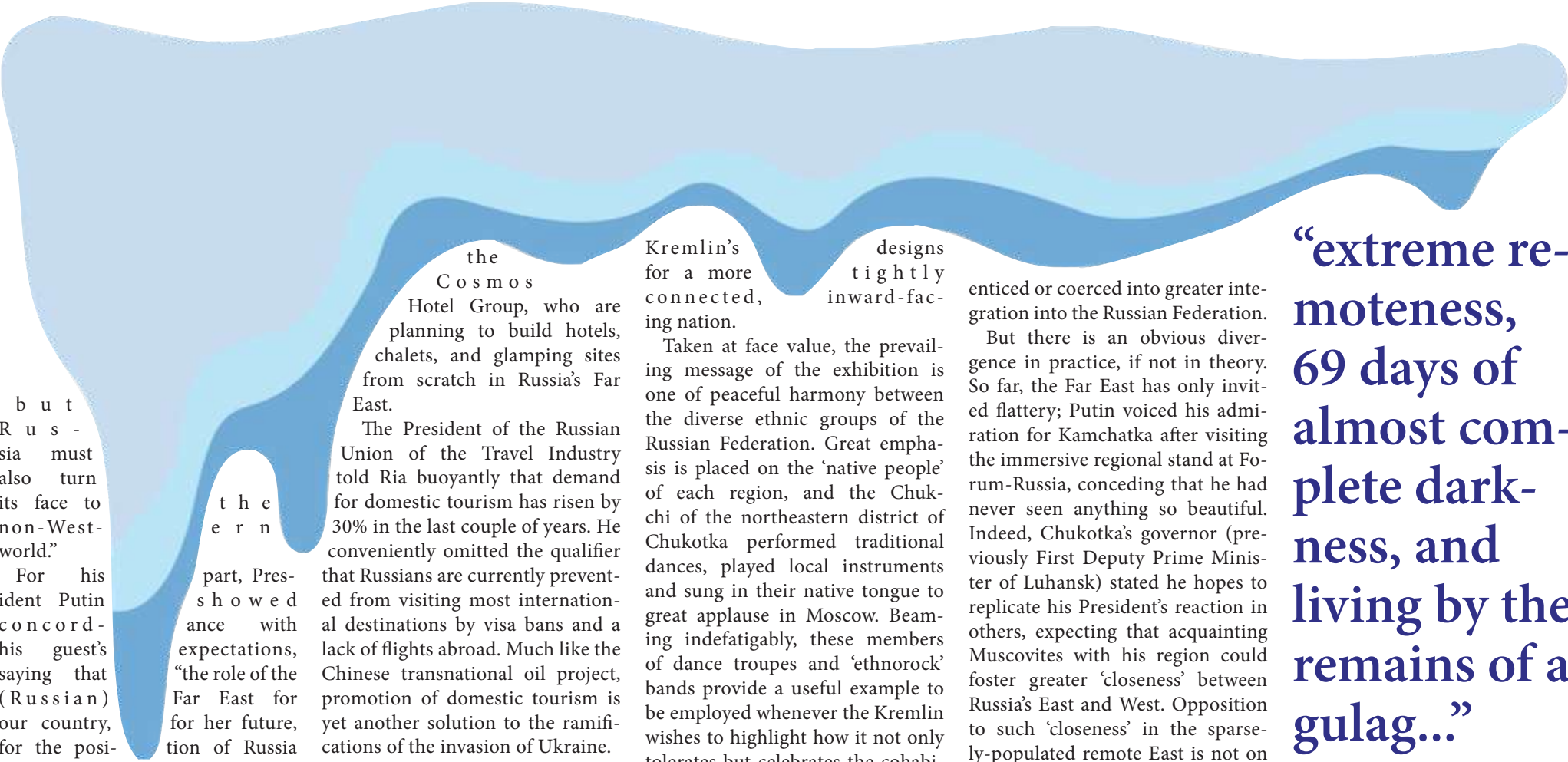
And though Pevek seems unremarkable, and the Akademik Lomonosov (as the barge is named) does not look particularly inspiring, this development is an unlikely symbol for the unnoticed regeneration of Russia's most remote districts.

At this year's Eastern Economic Forum, an international conference aimed at encouraging foreign in-

vestment in Russia's Far East, delegations from 63 countries including India and China discussed higher education, shipping, and Arctic development with their Russian counterparts. Almost 400 agreements were signed, with 41 involving foreign enterprises. The most notable was a joint deal between a Russian and a Chinese company who agreed to invest 5 billion yuan (£553 million) in the construction of an oil complex to straddle the border between the two countries, making exportation to China easier. Such a

project is not only a result of closer cooperation between China and Russia, but is a response to a very practical concern over a decline in European demands for Russian energy.

Russia's reorientation to the East was articulated more explicitly by the deacon of the Chongyang Institute of Financial Studies, a guest at the conference. Dr. Wang Wen said that Vladivostok could become the next Hong Kong, explaining that “the non-Western world welcomes Russia warmly, with both hands,



but Russia must also turn its face to non-West-world.”

For his part, President Putin showed concordance with his guest’s expectations, saying that “the role of the Far East for our country, for her future, for the position of Russia in a multipolar world, is exceptionally important”. This evocation of the ‘multipolar world’ goes beyond a ‘turn to the East’ in describing the Kremlin’s hopes to establish new, more numerous centres of power which will re-balance the world order, bringing about the end of Western hegemony. Whilst votes of abstention and support for Russia at the UN among the global south are perceived as the source of this apparently inevitable process, the Russian Far East offers an increasingly promising launchpad in Asia for collaboration with non-aligned and anti-Western states. In particular, the Far East’s role on the domestic stage is perhaps the more significant compact.

One piece from state news outlet Ria Novosti describes ‘heliskiing’ as “snowboarding down untouched snowy slopes with a helicopter ride up to the beginning of the descent”. This is just one of the many activities you can participate in on a VIP tour of the ‘remote regions’ run by

“The war and civilian life in the East become ever more subtly intertwined.”

the Cosmos Hotel Group, who are planning to build hotels, chalets, and glamping sites from scratch in Russia’s Far East.

The President of the Russian Union of the Travel Industry told Ria buoyantly that demand for domestic tourism has risen by 30% in the last couple of years. He conveniently omitted the qualifier that Russians are currently prevented from visiting most international destinations by visa bans and a lack of flights abroad. Much like the Chinese transnational oil project, promotion of domestic tourism is yet another solution to the ramifications of the invasion of Ukraine.

Branding the Far East as a thrilling wilderness is a consistent effort that goes beyond state-sanctioned tour group adverts. It has been given a prominent stage at the dazzling Forum-Russia exhibition in Moscow, which is currently showcasing Russia’s regional cultures and landscapes to the capital’s population. One particular event was dedicated to recognising the winners of the ‘Far East – Land of Adventures’ travel competition, where the Grand Prize was awarded to a local who completed a 500-kilometre solo-kayak trip around the bay of Vladivostok. Winners in the ‘Winter Travel’ category, all of whom were from the Far East, respectively completed a seven-day bicycle hike, a dog sled race, and a horse trek along the Kolyma highway (the latter notable for sharing its name with the Stalinist gulag).

Promoting residents of the Far East themselves as courageous and determined is perfectly synchronised to enormous billboards showing Russian soldiers with the defiant text “We will succeed in everything!”. The war and civilian life in the East become ever more subtly intertwined.

But the more immediate practical function of the competition was articulated by the convenor (a deputy Prime Minister) who praised the winners for the videos which they had to submit as part of their entries, which would encourage others to go “in the right direction, to the Far East”. The promotion of internal travel on multiple fronts seeks not only to provide the remote regions of Russia with economic inspiration, but contributes to the

Kremlin’s for a more connected, designs tightly inward-fac-ing nation.

Taken at face value, the prevailing message of the exhibition is one of peaceful harmony between the diverse ethnic groups of the Russian Federation. Great emphasis is placed on the ‘native people’ of each region, and the Chukchi of the northeastern district of Chukotka performed traditional dances, played local instruments and sung in their native tongue to great applause in Moscow. Beaming indefatigably, these members of dance troupes and ‘ethnorock’ bands provide a useful example to be employed whenever the Kremlin wishes to highlight how it not only tolerates but celebrates the cohabitation of different groups within its borders.

Such a narrative is even more chilling when you consider that the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples’ Re-

“Russians are currently prevented from visiting most international destinations by visa bans and a lack of flights

publics, as well as the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts have also got stalls at the exhibition, also supposedly demonstrating the Russian value of peaceful coexistence.

Does this suggest a consistency in policy for Russia’s West and East? The misleading ‘We don’t abandon our own’ doctrine, initially used in connection with the campaign in Kherson, arguably extends all the way to the North Pacific, as the Kremlin decides who constitutes ‘our own’ and how they might be

enticed or coerced into greater integration into the Russian Federation.

But there is an obvious divergence in practice, if not in theory. So far, the Far East has only invited flattery; Putin voiced his admiration for Kamchatka after visiting the immersive regional stand at Forum-Russia, conceding that he had never seen anything so beautiful. Indeed, Chukotka’s governor (previously First Deputy Prime Minister of Luhansk) stated he hopes to replicate his President’s reaction in others, expecting that acquainting Muscovites with his region could foster greater ‘closeness’ between Russia’s East and West. Opposition to such ‘closeness’ in the sparsely-populated remote East is not on the cards, but the comprehensive vision of the Kremlin’s policies - aiming at greater integration and centralisation with Russia - is certainly worth noting.

For the inhabitants of the Far East themselves, the material benefits arriving in the region will have far more of an impact than the state’s verbal admiration; the governor of Chukotka recently announced plans to open the local ports to cruise liners, a new regional centre for instruction in the mining industry is being set up in Kamchatka, and state media reported just this month that the cheapest mortgages in Russia are to be found in its distant North East.

Whilst extreme remoteness, 69 days of almost complete darkness, and living by the ruins of a gulag may not sound immediately inviting, Pevek and the settlements of the Far East are being positively redeveloped and growing in attraction. Irina Shuvalova contrasts the deprivation of the 90s, when her daughter would peer into an almost-empty fridge and ask for bread and butter, with the vitality currently being channelled into her town. She celebrates the resumption of shipping activities, accompanied by the appearance of brightly-coloured painted murals on the flat blocks which have given Pevek a veritable facelift.

Last month Pevek even made it to the national news, as discussions over the construction of a second floating nuclear power plant have apparently begun. The memorandum quoted in the article was sent by the government to Rosatom (responsible for the initial barge), and

“extreme remoteness, 69 days of almost complete darkness, and living by the remains of a gulag...”

lays out the importance of “ensuring the socio-economic development of the region” with a project which could both help in the extraction mineral resources, and provide energy to inhabitants of Chukotka.

Plans for a second floating nuclear power plant in the North Pacific Ocean are not necessarily the key for a dramatic uncovering of Putin’s plans for Russia’s direction of travel, and I do not predict mass exodus from Moscow, nor Vladivostok becoming the eventual state capital. Nonetheless, the efforts going into the regeneration and promotion of Russia’s remote districts are remarkable, and have clearly acquired a new significance since February 2022.

Historically, there has been no strong tendency to report on Russia’s Far East in the media, so the fact that these developments have gone under the radar is, in itself, not a surprise. But the difference between now and the decades that preceded the invasion is that our attention is being actively diverted towards Russia’s western border, away from the vast lands east of Moscow. This is a serious mistake, since it prevents us in the West from grasping just how far-reaching the impacts of the war are on the Russian population, and moreover how the Kremlin is seeking to mitigate them.

Paradoxically, by having our eyes so trained on events to Russia’s West, we risk ignoring what true relevance they have on the entire country, especially in the Far East.

Image credits: Boris Solovyev / via Wikimedia Commons

Are We Running Out Of Heroes?

