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INDEPENDENT SINCE 1920

SU sustainability tracker demands net zero targets

Bintia Dennog reports

Oxford University's Student Union (SU) has released their sustainability demands tracker, after giving colleges until the end of March to update accordingly. Using a traffic light coding system, each college was assessed on their target, strategy, and enablers to reach net zero carbon and improve biodiversity. Out of all the colleges, only Somerville managed to fully meet two of the three demands; a third of all colleges didn't show any progress on any demand and were coded entirely in red.

Originally proposed in November last year, the sustainability tracker addresses "the need to visibly see what progress is being made" by each of the colleges. Although the University itself intends to reach net zero carbon by 2035, only ten colleges have committed to this so far. "[W]e can't really claim the whole University is committed to this since the colleges make up such a huge part of the University," the SU told *Cherwell*.

The criteria proposed by the SU requires colleges to adopt a target for net zero carbon and biodiversity net gain by at least 2035, in line with the university's target. They also request that colleges publish strategies on improving biodiversity and tackling scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions (which includes emissions caused indirectly through the colleges' activities, such as travel and investments). These would need to be reported on annually, and colleges must display a policy commitment to divest from fossil fuels, in order to achieve a 'green' grade. Whilst 20 colleges either have or are working on a

strategy, no college has met this demand fully so far. In order to meet the enabler criteria, the SU asked colleges to administer appropriate governance procedures, such as a sustainability committee, to enforce the sustainability strategy.

When asked why the results were solely based on publicly available information, the SU explained that "[t]his is because what we are asking for – a target, strategy and enablers – are things which when developed, should be publicly available, as they are for the central University (and have been since 2021). Thus, we really encourage those colleges who are doing sustainability work but haven't yet articulated this on their website, to do so."

St Peter's Environmental Rep, Luke Vernon, commented that the SU's decision to use publicly available information was "fair" but that the tracker "places too much emphasis on setting a net zero target, which encourages Colleges to set an optimistic target which might dishearten students if it can't be met."

"St Peter's got an amber for the 'target' section which again is completely justified given that St Peter's hasn't set a concrete goal for net zero yet," he said, "but I don't think it reflects on how much is being done behind the scenes by the College to work towards net zero and in reality is part of an approach by those at St Peter's to only release a net zero target when they have complete confidence it can really be met."

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Overworked and underpaid: testimonies of Oxford scouts

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Image credit: Cecilia Catmur

Oxford Union banned from freshers fair

Bintia Dennog reports.

Oxford's Student Union (SU) has passed a motion to cut financial ties with the Oxford Union, with 78.1% of those present voting in favour. This will likely prevent the Oxford Union from having a stall at the freshers' fair and is likely to have an impact on new membership signups.

As the Oxford Union is not a student society, they are required to pay for a commercial stall at the SU's annual freshers' fair. According to the SU, this is "the primary situation where the two organisations overlap and interact".

The motion resolved to add Oxford Union to the SU's list of "prohibited external organisations", until the mandate expires in three years. Whilst there is no banned list as of this moment, the SU does have an Ethical Code of Practice for its commercial activities. According to this, the "Oxford SU should take all practically possible steps to ensure the organisations they engage with for commercial purposes are committed to minimising their negative impact on the environment and the communities they operate in".

The motion stipulates that the Student Council believes the Oxford Union should be able to "carry out its principles without creating a toxic environment which seems to encourage bullying, harassment, racial profiling, and a systemic abuse of power". However, since the Oxford Union is a Private Member's Club, it is not under the jurisdiction of the university and the SU is "unable to properly check Oxford Union matters... which affect students".

In areas where the SU lacks direct influence, the motion highlighted that "they still have a duty to lobby for change", or, if unsuccessful, take "necessary actions to safeguard all members of the Oxford student community". The passing of the motion mandates the VP Welfare & Equal Opportunities and VP Access & Academic Affairs to review the SU's relationship with the Oxford Union.

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What happens at Port and Policy?

We visted the infamous OUCA drinking event so you don't have to.

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Is Summer VIII's over-hyped?

Our editors go head-to-head in the Debate Chamber.

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Balliol’s Environemnt & Ethics Rep, Andy Wei, also told *Cherwell* that many of Balliol’s sustainability initiatives, such as food waste recycling, are not directly acknowledged on the tracker. However, he says, “incremental change, while important, is not enough and needs to be part of a larger, publicly accountable strategy to achieve lower and net-zero carbon emissions”.

Each college received the coding before publication, allowing them to send in updates or amendments before the final version was released. According to the SU, around 15 colleges “productively engaged” with them and updated their websites in response. Worcester, for example, outlined various measures to improve their sustainability, including measures related to food, water, waste, and investments and



procurement. They intend to release a net zero strategy. The tracker will also be updated on a regular basis. One change that is currently being pursued is adjusting the methodology for coding “dedicated staff time” (part of the enabler demand) as green, since some colleges don’t employ a specific sustainability officer but still dedicate significant amounts of staff time towards sustainability. It is proposed that these colleges will be granted green if they explain their reasoning for doing so on their website. “We are finalising a slightly shifted methodology from this which will be made clear on the website,” the SU told *Cherwell*. There are also talks of a potential group hire across colleges for sustainability decisions. *Image Credit: Oxford Climate Justice Campaign Graph Credit: Oxford SU, current as of 10/05/2023*

	1	2	3
Balliol College	●	●	●
Blackfriars	●	●	●
Brasenose College	●	●	●
Campion Hall	●	●	●
Christ Church	●	●	●
Corpus Christi College	●	●	●
Exeter College	●	●	●
Green Templeton College	●	●	●
Harris Manchester College	●	●	●
Hertford College	●	●	●
Jesus College	●	●	●
Keble College	●	●	●
Kellogg College	●	●	●
Lady Margaret Hall	●	●	●
Linacre College	●	●	●
Lincoln College	●	●	●
Magdalen College	●	●	●
Mansfield College	●	●	●
Merton College	●	●	●
New College	●	●	●
Nuffield College	●	●	●
Oriel College	●	●	●

	1	2	3
Pembroke College	●	●	●
The Queen's College	●	●	●
Regent's Park College	●	●	●
Reuben College	●	●	●
Somerville College	●	●	●
St Anne's College	●	●	●
St Antony's College	●	●	●
St Catherine's College	●	●	●
St Cross College	●	●	●
St Edmund Hall	●	●	●
St Hilda's College	●	●	●
St Hugh's College	●	●	●
St John's College	●	●	●
St Peter's College	●	●	●
St Stephen's House	●	●	●
Trinity College	●	●	●
University College	●	●	●
Wadham College	●	●	●
Wolfson College	●	●	●
Worcester College	●	●	●
Wycliffe Hall	●	●	●

Honorary degree recipients to include former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Andy Wei reports.

The University of Oxford has revealed the list of eight people who will be receiving honorary degrees this year. Each recipient has demonstrated outstanding achievement in their field, and they will be celebrated at the Encaenia ceremony at the end of Trinity term.

Professor Frances Arnold is an American chemical engineer at the California Institute of Technology. She received the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry “for the directed evolution of enzymes.” On the topic of enzymes, she told *Cherwell*: “I’m thrilled that Oxford is honouring science, engineering, and evolution—the most powerful, and enduring, of all design processes. And enzymes. Let’s not forget about enzymes, because they are pretty great chemists.”