James Forsdyke

muses on the highs and lows of superheroes in flight wondering why the filmic genre is plummeting

It's hard to know exactly when the concept of the action-come-superhero movie started spinning out of control. I'm not sure if I'd place it in 2015 with the release of *Ant-Man*, or perhaps the release of *Ant-Man and the Wasp* in 2018, but it certainly seems to have happened before the premiere of *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania* in 2023. I'd say it was probably sometime between the release of the first and the eleventh of the Fast and Furious films, but definitely not recently enough to warrant consideration of the hair-brained *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem*.

Maybe it's a me-problem. Maybe I just don't care for big-budget action films, about things that don't exist and powers which defy the laws of physics. I realise that for many, growing up watching Disney films (other franchises are available) was a right of passage, but for me, it was primarily *Top Gear* (the May-Clarkson-Hammond era, obviously) and secondly, like most PPE students, *The Thick of It*. I always enjoy a sense of realism. There's something wondrous about seeing three relatively normal blokes - anti-heroes

having learned nothing.

It could be cynicism, but it feels like a running trend. How do you churn out so many films based around the same premises? It's easy to understand why. If it makes a net profit then it's a win. Perhaps the first one was popular, and the time has come to ride that wave of success into a sequel, and then a prequel, all the way into *Fishman 14: Playing Cod - A Battering from Trout Space*.

Why can't people come up with an idea, see it through, and then know when to stop? The ending of the original *Italian Job* in 1969 was so brilliant, a classic, to a large extent because: that was it! No more. Finished. Done. (Spoiler alert:) The literal cliffhanger invites viewers to speculate, to ask to n o

ing the question: 'Why?'. If it was never part of the plan to make one, and it wasn't necessary for any reason to do with the value of the work, then it begins to look like the purpose is solely to generate revenue, and the knowledge of this surely has to count against the creative value of the project. When people other than those who originally generated the idea add to a work, I regard the project as fan fiction. There is something valuable about the intentions of the original creator even if they don't absolutely and solely define the work.

In 1926, Buster Keaton's *The General* was released. He later said of it in 1963: "I was more proud of that picture than any I ever made." He believed that he'd put s o

widely regarded as a classic, and it's still famous for containing the most expensive single scene in silent film history: a train wreck over a wooden bridge above the Row River, Cottage Grove which, at the time, set the production back \$42,000, or today around \$600,000. In a way, this demonstrates two points. Firstly, money won't necessarily bring immediate success with it, but more importantly, when risks are taken, looking back in the long run we might eventually find ourselves appreciating them all the more. In this case, the risk was to a large extent financial, but it doesn't have to be, it could rather be woven into the narrative.

History, I think, rewards those who choose to throw everything at their creative endeavours, to do it their way rather than to replicate what is popular from a sort of metaphorical 'formula-book'. It fascinates me when people create, not for the acclaim or the gain now, but to know that what has been achieved is exactly what it was intended to be, regardless of whether it becomes popular or not.

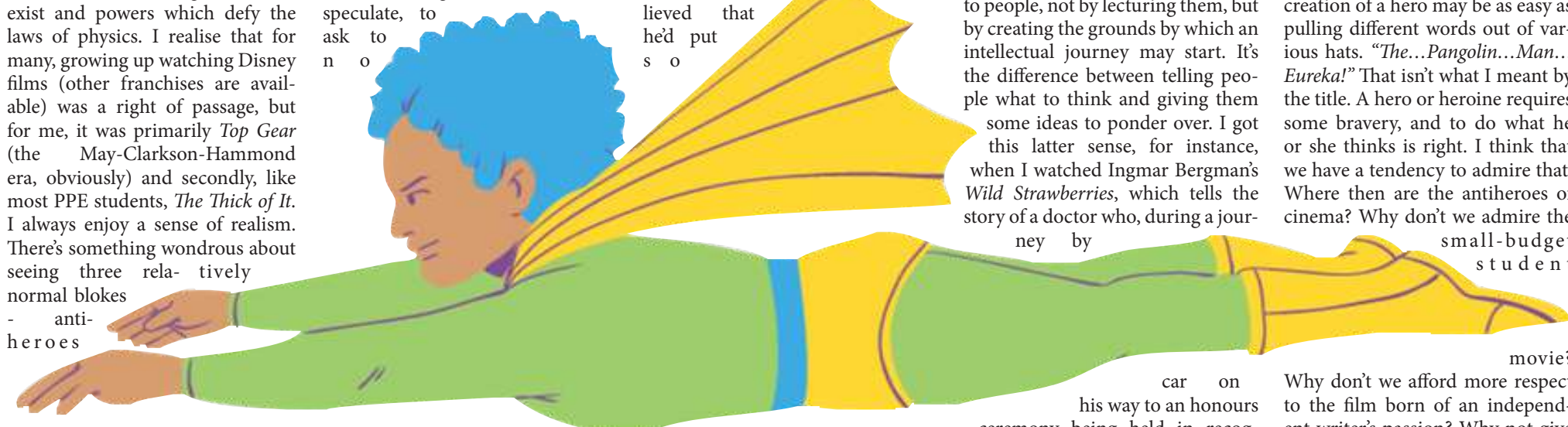
So why aren't there more people who are willing to create something that they genuinely care about for the sake of their enjoyment? I suspect it's a combination of factors. Money, for one. Why take risks when you can copy something else, but make it slightly different, such that it draws a crowd and gives people what they appear to want? Secondly, a lot of people already invested in the industry depend on it for their livelihoods, so it's perhaps understandable that those involved would want to follow a risk-averse strategy. But finally, and here's the big one, I blame the cult of celebrity.

There are two obvious ways to send a message via the medium of film, subtly and overtly. We're forgetting the benefits of bringing ideas to people, not by lecturing them, but by creating the grounds by which an intellectual journey may start. It's the difference between telling people what to think and giving them some ideas to ponder over. I got this latter sense, for instance, when I watched Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, which tells the story of a doctor who, during a journey by

anything positive, in fact, negative stories seem to arise all of the time precisely because they grab public attention. So getting good coverage doesn't necessarily mean that you're doing anything right, it just means you're pulling the ropes to redirect the spotlight onto your own career. As long as celebrities fit a certain sort of expectation, as long as they say the right things and pay the right lip service to the press, they can often afford to cultivate a certain sort of narcissism which makes them liable to believe that they can transcend, in some cases, even the law.

While big names proclaim that the public must educate themselves about their privileges, while sitting back on white velvet sofas sipping red wine and furiously flicking through social media, they're also the same people with a huge amount of influence when it comes to television, culture and entertainment. It's no wonder then that modern film and media seem to perpetuate the same sorts of messages, in similar sorts of ways. It usually requires a massive budget to make a film, and that seriously serves to limit a diverse array of people from entering the market and having an influence on our culture, not to mention that sometimes prevailing narratives can engender a conservatism which might serve to limit diversity of thought and a more truly inclusive forum, an inward looking habit perhaps occasionally punctuated by events such as the speech Ricky Gervais gave at the Golden Globes in 2020 which subsequently went viral.

So I'll return to where I began, to think about what a proper hero might look like. Readers might have noticed that I listed a variety of different superheroes at the start, so how can we be running out of heroes? Indeed it seems like the creation of a hero may be as easy as pulling different words out of various hats. "*The...Pangolin...Man...Eureka!*" That isn't what I meant by the title. A hero or heroine requires some bravery, and to do what he or she thinks is right. I think that we have a tendency to admire that. Where then are the antiheroes of cinema? Why don't we admire the small-budget student



perhaps - messing about and achieving amazing goals, seeing some incredible places along the way. But often, that sense of realism leads one to ask the inevitable question: 'I can imagine there's some truth to this, I wonder how much?' I suppose that many great ideas have escapist elements to them. But some seem too over-the-top, unrealistic and formulaic to the point where we come to the end

avail 'But what happened next?!'. Making a follow-up to that, a true follow-on sequel would have fundamentally changed it. To know exactly when to stop and to leave the story as it is - I think that's part of what makes a great work.

Often sequels, particularly those which are made to fit post-production of the first or 'added on' to the existing work, can leave people ask-

much effort into it, taking pride in telling the story in detail with a rich historical understanding that brought it into, perhaps, the same domain of realism I spoke of earlier. The protagonist is certainly another unconventional, imperfect hero. The story wasn't so simple or straightforward. The film wasn't successful, either monetarily or in terms of its acclaim, but is now

car on his way to an honours ceremony being held in recognition of his services to medicine, finds himself having immersive dreams about his past.

There's nothing subtle about 'celebrity'. From court cases devouring public attention through the medium of newspapers and clickbait, to insider interviews and gossip about A-listers, celebrity pays, big time, and because of that, the media coverage doesn't have to be about

Why don't we afford more respect to the film born of an independent writer's passion? Why not give some time to those who create something original or at least to those who know when the time has come to move on, to do something new? I think we can learn from one another through the medium of film, and it's definitely a concern that at the moment it seems, we're only learning about a limited part of a collective story. Our heroes aren't always wearing a cape.

How to judge a book by its cover

BOOKS

Ananya Parakh

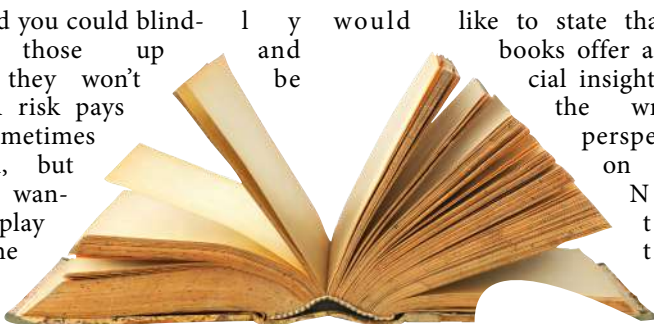
Let's be real. You're in Blackwells looking for a book to read if you're cool, and buying a mug with a world map on it if you're not. You wouldn't sit there and flip through the pages absorbing the information in the book to then decide whether or not you should spend 8 pounds on it after you have practically fully read it. If you do

that, you're a sociopath. Therefore, judging a book by its cover is a skill that is essential for any reader's repertoire. The first thing that would catch any normally functioning human's eye would be colour. Yeah, pretty books make for great coffee table decorations, but no, you must not be lured by that. Resist the temptation. What you are allowed to

judge a book by, though, is the name. Usually. Well written books tend to have interesting names. Maybe some alliteration thrown in there, some banter with words, something not cheesy please, or just something classic or comforting or beautiful. A few examples of the following are, *The Elements of Eloquence* (great relevance for the book's content too), *The Enchanted April* (doesn't that just sound like a beautiful read?!) or *Where the Crawdads sing* (What are crawdads? And why do I care about where they sing?). But this doesn't always work. For example, 'Pineapple street'. I thought it was a cute name, but it's a shit book. I guess I was at fault because the cover was orange, my bad. The next thing I'd consider would be the author. Have I heard their name before and in what context? Did someone cringe at their name or was there reverence and brimming excitement. Was it booktok or a Guardian recommendation? I mean you do you, but I'd totally judge. Some classics like Agatha Christie, Virginia Woolf and George Orwell are just time-

less and you could blind-pick those up and know they won't be bad. A risk pays off sometimes though, but if you wanna play safe, the older ones that are still sticking around bookstores are usually pretty good. Lastly, the *vibes*. Did you see it in a section that is surrounded by similarly good books? Is it close to other books that you have read and liked in the past? Does the blurb sound unique and make you feel something? Does it make you wish that there was more? If the synopsis feels too long you're not getting through 5 pages of that book. Skim through the first page of the author's introduction if they have one (trust me). Is that engaging? If yes, that book will change your life. Out of a compulsion to not discriminate against any books, I

would like to state that all books offer a special insight into the writer's perspective on life. Now that's out of the way, here's a couple of basic rules: if the book has been adapted into a young adult movie, it goes down by 5 points. If it has pictures of real people instead of graphics, minus 3. If the reviews on the book say 'deliciously fun', 'poignant' or any stupid word you could use to describe your chicken, minus 10. If it talks about taking you on a journey, run the other way. Now that you're fully equipped with the skills of judging a book by its cover, I wish you all the best with wise spending and enjoyable experiences for the rest of your life's journey. Image Credits: CC 2.0 BY, Wikimedia Commons