Michelle Bachelet

is a Chilean politician who served two terms as President of Chile and one term as the United Nations’ High Commissioner for Human Rights. As President, she created marine protection areas, expanded social protection for women and children, and promoted renewable energy. She was also the founding Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

Professor Stephen Furber is a computer engineer at the University of Manchester. He was previously a principal designer of the BBC Microcomputer and the ARM 32-bit RISC microprocessor, and he now leads

research into neural systems engineering. He told *Cherwell*: “I’m very much looking forward to what I hope will be a sunny summer solstice, falling on the 75th anniversary of the Manchester Baby Machine’s first successful execution of a program stored in its electronic memory. It is, of course, a great honour to receive this distinction from the University of Oxford, which ranks among the world’s greatest universities, and I feel very privileged to have this association with Oxford.” The Manchester Baby was the world’s first electronic stored-program computer and was built at the University of Manchester in 1948.

Lyse Doucet is a Canadian journalist who currently serves as BBC’s Chief International Correspondent. She covers pressing events around the world and presents on BBC Radio 4, BBC News, BBC World Service radio, and BBC World News television.

Professor Paul Gilroy is a cultural and social theorist at University College London. He has made significant contributions to critical race theory and Black British culture. He has authored several books, lectured around the world, and serves as the founding director of the UCL Sarah Parker Remond Centre for the Study of Racism and



Racialisation.

Val McDermid is a prolific Scottish writer. Her 39th novel, *Past Lying*, will be released later this year. Her previous novels have sold over 18 million copies and been translated into more than 40 languages. She told *Cherwell*: “When I became the first Scottish state school pupil to be accepted at St Hilda’s when I was only 16, I thought that was honour enough. I never dreamed that one day I’d have an Honorary Doctorate conferred on me. To say I’m thrilled and delighted would be an understatement and I’m looking forward to the celebrations.”

Professor Malik Peiris is a Sri-Lankan virologist at the University of Hong Kong. He was the first person to isolate the SARS virus in 2003, helping prevent a pandemic. He has previously advised the World Health Organization and the Hong Kong government on public health.

Professor Sir Simon Schama is a historian at Columbia University. He is also a contributing editor of the *Financial Times*, the author of 20 books, and the writer-presenter of 60 documentaries on art, history and literature for BBC television. He will be discussing his most recent book, which covers “the history of pandemics, vaccines and the health of nations,” at the Oxford Literary Festival on May 22nd.

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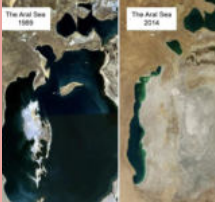
News Shorts

St Hugh’s students’ Uzbekistan expedition

Oxford and Uzbek university students are partnering to record an oral history of the Amu Darya, the main feeder of Uzbekistan’s Aral Sea. Project Amu Darya aims to engage with the people and cultures who have bore witness to one of the fastest man-made ecosystem collapses in recorded history.

The Aral Sea was the fourth biggest lake on earth a few decades ago. However, Soviet irrigation projects reduced it to just one tenth of its original size, and research on the Aral Sea was heavily restricted until 2016.

This will be St Hugh’s JCR first official Expedition and will be the first oral history, academic transcript, and film of the Aral Sea crisis.



New Aldi to open in Oxford

Aldi has indicated interest in opening up to ten new stores in the Oxfordshire area, with potential plans to build an Aldi in central Oxford. These candidate sites are part of a wider expansion plan to open 100 new branches over the next two years, investing over £1.3 billion.

It is currently unclear where a central Oxford Aldi may be located, but Aldi has specified that their site requires roughly two acres of space, preferably by a main road and or in a central retail park. Aldi’s minimum distance between stores is a mere 1.5km. So, despite the fact that there are already Aldi



locations in Botley and Headington, as well as planning permission for an Aldi in Abingdon, there remains scope for a new Aldi to be built in central Oxford.

Burst sewage pipe

A pipe on Abingdon road burst on May Day morning, causing sewage to leak across Folly bridge. Just two weeks prior, “essential” work was completed to alleviate flooding on the road. There was some disruption to Hertfordians’ normal life, with accounts of odour and sewage puddles. One Hertford student told *Cherwell*: “[The leak] stunk for several days and made cycling over Folly bridge unpleasant to say the least.”

A Thames Water spokesperson told *Cherwell*: “Our engineers attended the same day and found a blockage in the pipework caused by debris. This was cleared straight away and flow was restored to the line.

“We did not receive any additional reports regarding the leak and therefore believe there was not any wider customer impact. We are sorry to residents and customers who were inconvenienced by this.”



Scientists highlight ethical importance of tackling next global pandemic

Anika Gupta reports.

Estimates predict that there is currently more than a one in four chance of another global pandemic in the next decade, and scientists are seeking to find ethical solutions.

However, scientists are unable to estimate what kind of pandemic it will be. Whilst it could be a coronavirus (like COVID or SARS) or influenza, there is also the possibility of something which has not been seen before. This unknown future threat is referred to by The World Health Organisation as “Disease X”.

The threat of “Disease X” has seen scientists start preparations. This has involved the “100 day mission” which aims to develop a vaccine for use within 100 days of an outbreak of a new pandemic.

Ongoing preparations have also started raising questions concerning medical ethics and priorities

In a newly published book from Oxford University press, Oxford’s Professor Dominic Wilkinson and Professor Julian Savulescu (National University of Singapore) tackle the question of an ethical approach to pandemics.

Indeed, Professor Wilkinson writes: “Pandemics raise the deepest ethical questions about the value of life, and how to weigh health against liberty. There is no simple formula.”

He adds that during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, politicians said that “We need to follow science”. Professor Wilkinson worries that “science can’t tell us whether we should have a lockdown, or mandatory vaccination. For

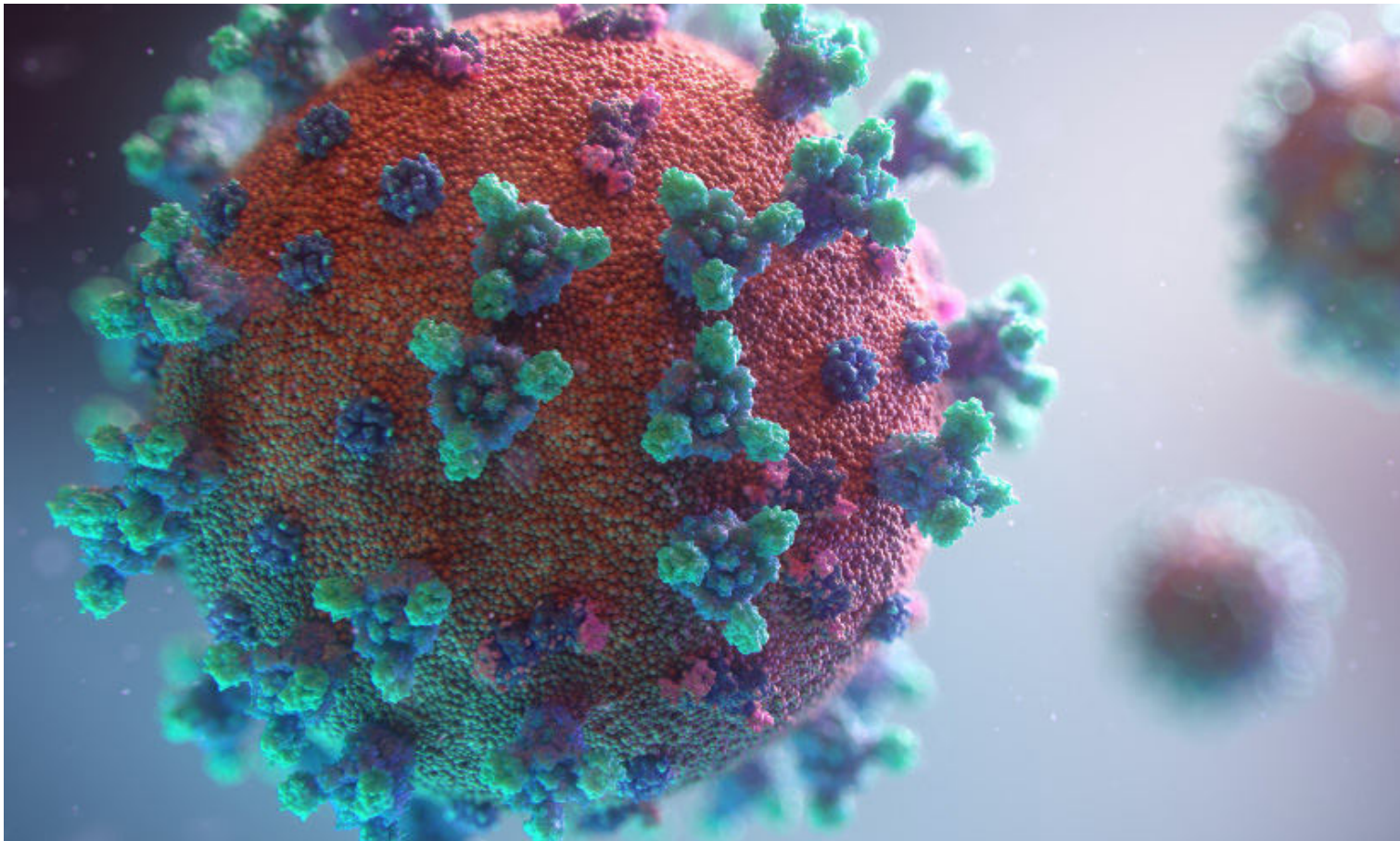
that we need thoughtful, careful ethical analysis”.