Review: *Parables, Fables, Nightmares* by Malachi McIntosh

Rufus Jones

This book is the first short story collection published by Malachi McIntosh. A short traditional story collection can be likened to a gallery of sameness - great pictures with few stylistic differences - essentially stories varying only in content rather than in style. The uniformity often found in

page piece, one is without a title. McIntosh uses the tried-and-tested short story format as a starting point and goes from there. This experimentation is not done purely for novelty's sake, however. If a story's format is unique, it serves a clear purpose: to enhance the reading experience in a way a conventional structure cannot; whether to make a joke funnier or a sad moment sadder

of each of his stories which vary wildly in voice and circumstances; he has a way with each of these that makes them a delight to read for entirely unique reasons. The voices of his characters, whether a dedicated but neurotic mother trying to prove the world's opinion of her child wrong (*Examination*) or a well-meaning but crabby father who discovers his adult son no longer resembles the child he

from masturbation for a month, purportedly to make his honeymoon more passionate. Consequently, his penis becomes 'some wild Grecian deity in his jeans, storming at every mild provocation and threatening to enter the world of men and set things right'. After caving and spending hours shamefully but intensely masturbating, his erection does not subside. His unabating member looks

are such exquisite stories that his others in any collection don't look as good nor deliver the same oomph. I was not unimpressed with the vast majority in this collection; it is just that the exceptional ones made me hungry for what I found in them and when the other stories did not deliver as much, I was disappointed. As a reader, instead of trying to fit a conventional story-shaped



such collections can put people off, since they appear less exciting. But insipid sameness is nowhere to be found in McIntosh's work. The collection is a unique one compared to others I've read recently - like Raymond Carver or Ernest Hemingway say - as it is not exclusively made up of pieces structured as typical short stories. For instance, one is a list (*White Wedding*), one is a two-

or heart-warming moment more uplifting. Even if the diverse range of formats all land, as they do here, they are wasted if the writing itself is bad. There is no need for such concern here. McIntosh's prose more than carries its weight: outlandish, funny, moving and ingeniously fresh. The phrase 'a way with words', though trite, is an apt description of McIntosh's style. His prose fits perfectly into the mould

knew (*Mirrors*), sound idiosyncratic and genuine. To write in a number of distinct voices with confidence and ease is no easy thing. McIntosh's uncanny and inexhaustible ability to write astonishingly rich and original descriptions is clear throughout. Two of my favourites are from the story *White Wedding*: the first is the description of a sexually-frustrated fiancé who resolutely abstains

like a 'hitchhiker's thumb forever thrusting out below his waistband'. My prim readers should note they are not all as ribald as this. They are equally as humorous, though. As with every short story collection, the great ones cast a long and uncompromising shadow which make the more flawed stories stand out. Hemingway is one example; *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *Big Two-Hearted River*

hole into the lock of each piece, it is tempting to use the mediums listed in the title instead. To discount them would be a mistake but to rigidly sort each story into either a parable, fable or nightmare misses the point. McIntosh's clear vision of the short story's capabilities and his skilful manipulation of them ultimately makes the vivid and multivarious ways a short story can turn out appear obvious.

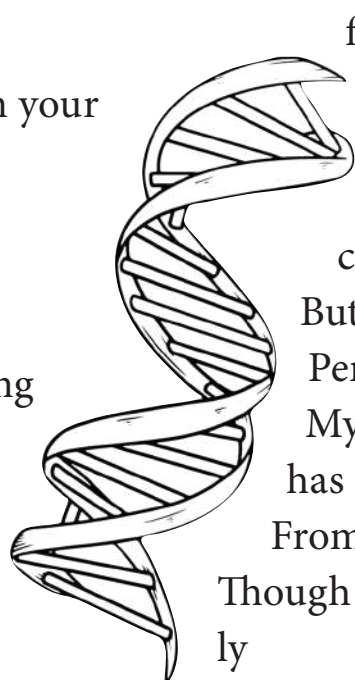


Genetics

SOURCE

by Kiaya Phillips

What beauty is there
In the anger that spills from your
lips?
After every kiss
A fight
Uneven ground
I've become so good at telling
lies
The droplets fall; I wipe
them
Away
Without a thought
You used to brush them from my
cheeks
With tentative hands and shaking



fingers
Now I turn away,
I really am my mother's
child
But I have my father's rage
Pent up inside
My brother just
has his eyes
From which, I turn away
Though I love my brother dear-
ly
All the pain
And the exercises
And yet he grabs my hand, still

Pleads with those eyes
That belong to a different face
One much less kind.
I could run
But my fate would find me
As it travels through my veins
Filing through my DNA
I was born to wear this broken
crown
Genetically pro-
grammed
This damaged
commodity.

MUSIC Why don't we have any 'mega-popstars' anymore?

Zahra Ahmad

This August, *Billboard* released an article asking the question: where have all our popstars from the 2000s and early 2010s gone? It was met by widespread online conversations, reflecting the deep-rooted concern within the music industry that the number of recognisable faces in pop music have declined in recent years. Labels are no longer relying on these 'mega stars' as the foundation for their incoming profit because pop stars are no longer breaking into mainstream media in the same way they had in the decades prior. Steve Cooper, the former CEO of Warner Music Group, stated at the Goldman Sachs Communacopia and Technology Conference: "what we've done over the last number of years is reduce our [financial] dependency on superstars." Even the record labels have been forced to change their tactics to keep up with the developing industry. Now, record labels financially depend on a larger number of smaller artists, helping them to create dedicated, but more intimate, fan bases who will buy tickets and merchandise. This is a step away from record labels funneling their money into a small number of 'mega pop stars' and relying on them and their star power to make up the majority of their profit.

So what does it mean to be a pop star in today's day and age? In the early 2000s, 'making it' as a pop star meant being on the front cover of magazines, hounded by paparazzi, winning Grammys, and selling out arenas. But now, an artist's success is measured completely differently. Having a couple hundred thousand streams on Spotify or blowing up on

TikTok are celebrated as huge accomplishments. What defines someone as a successful pop artist has narrowed - international and mainstream fame is no longer the aim. But why and how has this happened?

In the age of social media and ultra-personalised online algorithms, individuals are increasingly being shown content which is tailored to their interests. Gone are the days when we would collectively read the same news from the same tabloids from the same sources. With algorithms as sophisticated as TikTok's, we see the creation of pop stars or new emerging musical talent, but only to a select audience. Musical-theatre-star-turned-pop-musician Renee Rapp debuted her first album this August. Her first American and European tour saw her sell out venues with capacities of around 5,000 seats. A decade ago, this may have led some to say that she was on the cusp of becoming a major pop star. But now, her tour videos and album press are only being presented to those who want to see it. She is popular among her loyal fanbase, but the previous wide reach that pop stars were able to turn into international fame is not available. Instead, musicians aim to form smaller, but more loyal, fanbases.

TikTok has also changed who record labels sign, and in what way they do it. Record labels have grown to place a huge emphasis on artists having a notable social media following before they can even be considered for contract. Gone are the days of years of artist development where record labels help to discover and support underground artists. This contributes to the lack of 'once in a generation' pop talent. Beyonce

had her time in Destiny's Child, her former girl group, before taking the world by storm as a solo act. Taylor Swift was able to release her debut album before international hits 'Love Story' and 'You Belong With Me' featured on her second album. Without record labels backing artists who might not find instant success, they leave thousands of artists undiscovered.

Instead, record labels are signing the artists with the most followers and engagement, not necessarily the ones with the most artistic promise. What makes this worse is this tactic clearly is not working. One A&R executive stated that "labels signed more and signed worse than ever before in the decade-plus I've been at a major". The problem is that TikTok is not designed to promote and sustain an artist's career, but rather individual songs. In the 2000s, when streaming was not as widely used as it is today, labels had significant control over what songs were put on the radio. Record labels could control what we listened to and ensure that certain artists had radio play. Now, however, streaming and TikTok hold much more importance within the industry. Even if an artist has a hit TikTok song, the wider online audience is unlikely to hear the artist's later singles. The small success which pop artists can grasp onto is hard to transform into a long-lasting career within pop music. For example, Katie Gregson-MacLeod came to TikTok fame when a video of her singing her song 'Complex' garnered 9 million views. It became widely shared and talked about on TikTok and led to her being signed with Columbia Record. Despite her strong artistry and compelling lyrics,

the majority of her videos now have under twelve thousand views. This is out of MacLeod's and her Columbia Record's hands - it is simply the nature of TikTok, proving how risky it is to rely on it.

As an aspiring pop artist myself I can attest to the industry's growing frustration, especially among independent artists, at how TikTok has grown to play such a seismic role in music today. If you want to be discovered and signed and funded by a label you have to start playing the game, which is no longer about artistry but online numbers. Of course, you cannot ignore the huge opportunity that TikTok and other social media platforms offer to artists, allowing them to promote their music to millions of people for free and fairly easily. However the reliance that the industry now has on TikTok is, I believe, a failure on the part of record labels. This approach to discovering and signing artists is not sustainable, and I'm sure

in the next few decades when the influence of TikTok slowly decreases record labels will have to rethink their current strategy.

This is not to say that we will never have a mega popstar again. Olivia Rodrigo released her sophomore album 'Guts' this September which topped the album charts in 14 countries and gained her 6 Grammy nominations, including Album of the Year. Dua Lipa has just released her first single titled 'Houdini' since her second album 'Future Nostalgia' which received over 6 million unfiltered streams on Spotify on its first day, her biggest debut yet. We still see pop stars stake their claim in the music industry, all hope is not lost, but the age of a music industry which runs off the monetary power of dozens of rising and established pop stars are over.

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The slow death of ASOS: a retail giant in decline

Eden Kilgour

In the ever-evolving digital realm of fashion retail, ASOS once stood as a shining star - a household name which soared to success over the pandemic. However, ASOS' domination of this industry has taken an unexpected turn, finds itself in a potentially irreparable financial situation as the company's profits plummet. The future of this retailer is in jeopardy, begging the question: how has ASOS found themselves in this position, and can they can carve themselves a road to recovery?

Upon the onset of lockdown and the consequential closing of most high street stores, many turned to online retailers for their retail therapy fix. This marked a pivotal moment for ASOS, who experienced a staggering 329% surge in annual profits in October 2020. Yet today, their financial predicament seems drastically different. Recent reports indicate a concerning drop in UK sales by 13%, coupled with a forecast predicting a decline between 5% and 15% in the year leading up to September 2024. So how has ASOS faced such a fall from grace? ASOS may blame the drop on the soggy July weather, but it is arguably their inability to adapt beyond their lockdown stratagems that caused this sharp decline. Of course, the closing of high street stores was

eventually followed by their reopening, many of which returned with a vengeance boosted by revenge spending. Following this, many shoppers shifted away from online buying, and towards physical stores once more, on account of a renewed desire and appreciation for the in-person experience, leaving ASOS in the dust.

Delving deeper into the intricacies ASOS itself, the fundamental question arises: What sets this retailer apart? ASOS boasts high-quality, trendy and affordable products across an extensive range, characterised by both own-label and third-party brands targeted directly towards the demographic of 20-somethings. It appears however, that this plethora of products perhaps does more harm than good, since potential gems become lost in a sea of over-saturation. ASOS have been recently attempting to bolster its reputation with '20-somethings' for being 'trendy' via

its social media campaigns that you may have seen on Tiktok or Instagram in collaboration with various 'influencers'. Despite these efforts, there is a discernible argument that evolving consumer behaviour is outpacing ASOS' ability to adapt, and the products

Arguably the most detrimental challenge to ASOS' business, however, lies in its intensifying competition. With the simultaneous lockdown ascent of brands such as Shein and, more recently, Temu, ASOS simply cannot compete price-wise due to the ultra-fast-fashion nature of these companies. Otherwise, concerning customer experience, it is becoming increasingly clear that consumers are favouring hybrid companies such as H&M and Zara over solely online retailers such as ASOS. Intriguingly, changes in consumer values are affecting ASOS, in the sense that the rise of second-hand companies such as Vinted is gaining momentum and posing an additional challenge in this evolving market.

And of course,

we cannot ignore the elephant in the room - the rising cost of living. For young people, and particularly the targeted '20-somethings' demographic of ASOS, funds are dwindling. Financial strain means it is increasingly difficult to splash the cash on new casual wear whilst struggling to afford the basics of food and energy.

Ultimately, the survival of ASOS hangs in the balance. Despite the optimistic outlook of Chief Executive José Ramon Calamonte, who anticipates a resurgence in 2025 post-decline, there are multiple hurdles that ASOS must first conquer. ASOS has acknowledged the need for strategic changes to overcome their current financial challenges and return to its former position. The core of this plan centres around cost-cutting, evidenced by a 30% reduction in stock, the elimination of 100 jobs, and the removal of 35 unprofitable brands, alongside operational cost cuts. Yet, ASOS faces deeper problems than excessive expenditure, leaving the critical question: Is cost-cutting enough to navigate the company back to prosperity? The answer to this remains lingering and unanswered, and lies at the root of ASOS' journey towards financial recovery.

Image Credits: CC 1.0 via. Pexels



that ASOS offer are simply facing diminished demand compared to their previous popularity.

FILM

Unveiling the Suburban Secrets of *Desperate Housewives*

Nina Naidu

If I were to select only one show on repeat for the rest of my life, there's no doubt it would be *Desperate Housewives*. Those who know me understand my absolute obsession with this series. This choice isn't merely hypothetical; my reality is shaped by a perpetual rewatch of its eight seasons. However, when I express my fervour for the show to others, confusion often ensues. "But isn't that a reality show?" They ask with raised eyebrows. People frequently mistake *Desperate Housewives* for the *Real Housewives* reality TV shows. While the confusion is somewhat understandable, given that the *Real Housewives* franchise drew inspiration from the former's success, it's a complete misrepresentation of the captivating drama that unfolds in the hit early 2000's mystery show, a series I'll continue to rave about indefinitely.

Created by Marc Cherry in 2004 and spanning eight seasons until 2012, *Desperate Housewives* is a comedy-drama that delves into the lives of four suburban housewives residing on the fictional Wisteria Lane after the suicide of Mary-Alice Young. Each harbouring their own secrets, the housewives dis-

cover the myriad of deceptive secrets that Mary-Alice left leading up to her death. Every season introduces a new family to the lane, bringing with them a mysterious secret that slowly unravels, ensuring a continuous supply of drama with an expansive cast. No one on Wisteria Lane is immune to the harsh realities that shatter the illusion of the perfect suburban family.

The ensemble includes the "perfect" domestic housewife Bree Van De Kamp (Marcia Cross), desperate to salvage her marriage with a cheating husband; the ambitious businesswoman Lynette Scavo (Felicity Huffman), eager to re-enter

the workforce after years as a stay-at-home mum of four; the former supermodel Gabrielle Solis (Eva Longoria), struggling to adapt to a quiet suburban life; and single, klutzy Susan Mayer (Teri Hatcher), yearning for love. "Desperate" perfectly describes these women, who employ any means necessary to achieve their desires, often leading to conflicts, deception, and fractured relationships (although the show definitely puts every character through the wringer at some point). Packed with scandals, murder, and sex, each epi-

sode offers a binge-worthy experience.

Beyond its surface entertainment, *Desperate Housewives* courageously tackles weighty topics, including alcoholism, suicide, and cancer, approaching them with a maturity that fosters honest conversations about the challenges women face. The show, with its predominantly female cast, places the voices of wives and mothers at the forefront, making it a pivotal force in representing this demographic. Noteworthy performances by Felicity Huffman and Marcia Cross have earned accolades, including nominations and wins at the SAG-Awards and the Golden Globes. The show is also progressive regarding gay relationships, as Marc Cherry cites his own family as inspiration for the Van De Kamps, who eventually come to terms with their son's sexuality.

Despite its juicy drama and heart-wrenching moments, *Desperate Housewives* is undeniably a product of its time, with positive and negative aspects. The show, a reflection of the early 2000's, insensitively engages in harmful societal issues such as pervasive fat-shaming, problematic storylines involving human trafficking, police brutality, and a demonising stance on

abortion (allegedly due to restrictions enforced by the ABC channel). On the (somewhat) bright side, though, Felicity Huffman's infamous 2019 college admissions scandal certainly would have fit within the world of *Desperate Housewives*.

While some storylines haven't aged well, the series continues to captivate audiences, boasting a dedicated fanbase that remains active on platforms like Reddit, where controversies are often debated. Streaming services such as Disney+ have also introduced new audiences to the shocking mysteries of Wisteria Lane.

Although the show has its share of bizarre and poorly aged moments, *Desperate Housewives* has left an indelible mark on many hearts, both during its original run and now, in the era of streaming. The series' enduring popularity is evident in the number of fans who still share their favourite moments and characters. If you're in search of scandalous yet light-hearted comedy interwoven with frantic melodrama, akin to shows like *Pretty Little Liars* or *Grey's Anatomy*, then *Desperate Housewives* is the perfect choice for you.

Image Credits: CC BY 2.0, William



Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me!

ART

Kelsey Moriarty

I think I have always wondered how the first kiss came about. A quick Google search produces a very provisional 2500BC as an answer but there's something terribly factual and unsatisfying about that – I want to understand what happened just moments before. The first kiss must've been so confusing and exciting. It's no wonder the action has been repeated billions of times since, in moments of tenderness, passion, anger, and frenzy. Kisses convey emotion and attachment in a way that transcends the spoken language, and appeals rather to an innate human understanding of love and relationships.

Art has met this in many ways. Marina Abramović and Ulay's 1977 performance piece *Breathing In / Breathing Out* involved the two artists blocking their noises with cigarette filters and pressing their mouths together until they both passed out nineteen minutes later. Neither could inhale anything but what the other had already exhaled. Abramović's performance art is known for testing the limits of the human body, but this work with Ulay particularly highlights the convergence of bodies – the co-ordination of positioning, movement, and something so

singular and ritual as breathing. During the performance there were microphones taped to their bodies, and the unified frenzied fight for breath shows the merging of physical function and identity that takes place during a kiss. It is a moment in which individuals are quite literally inseparable – their desires, vulnerabilities, and affections

ble – their desires, vulnerabilities, and affections

tions briefly intersect and become one. It leaves one wondering what sort of passion and blind confusion could lead to such an irrational action.

Sculpture captures this in a most interesting way. Most evident is Rodin's *The Kiss / Le*

Basier. Sculpture at its best possesses an innate ability to capture physical situations like theatre. The Kiss feels so universal in its scope – bodies contorted in want litter our past and Rodin's work embodies all of this. The couple depicted are Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, who are featured in Dante's *Inferno*. Their kiss is the product of their passion when reading the story of

Their kiss is the product of their passion when reading the story of

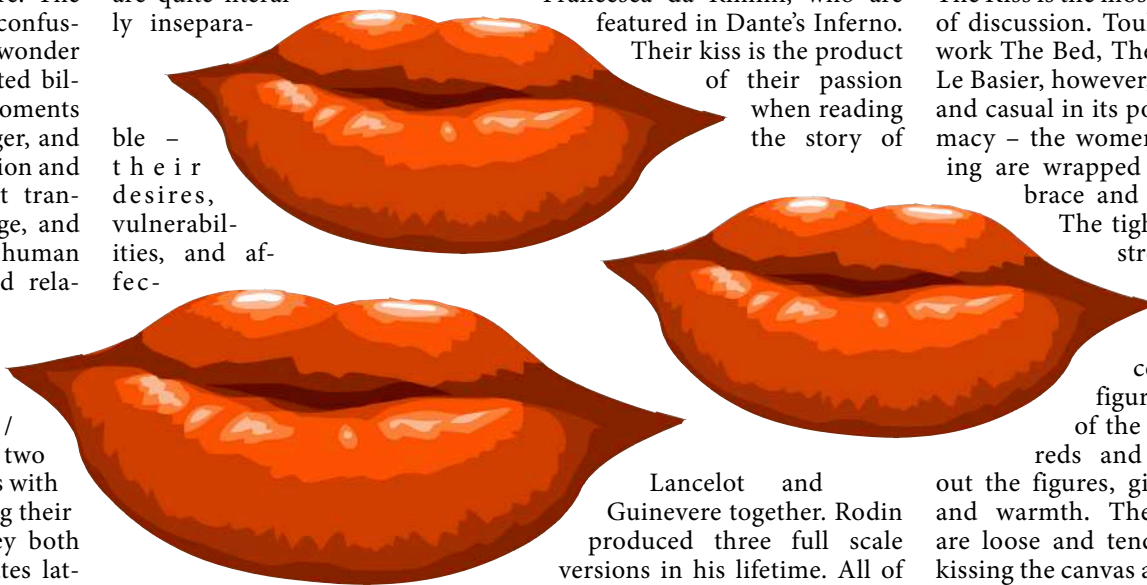
Lancelot and Guinevere together. Rodin produced three full scale versions in his lifetime. All of this creates an idea that the marble Kiss feels almost as if it exists out of time and space. It feels as if it could exist anywhere – the marble is Grecian in character, the pose. The pose is reminiscent of *Breathing In / Breathing Out*, but the fusion of the marble mouths gives the piece a static quality,

and a sort of poetic permanence. Also notable is Rodin's approach to sculpting women – rather than portraying them as passive recipients of passion, he depicts them as active participants, 'full partners in ardour'.

In the realm of painting, Klimt's *The Kiss* is the most obvious point of discussion. Toulouse-Lautrec's work *The Bed, The Kiss / Au Lit, Le Basier*, however, is more subtle and casual in its portrayal of intimacy – the women in the painting are wrapped in a soft embrace and kissing gently.

The tight composition stresses the privacy of the setting, as well as the centrality of the figures to the heart of the painting. Soft reds and yellows flesh out the figures, giving them life and warmth. The brushstrokes are loose and tender, practically kissing the canvas and making the moment all the more intimate. Toulouse-Lautrec could've quite easily sensationalised it and been celebrated, but instead focuses on depicting it as-is – an act of everyday, mundane intimacy. *Read the full version on Cherwell.org!*

Image Credits: CC 1.0 via. RawPixel



STAGE

Review of *Enemy of the People*: Comedy or a Straight Drama?

Ralph Whitworth

Henrik Ibsen wrote to the publisher of his 1882 play *An Enemy of the People* that 'I am still uncertain whether I should call it a comedy or a straight drama'. The play's balance between comic elements and serious themes has posed a perpetual challenge for directors in the 140 years since it was written. But Valerina Tjandra's recent production of Ibsen's individualist outcry has come down decidedly on the side of comedy.

The comic choices are clear from the outset when Mrs Stockmann arrives to provide the characters with three oversized bottles of spirits, which they then pour generous glasses from. The bottles remained on stage and continued to be drunk from for the entirety of the production. This is followed by the ingenious decision to have both Dr Stockmann and his brother, the mayor, use a large presentation stand to reveal their ideas by dramatically flipping the paper. The culmination of this technique, perhaps, is the scene when Dr Stockmann walks in on the Mayor, Hovstad and Alaksen plotting. This provokes the Mayor to then scurry repeatedly round the floor of the room, making desperate attempts to seize a glass of spirits.

All this was very funny and only

enhanced by the acting performance given. While there were no standout performances, the supporting characters of Hovstad, Billing and Alaksen delivered their lines with enough melodramatic energy to have the audience chuckling constantly. The pompous formal costumes added to the atmosphere of exaggerated silliness which carried us through a rolling first half. As long as it wasn't taken too seriously, it was a lot of fun to watch.