On the subject of priorities, the issues seen during COVID; i.e. not being able to treat everyone who needs a hospital bed, ventilator, oxygen or a vaccine are drawn to light. The book also stresses the conflict of prioritising national

versus international interests as well as the difficult barter between protecting public health during a pandemic and maintaining and growing economic activity.

These conflicts highlight the need to factor in ethics when attempting to ease the impacts and find solutions to the future “Disease X”.

Professors Wilkinson and Savulescu have successfully assembled a group of international experts in ethics, economics, philosophy and law to examine and evaluate the problems and lessons from COVID-19. Hopefully, they can distill the best solutions for future pandemics.



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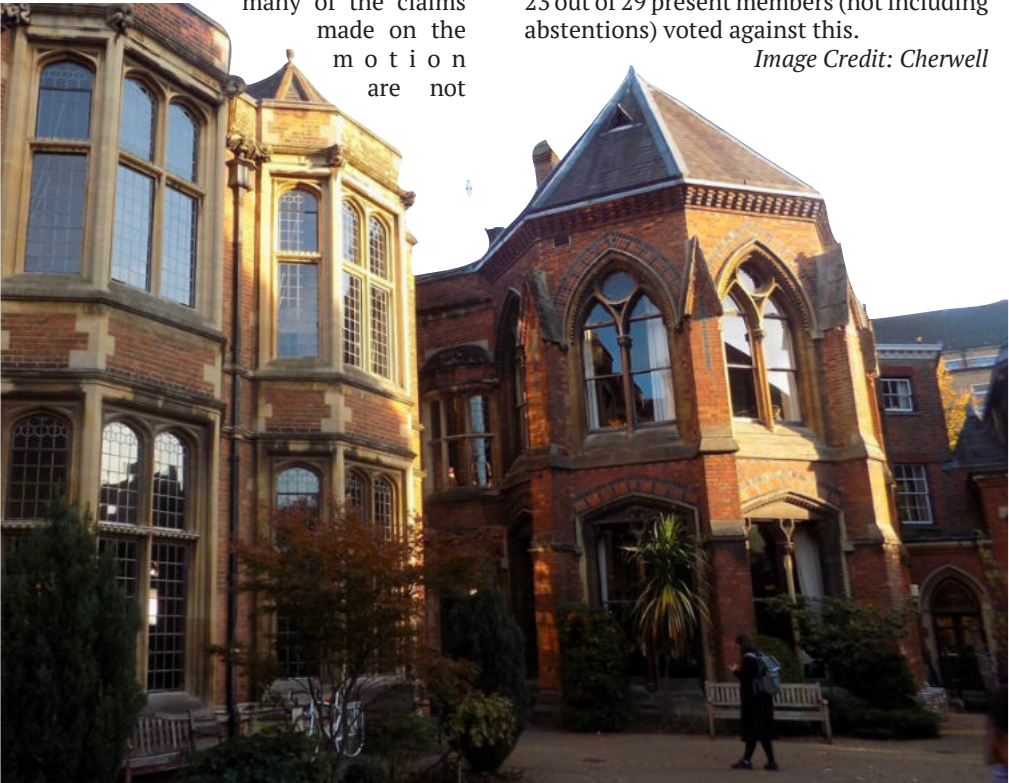
The Union told Cherwell: “The Union offers unique opportunities to its membes, which range from meeting world leaders, to partaking in our debates, and joining us in our social events. The University’s compliance policy indicates that ‘free speech is the lifeblood of a university’, a principle that is upheld by the Oxford Union.

“It is unfortunate that many of the claims made on the motion are not

factually accurate, and merely represent the views of a minority of the student body.”

The possibility of turning the motion into a procedural motion was also discussed, which would have enabled all eligible members to vote, rather than just those present in person or online. A cause of concern, however, was that the list of eligible voters might be outdated, as the list was not updated since last term. Ultimately, 23 out of 29 present members (not including abstentions) voted against this.

Image Credit: Cherwell



Christ Church to build 1450 new homes in North Oxford

Phin Hubbard reports.

Christ Church, flexing the financial muscle of its £770 million endowment (the largest of any Oxford college), has submitted planning applications to Oxford City and South Oxfordshire City Councils.

Looking to develop land north of Headington at Bayswater Brook, the proposals would involve the construction of 1450 new homes, half of which would be classified as affordable. The development would introduce another primary school, nursery and 19km of new cycle paths to OX3. Residents worry that the development may put too much traffic pressure on Headington roundabout and overwhelm the existing GP surgeries in the area.

Speaking to *Oxford Mail*, college treasurer James Lawrie explained that “with Oxford facing a significant housing crisis, we are proud to be delivering vital homes to address Oxford City’s unmet housing need.”

He added, “we look forward to giving this development a distinct identity that integrates seamlessly with the surrounding landscape and will provide amenities and facilities for use by the existing communities at Barton, Barton Park and local villages to help bring

the communities together through an innovative approach to long-term stewardship.”

Both Christ Church and their partner Dorchester Regeneration Ltd. stand to win an impressive contract on what the housing development industry terms ‘brownfield space’, should the proposals be accepted. Bayswater Brook is more commonly termed part of Oxford’s green belt.

The proposed site encompasses the ecologically fragile Sidling Copse and College Pond SSSI as well as the Wick Copse Ancient Woodland and their rarity may pose a serious challenge since they are especially vulnerable to habitat collapse from increased visitor pressure. Extinction Rebellion held a ‘die-in’ in 2020 after South Oxford District Council accepted a development plan in the green belt - there is yet to have been a response by the group to the submission.

As *Cherwell’s* Vansh Sharma reported last month, in a city where no planning permission is granted for developments within a 1,200-metre radius of Carfax Tower that exceed either 18.2m (60ft) in height or 79.3m (260ft) above sea level (whichever is lower), big developments like this are sorely needed. But if accepted, the earliest quoted completion date for the development would be in 2034.

Conservatives lose Oxford district council control in local elections

Sloane Getz reports.