However, this strategy began to run out of steam after the interval. It's at this point in the play, when Dr Stockmann stands before a town meeting, that Ibsen tries to pull his philosophical punches, and the jubilant chaos of the first half had meant it now became very difficult to take anyone seriously. The lines of the various supporting characters were often confused, and the acting felt forced, as if these comic actors suddenly felt out of their element in more serious tones. Even Dr Stockmann's performance, of central importance to the message of the play, was mumbled and uneven at times. Combine this with an unnecessary interactive voting gimmick where no one, least of all the actors, seemed to know what the plan was, and you had a town meeting where it was hard to

tell which farces were deliberate and which were unintentional.

The ending of the play (famously inconclusive) attempted for a more serious tone, and to some extent achieved it. The ruined set, scattered with dropped household items and scraps of recent *Cherwell* editions which took the place of Dr Stockmann's papers, provided a somewhat moving background to the emotional segments. In which, a stifled Dr Stockmann tries to assure his family of his affection by kissing the plastic doll which functioned as a newborn son, and asking for their support in return. But even this was broken up by elements of slapstick humour, like when Dr Stockmann chases Hovstad

and Alaksen out of his house with his walking stick. After all of this chaos, the play's final ending was abrupt and unexpected.

'An Enemy of the People' is a difficult play to produce. If even Ibsen was uncertain of what he wanted out of it, it's no surprise that directors find it difficult to take a stance as well. Valerina Tjandra's comic angle was highly successful in a first half where the characters' ridiculous personalities are hard not to make fun of. However, humour can only get you so far. This was by no means a masterpiece – but upon leaving the theatre, I could not deny that it had been a highly enjoyable watch.

Photography by Eliana Kwok



WHAT'S ON!

STAGE

Milked

@BT Studio

28th Nov - 2nd Dec

Paul is trying to find a job. Snowy is trying to find himself.

But when Snowy stumbles across a dying cow stuck in a local field, he ropes Paul into trying to help the cow, but after they realise the cow is beyond saving, they find a new plan: putting it out of its misery.

Night Shift

@BT Studio

28th Nov - 2nd Dec

3AM Productions presents

Night Shift, a new play by

Elsbeth Rogers exploring family, reality and growing up with a fresh, psychedelic twist.

Amadeus

@Keble O'Reilly

22nd - 25th Nov

Corsets and morals are loosened in Clarendon Productions' *AMADEUS*, a fresh modern perspective on the Tony-award winning tale of Salieri and Mozart's epic rivalry.

MUSIC

Jazz Night, ft. Sisters of Funk

@Mad Hatter, Iffley Rd

28th Nov

Join Oxford Jazz Soc and Sisters of Funk for the final Tuesday Jazz Night of 2023!

Handel: Messiah

@Sheldonian Theatre

25th Nov

Performed by Choir of The Queen's College, Oxford and the world famous Academy of Ancient Music.

FILM

Saltburn

@Phoenix Picturehouse & Curzon Westgate

Struggling to find his place at Oxford University, student Oliver Quick finds himself drawn into the world of the charming and aristocratic Felix Catton.

The Tier List

Streets in Oxford

Turl Street

A slightly quieter street just off Broad Street, Turl Street is perhaps the quintessential “Oxford” street, with the yellow brick buildings that surround it.

Little Clarendon

Full of cute, independent coffee shops, charity shops, and restaurants, Little Clarendon is a pleasant street in Jericho. The fairy lights are the cherry on top.

High Street

The High Street can be crowded, but it is a convenient way of getting to important places like Exam Schools. There are a few colleges on the High Street, which makes it a sort of whistle-stop-tour of Oxford.

Cornmarket

Super crowded even on a good day, Cornmarket is normally swarming with people, music is performed a little too loudly, and cyclists zoom past you. A usually unavoidable sensory overload.



The Not So Secret History: family dynamics

Flora Symington discusses the developments of the relationships of those living in her Cowley house.

After the madness of the first half of term, these last few weeks have seen at least three of the household retreating back into the house to hibernate and catch up on the work we should have been doing earlier. Although it's been nice to see more of each other, one of the side effects I've observed is a certain fraying of tempers, particularly among those who perhaps spend a little too much time together. I've remarked to other friends that I feel like I'm living with two pairs of siblings, and it became apparent this week that, like all family dynamics, ours has its breaking points.

Let me begin by saying that I have nothing but admiration for the way the Classicist and the Thespian have maintained cordial relations throughout not only living together but also working together for months on an incredibly stressful production. From what I can tell, the secret to their success lies in spending lots of time in bigger groups, followed by late night debriefs of these gatherings before bed.

The Poet and the Chef, on the other hand, spend a fair amount of time alone in the house together, and two months in the cracks are starting to show.

The Poet has two brothers, and as an international student they don't get to see them very often, so I've often imagined that they must miss them a lot, and have transferred some of these affections onto the Chef by way of a substitute. At least, that's what I tell myself. 'Affections' is a strong word. What I'm really getting at is that the Poet likes to bully the Chef, reserving for them a tone much harsher than the rest of us are ever subjected to. I once accidentally turned the light off as I was walking past the kitchen, having not realised the Poet was still in there, to be

greeted by a shriek of 'Hey! How dare you, you knew I was - oh, I'm so sorry, I thought you were someone else.' The Poet did at least have the decency to look guilty - clearly, they would never have dreamed of screaming at anyone else like this, but within the remit of their relationship with the Chef it's apparently fair game. I've often seen them walk into the kitchen while the Chef is cooking and spend a few minutes standing behind them at the stove making critical remarks about the food, or laughing at an item of clothing that's arrived in the post for them. The Chef's policy is usually to take this lying down (they have two younger siblings and are, I'm sure, used to it), but recently they've started biting back. In one instance, they told the Poet they didn't like their outfit, whereupon the Poet jumped right back down their throat, telling them they didn't understand the rules of friendly sibling bullying: 'it has to be playful!' If it sounds thus far like I've been painting a rather one-sided account, let me set the record straight. The Chef has their faults when it comes to cleanliness and general

housekeeping, and the Poet is more tolerant of this behaviour than the rest of us put together. It all came to a head this week, however, when a bath mat belonging to the Poet, that went mysteriously missing in about September, miraculously reappeared in the Chef's bathroom. I have rarely been as tense (outside of a theatre) as I was watching this great showdown: the Poet stood in the kitchen

doorway, dripping wet mat in hand, while the Chef sat back on the sofa, insisting what was before them was, in fact, a hand towel, and therefore not stolen goods. As my head flipped back and forth between the two like a Wimbledon spectator, they did not break eye contact, holding each other's gaze for what felt like an age. Finally the Chef broke the silence: 'Ok, it might be a bath mat. Sorry.' I waited for the explosion. But, to their immense credit, the Poet just nodded, and took the mat back to their bathroom. Given the number of times the Poet has had to stand dripping on a cold bathroom floor after a shower in the last few months, not to mention the amount of hours spent looking for the accursed mat, I have to commend them for the restraint of their reaction. I'm not sure I could have done the same.

As with all housemate sagas, however, the story doesn't end there. A few mornings later, the Poet went to get the milk out of the fridge for their tea, and stood up holding an empty pint carton. Their hands were trembling. 'I'm going to go and hit them over the head with this right now' (the Chef was in bed nursing a hangover). I protested that it might not have been them, and anyway, maybe hitting them wasn't the right option? 'I just saw them leave the kitchen with a cup of tea. And they knew I was making tea too!' 'Deep breaths,' I advised. I needn't have worried. Instead of making their way to the door, they simply put the carton in the recycling, and checked the other fridge. I can't speak for what would have happened if there hadn't been more milk in there, but based on the bath mat incident I have to believe their characteristic restraint would have prevailed. That's what siblings are for, after all: you can drive each other up the wall, but in the end you love them anyway. Household harmony prevails.

THE COLUMN

CHERPSE 1

First impressions?
“F*ck me, she’s beautiful.”

Did it meet your expectations?
I wasn’t really sure what to expect. But I was hoping to have a nice chat with someone new, and I guess I got that.

What was the highlight?
Perhaps highlight is the wrong word, but the most unique moment was the discussion of the ethics of cannibalism.

What was the most embarrassing moment?
In all honesty, I don’t think there was really an embarrassing moment - a few awkward pauses at most.

Describe the date in 3 words:
Friendly, no spark

Is there a second date on the cards?
Probably not.



CHERPSE 2

First impressions?
He was quite shy, but very nice

What was the highlight?
Introducing him to a dirty chai

What was the most embarrassing moment?
When we said goodbye but were going in the same direction home.

Describe the date in 3 words:
Sweet, awkward, long.

Is there a second date on the cards?
Probably not, no! He was nice, but the conversation didn’t really flow.

Looking for love?

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

“Intruder Syndrome”: the new imposter syndrome

Matt Taylor

The feeling of dislocation at the University of Oxford is familiar to most of us. Like, somehow, you're not supposed to be here. Usually, people will call this imposter syndrome - the feeling of being unworthy of your position and persistent fear of being exposed as a fraud for lacking fundamental knowledge or skills. However, if you are like me and come from an under-represented background or a low-income one, or, as in my case, both, I would argue that what you are feeling isn't imposter syndrome but intruder syndrome.

We all know the classic signs of imposter syndrome, best summed up by the fear of someone tapping you on the shoulder and saying, “Hey,

we're really sorry, but we've made a mistake.” It is a real thing, but honestly, this is just not how I felt. An imposter is someone who blagged their way in, maybe because they always thought it was inevitable they would end up here. Intruder syndrome is entering a world you were simply never supposed to be in.

I'm about as far away from the 'typical' Oxford student as you can get. The odds of being here are slim. I grew up in the care system. Just as there is a stereotype for the Oxford student, there is also one for kids from children's homes - that was me. I was kicked out of mainstream education in Year 9 and left with 2 GCSEs. Statistically, I had more chances of achieving a place in the country's prison system than

this university's college system. No matter how far away from that life I travel, that reality has never left me. This isn't a world I'm supposed to be in.

When I was allowed to enter a university building as a student for the first time, I felt like a burglar. I had somehow found a back window open into a world I didn't have permission to be in, and I entered anyway. I was not an imposter; I was an intruder. This distinction is essential. Because to be an imposter is to throw away the ten years of hard graft it took for me to be given a university card. I wasn't prepared to do that. Neither should you. When I've spoken to those from under-represented backgrounds at the university, it's also a sentiment they share.

Sustainable shopping: a guide to Oxford charity shops

Emma Jeffries

Charity shops are a great way to be fashionable on a budget, as well as shop sustainably. As a seasoned charity shopper, I am here to provide a guide to the Oxford charity shops.

Oxfam bookshops

These quintessentially Oxford charity shops, on Turl Street and St Giles', cater to what Oxford students like most. Books!

There are sections on literature, history, modern languages, art, philosophy, religion, and music - and the list goes on. Perhaps a bit pricier than books in non-Oxford charity shops, but the selection is amazing and it's a much cheaper alternative than Waterstones. My entire collection of Medieval literature is courtesy of Oxfam St Giles'.

Oxfam superstore

The charity shop of all charity shops. About a 20-minute cycle or one-hour walk from the centre of Oxford, it's a bit of a hike, but well worth it.

The selection is huge. There is a wide range of books, and there's a particularly nice section on an-

tique books and folios. There is also lots of clothes - and even a large men's section, which is pretty rare. The homeware is again extensive, and would be perfect if you are looking for some crockery for your second-year house. It's what you'd expect from a superstore: it has almost everything.

British Heart Foundation (Westgate)

In my mind this is the go-to charity shop in Oxford.

It's an all-rounder, and has a bit of everything. At the beginning of Michaelmas, there are academic gowns here. If you are planning on getting a first in your prelims and want to save some money, it is well worth bearing in mind!

Oxfam (Broad Street)

Quite a small charity shop with a real mix (with some very cheap cutlery if your housemates have been stealing yours). There is a particularly good range of sheet music in the basement.

Little Clarendon Street and Jericho

These three charity shops are particularly good for crafting. If you hopped on the 2023 crochet bandwagon like me, then this one is for you. Mercy in Action has a nice big basket of fabric offcuts if you're more of a seamstress, and Sobell House is where I sourced quite a few of my crochet hooks.

Sobell House also has a particularly cheap sale rack

clothes hidden away downstairs if you are looking for some bargains. Conversely, if you are looking for some more luxurious clothes, head to Jericho - I've seen Doc Martens and roller blades in there!

Cowley

Some of the charity shops in Oxford can be pretty pricey, but Age UK just over Magdalen Bridge is probably the cheapest! With a particularly large selection of dresses, it's well worth a visit if you like an Oxford formal - especially since it's so close to the centre.

Barnardo's and Oxfam a bit further into Cowley are also pretty good - Oxfam as usual has a stellar book selection. But beware of the earlier closing time of Barnardo's - I've only been once because I always seem to time it wrong!

Summertown

A bit further afield, but these are great for designer pieces. And if you have a bike, they're only about 15 minutes away.

The Oxfordshire Animal Sanctuary is also especially good for books, with a large nook at the back of the shop dedicated to them. I've even found one of my set texts in there. For the highest quality clothes, I'd recommend Scope and Helen & Douglas House, which have some particularly nice pieces between them.

The charity shopping scene in Oxford is definitely book-orientated, but as a history student I have to say I don't mind at all - although beware of the trap of buying books you could borrow from the library!



THE COLUMN

HOROSCOPES



Construct a raft and float (merrily) down the stream to Abingdon by moonlight.



Yule approaches! You have been elected the champion of Yule. Let it be creepy, not cosy.



Address the elephant(s) in the room. They are pink and doing a spooky jazz number. Probably best to say hi.



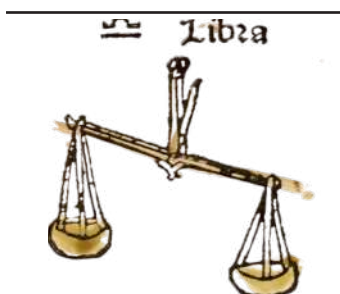
What stone remains unturned in your Zen pebble garden? Do you really want to know what's written on its underside?



You're going to slip into cruise control over Christmas so be authentic 'n' agentic in this bleak non-time.



It is too windy for you. Wear tight fitting clothes that WILL NOT become sails. Hazard!



Glide through the week's trials serenely on your little skates. It's so easy when you know what you're doing.



Buy a copy of Cain's Jawbone. Say goodbye to outside.



You are the biggest cheese on the block this week. You radically season others' lives.



Maybe it's time to do the laundry?
Maybe it's time to cut your nails?
Up 2 U, funky.



What's weird is when you give up on a sentence after you stutter. The people want that thought finished.



Big vibes trump little treats. Let out the sails and catch a fat gale.

The nightmare visa: how (not) to prepare for your year abroad

Nina Naidu

I am among those regrettably desperate individuals who, over three years ago, naively scoured UCAS for any opportunity to flee this rainy country and study abroad. I stumbled upon Italian and Linguistics and fast forward a couple years, here I am. It suddenly struck me that a year abroad actually requires careful consideration. Apparently, you can't simply show up unannounced expecting an Aperol Spritz... you need something called a 'visa'. However, against all advice, I fumbled and did not prepare my own visa appointment in advance.

Fortuitously, giving zero thought to my year abroad's activities worked in my favour. As the only person at St. Hugh's studying Italian this year, I only had to wait for my tutor to email Collegio Ghislieri at the University of Pavia as they have an ongoing exchange program. Suddenly, I was about to spend a whole academic year

studying... something. I'd applied to study Modern Languages – yes, all of them – but this was a major oversight I was willing to ignore. Signing a few learning agreements seemed enough to me. If I came back speaking five languages, then why not? Italy, here I come!

Enter Brexit. As a British citizen without an EU passport, I acknowledged that I was royally screwed and in need of a visa. To add fuel to the fire, Italian bureaucracy tends to be incredibly slow. After fervently checking the visa website, I finally booked an appointment in June for mid-August when I was due to fly out to Milan in mid-September. Scrambling through my documents the night before, behind schedule and without enough time to gather everything was another mistake. While I take responsibility for not collecting them earlier, no one should pay £2 per page to print anything and certainly not at a visa centre and especially not when frantically printing minutes before meeting with the visa officer.

The cherry on top was the

disastrous appointment itself, where I was informed that to spend a whole year in Italy, I'd need a minimum of £8,000 in my bank account. Given two hours to cough up, I inevitably had to call my dad, begging him to temporarily transfer his savings over for proof of financial security. This requirement was not communicated beforehand. Perhaps I should have prepared more thoroughly earlier or perhaps I should not have to run 1.5 miles to the nearest HSBC for a transaction receipt in 2023.

Following this mortifying appointment, they scooped up my documents, telling me all I had to do was wait. Fabulous! Now I could spend the whole summer losing sleep over whether my visa will be rejected or not. After what seemed like forever (a whole week), I received a cryptic email stating my visa application had been sent to the embassy. I thought nothing of it until a few days before I was due to leave for Italy, having received no other emails. I called the visa centre helpline and emailed several times,

asking whether the email meant I could pick up my passport, but each time, I was told to wait for another email. Weeks passed, and I hadn't experienced peak stress up until this moment of desperation when I ended up going to the visa centre. It turns out the cryptic email was indeed giving me permission to pick up my passport. Why couldn't they have just said that? It didn't matter anymore since at least now, I knew I was getting on that plane to Milan for certain.

I was really lucky when it came to my visa application, as my college facilitated finding a study placement and getting a study visa was undoubtedly less stressful than a work visa. Although I wish that I had begun the visa process earlier, it's even more important to sort out the kind of placement you want well before the summer leading up to third-year. The sooner you start looking, the more your future self will thank you for avoiding unnecessary stress. While overwhelming at times, I promise it will all be worth it.

DOUBLE TAKE:

Dear Cherwell... I'm a fresher really missing home, what do I do?

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

Remember to give yourself time to adjust

Take it from us: starting university can be an overwhelming and daunting experience, and feeling homesick is to be expected! First and foremost, know that you're not alone in this. It's completely normal to miss the familiarity of home and the comfort of friends and family.

Perhaps try and fill the void you are feeling by gradually immersing yourself in university life. Join clubs or societies that align with your interests: this is a great way to meet new people and make friends who share similar passions. Attend universi-

ty events, and don't hesitate to strike up conversations with fellow freshers in lectures and labs. Building a new support network can help alleviate the sense of loss that you might feel from moving away from your old one.

Another suggestion might be to make your living space feel more like home by decorating it with items that bring you comfort or remind you of loved ones. Schedule regular calls or video chats with family and friends, maintaining a connection with your loved ones while adapting to your new environment.

Remember, adjusting to university life takes time, and it's okay to seek support from campus counselling services or student support groups. They can provide valuable resources and guidance to help you navigate through this transitional period.

Be patient with yourself, and give yourself the time and space to grow into this new (and exciting!) chapter.



Make the most of the time you have before the vac

The way we see it, you have two options: waste two weeks being miserable about missing home, or enjoy the last two weeks as much as you can and go home with lots of stories to tell your family. We know which option we'd prefer.

Oxford is full of so many great things at Oxmas. Go to the Broad Street Christmas market; wander the city drinking hot chocolate; give yourself an essay off and do minimal reading to make some you time; go to Christmas formal... the possibilities are endless! Feeling homesick and have some time on your hands? Go for mulled wine at the pub. Wander and see the lights. Go try all of Whittard's taster hot chocolate. Time flies when you're having fun - and time flies faster the more fun you have.

Not to mention, you will have made some great friends this term who probably come from all over the country - and when the Christmas vac starts, you won't see them

for a really long time. Rather than missing your family (who you'll see soon enough anyway), spend time with them. Eight-week terms are so short that they're over before you know it. Invest your time in friendships. Your family aren't going anywhere.

Basically, it's seventh week -- we're all missing home. Of course you're tired. Instead of wasting your time feeling sorry for yourself, go out and make the most of your last two weeks of term. They're going to happen either way.



Weird food combinations that just make sense

Vedika Rastogi considers weird and wonderful food combinations

As I scrolled through my TikTok feed, I couldn't help but be intrigued by the range of peculiar ice cream flavors, from Heinz ketchup to Baked beans, courtesy of the Anya Hindmarch pop-up. It led me to consider unconventional food pairings. While I'm aware that these combinations might cause some to raise an eyebrow or two, I believe they're worth exploring. They could very well become a regular addition to your weekly Tesco shop.

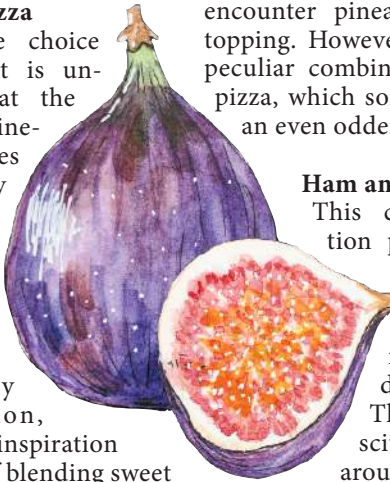


Crispy M&Ms and popcorn

A staple at home and a necessary supplement to any cinema trip. The buttery texture of the popcorn blends with the crunchiness of the M&Ms. Saltiness and sweetness mix in perfect harmony to make a perfect snack for any occasion.

Hawaiian pizza

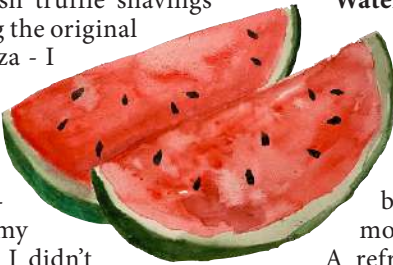
A divisive choice for some, it is undeniable that the saccharine pineapple balances out the savory ham. The inception of this unique pizza can be boiled down to its creator's culinary exploration, drawing inspiration from the art of blending sweet and savory flavors in Chinese cuisine. In spite of savoring a range



of pizzas during my summer in Italy, trying various types from those adorned with porcini mushrooms and fresh truffle shavings to experiencing the original Neapolitan pizza - I grudgingly admit Hawaiian pizza will always be my go-to. Unsurprisingly, during my time in Rome, I didn't encounter pineapple as a topping. However, I did notice a peculiar combination: potato on pizza, which some may consider an even odder pairing.

Ham and fruit

This classic combination perfectly balances the savory taste of ham with the natural sweetness of different fruits. Thinly sliced prosciutto wrapped around juicy melon or ham-wrapped figs showcase the interplay of flavours



Watermelon and feta cheese

A summery treat that provides both a burst of sweetness and transforms an otherwise bland fruit into a more satisfying snack. A refreshing salad option that marries the juicy, crispy taste of watermelon with the crumbly, salty feta.

Nduja sausage and honey

An elite combination which relies on the spicy kick of the soft spreadable sausage is complemented with the sweet, golden allure of honey. It works best on top of a cracker or pizza, and even has the potential to be paired with burrata if you want to elevate a midnight snack.

Popping candy and crème brûlée

A Christ Church classic, this

dessert serves as the perfect conclusion to any formal. My own affection for this sweet treat blossomed from Freshers' Formal. The inclusion of popping candy was instrumental in rousing me from a wine-induced stupor while seated amongst my tutors.

Caviar and ice cream

It might sound like an unusual duo, and it is not one I have been fortunate enough to try. However, the contrast between the simplicity of ice cream and the opulence of caviar has piqued my interest and given the chance to try it, I would.



Old Rosie

Not food, but it has an interesting enough taste to raise eyebrows at the Pub. The aridity of the cider must be combined with a pack of brown bag crisps (preferably smoked chilli).