Conservatives no longer have an Oxford district council under their control for the first time in over two decades. This comes after the local elections which took place on 4th May, when Oxfordshire residents turned out to elect new district council members in four of Oxfordshire's five shire districts.

The Liberal Democrats came away with the most favourable results across the board: across the four districts, they picked up a total of 19 new council seats, gaining mostly from seats previously held by Conservative and Independent councillors. The Greens also performed well, picking up seven new seats across Oxfordshire.

In South Oxfordshire, where no party previously had an overall majority, the Liberal Democrats gained 12 seats and a majority. West Oxfordshire and Cherwell now maintain no party majority and are expected to be governed under an existing Liberal Democrat-Green-Labour coalition. The Vale of the White Horse remains under Lib Dem control.

Ending the night in the worst shape were the Conservatives, who lost a whopping 23

seats across Oxfordshire. These results clearly show a broader shift away from Conservative control in Oxfordshire and beyond. This disappointment for the Tories follows the broader trend of Conservative losses in the 4th May local elections across England. As the government has struggled to deal with issues like the cost-of-living crisis, the aftermath of Brexit, and the invasion of Ukraine, national polling and the results of local elections have pointed toward a broader abandonment of the Conservative party by voters.

This election was also the first to be conducted under the controversial 2022 Elections Act, which currently requires voters in England to show an approved ID when voting in local elections, and will apply to all Britons in next year's general election. This new law, designed to target voter fraud, has been met with significant backlash from activists who argue this policy will unfairly disenfranchise people without approved forms of ID. Layla Moran, the MP for Oxford West and Abingdon expressed concern about the ramifications of this policy, tweeting on Thursday that voters in her Oxford constituency had already been turned away from the polls because they lacked proper ID. This development is particularly worrying for areas like Oxford with large student

populations, as according to the Electoral Reform Society, students and young people are less likely to hold the forms of ID accepted at polling places.

Although the City of Oxford did not have elections last week, the larger voting trends in Oxfordshire and across England did not go unnoticed by Oxford University's political associations: The Oxford University Liberal Democrats spokesperson Theo Jupp, a third year at St. Peters, told Cherwell the Lib Dems' performance in the elections were "fantastic", saying that Thursday's results prove "the

people are fed up with the reactionary duopoly of Conservatives and Labour", and alluded to the predictive potential attributed to these elections, which may be the last large-scale set of elections before the general election next year, cautioning voters to "keep an eye on places where the Lib Dems won big if you want to know where the balance of power will lie in the next election".

The Oxford University Labour Club and Oxford University Conservative Association were also approached for comment.

Image Credit: Red Dot via Unsplash



Hopping into business: Oriel launches birthday beer range

Olivia Boyle reports.

In celebration of its 697th anniversary, Oriel College has launched its own "specialty-brewed range of beers".

The beer range was championed by the college's lodge manager, Samuel Henry. He said: "A number of other Colleges use white label beers to create a 'College beer' but I wanted to create something special for the birthday which was uniquely Oriel."

The label is '697' with the college hoping to continue with '698' and '699' leading up to the 700th birthday.

Oriel has been working with "XT Brewing Company, with our staff participating in the brewing process. The selection of ingredients were chosen by the college to be sustainable, opting for UK-grown wheat and barley," as Oriel Bar Rep, Alice McKenzie informed Cherwell.

Since the launch event in April, the beer has been a resounding success. The Oriel Bar Rep told Cherwell that "even on regular bar nights, '697' can be seen in people's hands - it is clearly a crowd favourite", and that "having tried it myself, I am a fan of the bitter, hoppy taste."

The beer is clearly more than just a fad.

Image Credit: Verity Armstrong



Analysis: Labour shouldn't celebrate yet

Zoe Abereoje comments.