Best matcha (latte) in town

Kobi Mohan tries different matcha lattes in Oxford

Matcha is a tea steeped (ha ha) in history, tradition and the patchwork of philosophical and religious traditions that have shaped Japan. As a former avid anime watcher, I came to know of the drink from television shows, though for many years it remained a thing of glossy animated fiction for me. That is until I finally tried the tea for the first time a few years ago and have since found increasing comfort in its moreish and subtle flavour. For the sake of systematising my opinions and perhaps also assisting fellow matcha fans, I will be reviewing the options for matcha available in Oxford.

First, I think it would be helpful to establish what matcha is before the reviewing begins, both for the matcha-curious and others who the matcha hype has somehow not reached. Matcha is a traditional Japanese green tea made from a finely ground powder of meticulously grown and processed green tea leaves. Matcha literally means 'rubbed tea', in reference to the process by which ceremonial grade matcha is ground down to a fine powder in a gran-



ite mill. The earliest origins of the drink can be found in China during the Tang dynasty but matcha as it is now known and the associated extensive preparation methods and ceremony are Japanese in origin. Matcha was introduced to Japan in the 12th century by the Zen Buddhist monk Eisai who brought from his studies in China some tea seeds and established a practice known as 'the way of tea'. At the time, there was a common conception that the world was in a state of 'mappo', which in Japanese Buddhism is the age of the degeneration of the Buddha's law. For Eisai, the perfect preparation of matcha was to be an exercise of devotion honouring the beauty that could be found among an otherwise imperfect and precarious world. This may be the origin of the modern Japanese tea ceremony and its many iterations which continues to be a cultural, spiritual and social activity for many, rooted in the philosophies and practices of Zen Buddhism and Shintoism.

It's worth noting that I actually failed to find a single cafe that offered matcha as it is traditionally made: ceremonial grade matcha powder prepared with hot water in the ceremonial fashion. For this

reason, I've had to widen the scope of qualifying matchas to include some drinks which stray from the tradition of matcha somewhat such as the various matcha-flavoured drinks, including matcha lattes that, though often delicious, are not necessarily authentic. With these limitations in mind, let the matcha (latte and flavoured drinks) review commence!

According to various sources, good matcha should have slightly vegetal notes, a touch of bitterness, nuttiness and an overall smooth and subtly sweet taste. When judging this series of matcha-adjacent drinks I will account for authenticity of flavour worth four points and use of traditional powder over syrup, overall flavour and price each worth two points, for a total of ten potential matcha points to earn!

Art café's matcha latte has a really lovely and smooth flavour, subtly sweet and made with traditional powder, this latte is definitely worth a try. At £4, this was pretty mid-range on price and honestly worth the bit extra. 9/10

Leon's iced matcha latte is pretty similar to an iced vanilla latte in terms of flavour. It's a bit on the sweet side but still pretty tasty. It seems to be made with a pre-mixed solution but the solution does, apparently, use actual matcha powder which is surprising for a chain of its scale. 5.5/10

Starbucks' iced matcha latte uses traditional powder, which is very apparent from the clumps of sediment you might find at the bottom of one of its drinks. As far as flavour goes, certainly there is a flavour but I'm not sure it's one I particularly liked. 4/10

In Cha's matcha macchiato is ridiculously good, a smooth blend of matcha and milk served chilled. At £6.05, however, it is the most expensive drink on this list. Though the drink itself is quite large, a single matcha drink setting you back nearly two meal deals has to lose this delicious milky matcha concoction some points. I was unable to fully investigate whether syrup or powder was used in the making of this drink but my housemate and resident barista friend suggested that it was possible that some sort of premixed solution made

with matcha powder might be being used. 7/10

Based on the matcha (lattes and flavoured drinks) that I have surveyed, it seems Art Café's matcha latte is the finest matcha in the land (of OX1). Art café's matcha latte delivers all the subtle notes of sweetness, slight bitterness and vegetality that google has suggested I should expect from a good matcha, and at a medium price point. Also, it was absolutely delicious. Beyond that there's not much else to say really.



Driving towards a sustainable future

Alice Banfield

Formula 1 is the pinnacle of motorsport, captivating fans across the globe. The 2022 season saw an average of 1.7 million UK viewers tuning in for each race; whether it be for the speed, the skill, or just the Dutch national anthem. However, as climate concerns continue to grow, the sport is faced with a challenge. As we move into an era defined by environmental consciousness and global responsibility, Formula 1 must turn its focus towards a more sustainable future.

'Sustainable' would probably be one of the last words you would think of when considering Formula 1, which produced 256,551 tonnes of CO2 in the 2018 season. Following this, F1 announced its sustainability strategy and vowed to reach net zero carbon by 2030. Although this sounds a tough task, some important modifications have already been implemented which are having a positive impact.

Recently, the sport has introduced a ban on single-use plastics at events, with over 80% of promoters in the 2022 season helping out via the installation of water refill stations, increased recycling facilities and the provision of refillable cups. Certain parts of cars are now being made of biodegradable materials, and a shift towards renewable energy has been seen in offices and factories, with a transition to 100% renewable energy underway. Changes such as these are having a positive impact, but the major issue lies with the incredibly inefficient and illogical Formula 1 calendar. The logistics contributes around 45% to the overall CO2 emissions, with 10 racing teams and all of their equipment being required to travel to 23 races held in 20 different countries across 5 continents this season.

The key idea in tackling this issue is by region-

alising the calendar to reduce the distances between each race. The current schedule is incredibly illogical, with a 2023 race order which, for example, requires teams to travel from Spain to Canada, only to go straight back to Europe for the Austrian Grand Prix. It has been reported that a new schedule is being planned, consisting of competition in four regions (Middle East, Europe, the Americas and east Asia/Australia), each hosting its own 'season'. However, there is currently no real timeline for its implementation due to complications arising from existing contracts and the demands of host countries. One of the changes which has already been made for the 2024 season concerns the Japanese Grand Prix – it adopts an April date rather than its traditional autumn slot, so that it can take place in between races in Melbourne and Shanghai.

Meanwhile, teams have been busy redesigning freight containers so that more efficient aircraft can be used to transport equipment, leading to a reduction in emissions of 19.12%. For European races, bio-fuel trucks were used for transportation, with Mercedes reporting a cut in emissions by around 90% in 2022. Travel of personnel also has a large impact on emissions, so fans are currently being encouraged to travel using public transport, and broadcasting operations are beginning operations beginning to be carried out remotely.

Important changes have already been made, signalling the sport's determination to drive change. It is of vital importance that F1 continues to prioritise sustainability and reimagine its practices to work towards a better future. The steps which have already been made are encouraging, but the net zero plan is highly ambitious and much more must be done to ensure a green future for the sport.



Investment in (Men's) sport needs to slow down

Zoe Abereoje

A few weeks ago, listening to Ian Wright's 60th birthday podcast special I picked up on something very interesting. When asked what he wanted to spend this stage of his life doing he responded helping grow the women's game and when asked why he responded, "It's really pure". I wasn't really sure how to interpret this comment but looking at the way the sport interacts with its fans, growth and investment against the men's side, I feel pretty confident to say I have grasped the distinction.

When investments are made into the women's game, it is a decision by shareholders and investors to grow the sport in the name of fans, the competitors involved and for the general growth of the sport. When a large investment is made in the men's side, the intentions are different. It tends to come down to one thing alone: financial incentive. I'm not trying to paint this incentive as negative. After all, the largest male sports are usually very well established, face very few existential threats and have large followings already, so it would be impossible for me to expect the same intentions for investments on each side. What I find concerning, however, is that the more established side is faster-growing.

This weekend saw the introduction of the Las Vegas F1 weekend, held on a racing circuit that wound through the lit-up streets of Vegas. With the track featuring a straight that ran alongside the strip of Vegas' largest and most expensive hotels, a Rolls Royce used as a cooldown room and constant advertising plastered across the newly built Sphere throughout the race, to say money wasn't the incentive for the weekend would be impossible. The levels of investment seen in F1's modern era is incredible, with race weekends cropping up from Miami to Riyadh.

And while the levels of investment in F1 are at incredible highs the same cannot be said for the women's side. A criticism that has consistently been laid at F1's feet is the lack of women in

the sport, something that the W-series, an all-women's racing championship, sought to correct from 2019. While the W series wasn't perfect, it certainly didn't deserve its demise as it went into administration this year. My argument isn't so much to say, F1 doesn't deserve to grow, I raise the question of why it is allowed to grow in the face of issues and inequalities that need to be solved.

Even a similar effect can be seen in football. It is easy to assume that inequality between the two games is reducing as more visibility is gained on the women's side. However, if reducing inequality between the two sides of the sport was ever meant to be a long-term goal, it can never be achieved as long as the investment trends between the two sports continue. Investment in the men's game does not seem to be slowing down.

This is not to say the women's side hasn't experienced its fair share of growth too, looking at the UK only, Arsenal WFC smashed the WSL average attendance record last season with 17,501.

While the trajectory of the women's side does look great, this holds no torch to the men's astronomical earnings. With the new Swiss format for the Champions League starting next year and the plans by FIFA to install a new club World Cup, it is clear the money that investors stand to gain from the men's side of the game could be very lucrative. However, this growth, in my opinion, is entirely unnecessary; the champions league format was just fine, save from fears from organisations and investors alike that larger teams can currently go out too soon which could risk revenues.

The Swiss format would have made more sense in the women's side, with

big teams like Manchester United and Juventus leaving the women's Champions League so early. Investment for the good of the game would make sense here yet it hasn't been seen. In contrast, investment in the men's game has no signs of stopping, as international competitions develop, so do other leagues like the Saudi Pro League, appearing to have endless sums of money ready to be spent. Despite the strides taken in the women's game it is difficult to ignore the enormous leaps the men's side has been making recently.

Excessive money and investment have always been a tenet of men's sports but recently this has reached new levels. More and more global investors are spending money on sports. American investment in non-American sports has never been so high, with F1 charting three separate races in America, its grip on the sport grows, stronger and more influential each year. Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney have a whole documentary detailing their investment into Wrexham AFC and if that wasn't enough they have joined the Otro capital group which is investing in Alpine, a French F1 team, along with other stars like Trent Alexander Arnold and Micheal B Jordan. Riyadh is the new boxing capital of the world, and it might just be the centre of football in a decade. Despite these sports being enormous already, more money is filtering in from across the world at blinding rates.

Fundamentally, international investment has massively shifted to the point where (men's) sports appear to be the new blue-chip stock. With established fan bases and competition structures, it seems that eyes are increasingly turning towards (men's) sport as the "best bang for your buck". While changes in the Champions League format, new F1 races, new golf competitions and boxing fights promise endless opportunities, one opportunity stands to be lost and that is closing the gap across the genders that people have only recently begun to recognise.

Image Credit: Andrew Magill/ CC BY 2.0 Via Wikimedia commons



A goodbye to Australia's Golden Generation

Raghav Chari

Near the start of the Ashes in England, ESPN-Cricinfo published a graphic asking viewers to compare the 2023 team to the legendary 2005 team, the original 'golden generation', the greatest Australian team there ever was. Of course, most people chose the 2005 team. But that the comparison can be suggested at all speaks volumes about the quality, experience, and grit of the 2023 team. It is a testament to the strength of today's team that Pat Cummins and Steve Smith can stand toe-to-toe with all-time greats like Glenn McGrath and Ricky Ponting. For this second golden generation, with their long

and storied careers that now draw to an end together, 2023 has been a year that they can look back fondly upon as a satisfying capstone achievement.

Australia have made three major achievements in 2023. First, they won the World Test Championship, beating India in the final at Lord's. Second, they retained the Ashes, playing against a revamped, Bazballing England in England. Third, and the greatest achievement, they defeated India - in India - to win the World Cup. But within this larger, team story, are so many smaller stories of the individual players. This is truly a second golden generation, and the stories of much of this generation are drawing to a close. In their stories, 2023 will be remembered as their swan song.

The very first to retire has already announced his plans, leaving at the end of this Aussie summer. David Warner's departure will probably be welcomed by many, given his poor performances in recent years. But the 37-year-old's contribution to Australia's batting over the years is incalculable. For well over a decade, he has been the best red-ball batsman after Steve Smith, and the best white-ball batsman too. He showed his white-ball talent in this World Cup too, slamming two magnificent hundreds and becoming Australia's top scorer. His retirement heralds the rest of his generation.

And probably closest to following him will be Steve Smith. Smith is, in my opinion, the true heir to the

title of the 'best since Bradman'. It is a testament to his quality that I consider his Test summer in England pretty average despite having scored two centuries in six Tests. He is 34 and his unremarkable 2023 hides the fact that he has been Australia's premier batsman for over a decade, and when he retires, he will be universally acknowledged as the greatest Test batsman of the last 80 years.

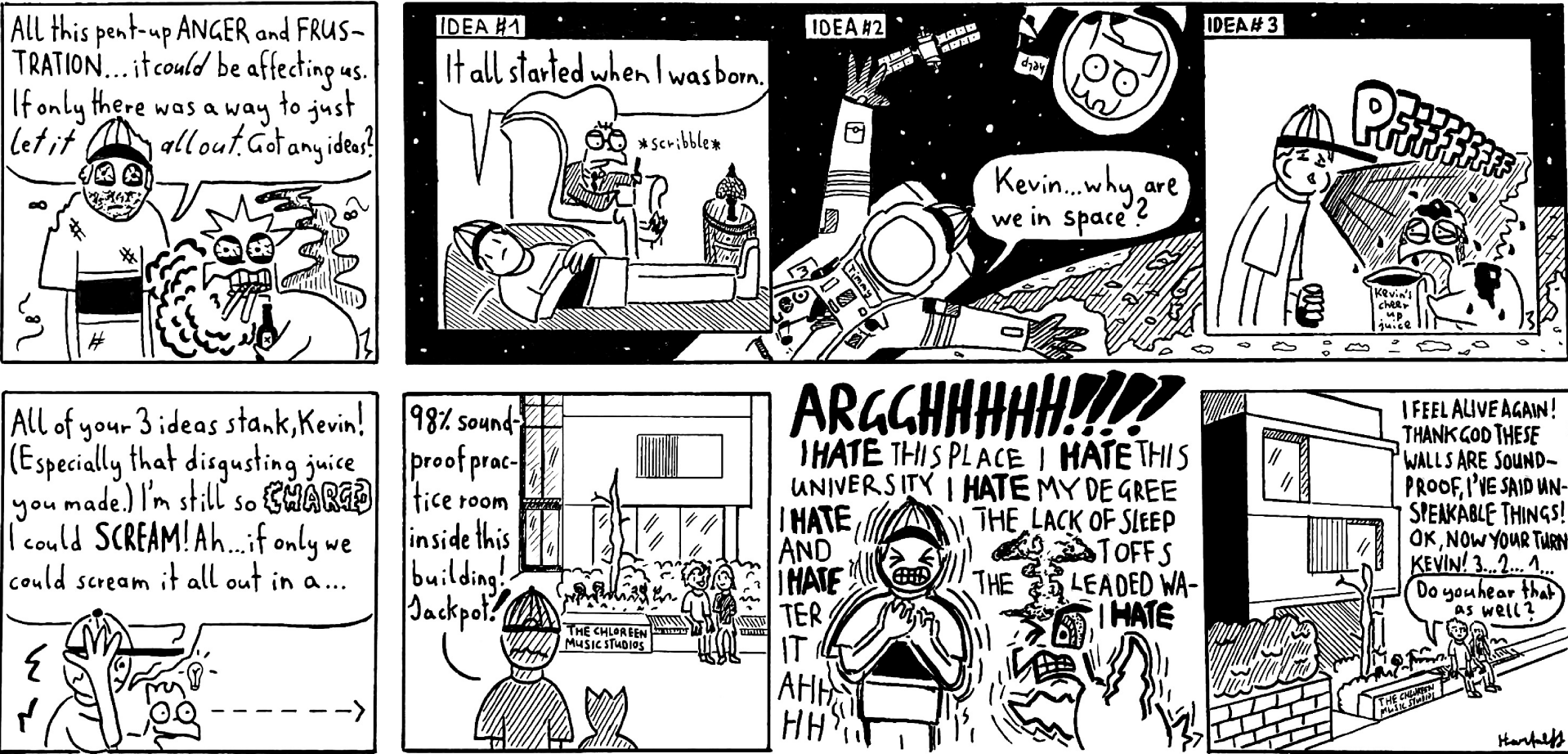
Rounding out this set of batters is Glenn Maxwell. The 35-year-old made a name for himself by playing aggressively and recklessly, and this World Cup was most clearly Maxwell's World Cup. In a group stage match against the Netherlands, he smoked the fastest 100 in a World Cup, off just 40 balls. In another match against Afghanistan, he produced a scarcely believable innings, dragging his team single handedly

from near-collapse at 91/7 to victory at 292/7. His innings of 201* is, in my opinion, the greatest ODI innings ever played. It is the only double hundred to be ever scored in a chase. In the middle of his innings, he began cramping and spasming from the heat and humidity, and fell to the ground, twitching in pain. He could barely walk, yet he told the physio he would battle on. And in doing so, he produced an innings of sheer will, forcing himself to hit sixes and fours on one leg, hobbling for runs where he could get them, and beating his body into submission. His 2023 is the year that has put him firmly in the history books as Australia's greatest ever finisher.

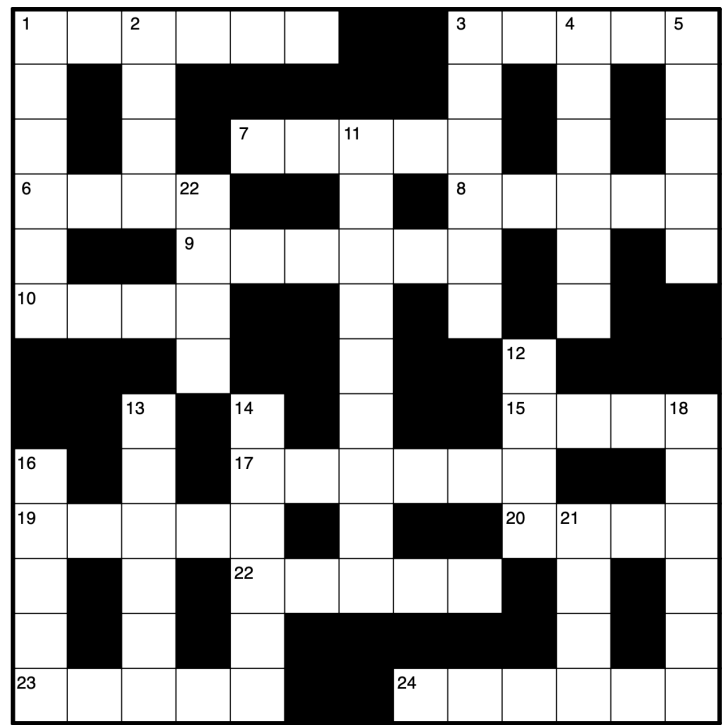
Read the full article, which discusses Australia's golden generation online at [Cherwell.org](https://www.cherwell.org)

Kevin and Timmy let it out

by Sean Hartnett

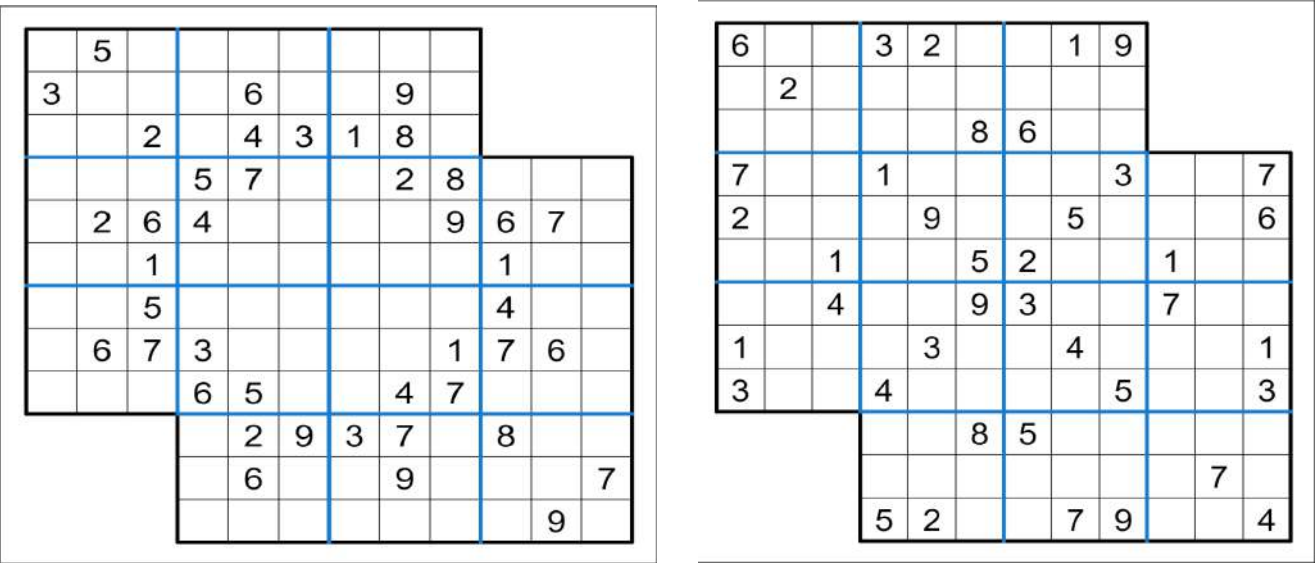


Cryptic Crossword by Sarah Beard



- ACROSS
1. Garment is most scratchy, apparently (6)
3. When Mike's not there, the monkeys make fries (5)
6. Sounds superior, but it's actually second rate (4)
7. Tear writing implement is mature (5)
8. Play makes doctor and mother extremists (5)
9. Gossip curse makes religious music (6)
10. Allegedly steal a plucky thing (4)
15. A friendly greeting is the first part to mindful stretching (4)
17. Warrior hidden in Panama zone (6)
19. Italian plumber first looks up into gas ignition (5)
20. Short album makes up half of a long poem (4)
22. Jabber on about card game (5)
23. We hear key to a vehicle in beige fabric (5)
24. Seems a golden fruit takes care of children abroad (6)
- DOWN
1. Instrument sounds allegorical (6)
2. Brazilian city tango makes for a brawl (40)
6. A wicked thing (6)
- Sprite's beer goes right through you! (6)
- South-west organ is uncouth (5)
- Chinese invention placed on spine could be a bestseller (9)
12. Newcastle flower (4)
13. A playful French girl is a mixed up puzzle (6)
14. Capital city is reportedly characterised by high achievement and competitiveness (6)
16. Timepiece missing 250 is OK (5)
18. Interbranch organisation hides what's at the bottom of the ocean (6)
21. Personal assistant around known for tilting attraction (4)
22. Without its head, what was trapped became old (4)

Samurai puzzles by Lewis Callister



Last week's answers

- 5TH WEEK | MT 23
- ACROSS: 4)Licenses; 8) Increase; 9) Adorable; 10) In the red; 11) Erotic; 12) Arm; 14) Iron out; 16) Exact; 18) Guess; 19) Obscure; 20) Err; 22) Covert; 25) Von Trapp; 26) Obstacle; 27) Reflects; 28) Latitude
- DOWN: 1) Finishing School; 2) A cut above; 3) Fewer; 4) Leader; 5) Errorless; 6) Cubit; 7) Speech Therapist; 12) Atone; 13) Manor; 15) Observant; 17) Abundance; 21) Reverse; 23) Visit; 24) Style