Last week's local election saw some reasonably interesting political changes within the local Oxford regions. While no local elections were held within the city, within wider Oxfordshire, the elections can be summarised as big wins for the Lib Dems and terrible losses for the Tories. With the Lib Dems gaining more seats in South Oxfordshire to form a majority and the Tories losing all but three seats in Cherwell, with what looks like just over a year to go until we host another general election, the results from Oxfordshire and beyond suggest that the Tories may not be as strong. That being said, the overall Labour performance may signify that perhaps not all hope is lost.

The move towards Lib Dem shows a general moving away from Conservatives in Oxford, but within the Oxford and the wider national result it's still fascinating that the Tories, who have polled terribly over the last year, have managed to scathe this election as wounded as opposed to entirely decimated. For a party that has had its leader accused of breaking constitutional convention and his own laws during his tenure only to replace him with a leader who tanked the economy, and then finally put in place a leader who couldn't even win the support of his own party in charge, it's almost baffling to consider the extent of their losses. Losing over 1000 seats is an awful outcome, but the result mirrors the woeful performance that Theresa May experienced in 2019. She lost a similar 1330 councillors and but as a rule-abiding PM who mostly suffered due to an inability to

control her party I'm left wondering why the terrible Tories of today didn't lose triple the actual figure.

For context, Labour in 1996 won 43% of the vote share, the year before their landslide victory in the Commons. This time, nationally, Labour won only 35%. Keeping in mind that Labour in the 2019 election suffered the worst result since Foot in the 1980s, to beat the Tories they have to undo the damage of their heavy electoral defeat that they suffered in 2019. While the Tories have had one of their worst results and the Labour one of their best since 1997, one has to wonder whether Charlie Chadwick's piece in *Cherwell*, "why the Tories will win the next election", may actually be clairvoyant.

Generally speaking, it is wise not read into local elections as indicative of the performance of the next general election. Generally, the sitting government tends to do worse in local elections than the opposition does and local elections see individuals vote in a way that they may not do in a local election. Back in the day UKIP lapped up support in local elections in my area, but come general elections it was nowhere to be found.

So therefore, while the Conservatives suffered a relatively heavy defeat in the local elections, it's wise not to get one's hopes up just yet. The UK really seems to love conservatives, even in their worst moments, Cherwell only managed to stretch as far as taking away their majority, but conservative presence still remains in the area despite their pitiful performance in national government.

Overworked and underpaid: Testimonies of Oxford’s scouts

Anandita Abraham reports.

The kitchen was scrubbed this morning, but Pam’s* superior runs her fingers across the kitchen walls and holds them up to the light, then says to clean the walls again. I ask Pam about the rash above her wrist and she says it’s the detergent. The scouts I speak to take the early buses into Oxford. They have grandchildren. Some have lived in this country for 35 years, others fled armed conflicts in Eastern Europe to come to the UK. Some are not permitted smoking breaks and are terrified of picking up a call from their kids abroad, fearing that superiors might see them on the phone.

Only two other British universities have equivalents of the scout system, where housekeeping has to navigate a hazardous student habitat to clean toilets and kitchens, make beds and Hoover rooms, serve tea to guests over the vacation, and sometimes act as a welfare checkpoint. At other universities a rota in the kitchen determines who takes out the rubbish that week.

“Money is never enough”

Scouts (or ‘bedders’, as they are known at Cambridge) knock to collect trash and, at some colleges, enter unannounced. Many students find these awkward run-ins embarrassing or bothersome, and are quick to lash out at scouts, who didn’t make the rules. Cleaning the living space of routinely stressed students is a thankless job – and an

underpaid one.

“[The] money is never enough”, Pam says to me when I ask why a 70-year-old scout with a bad knee can’t retire. Oxford Worker Justice is a student campaign that demands information from colleges about pay and other details in order to generate a ranking of colleges according to their adherence to the Oxford Living Wage (OLW). The OLW, at £10.50 at the time of inquiry earlier in the year, is a “liveable minimum pay” set by the City Council to reflect the high costs of living in Oxford. Eight colleges’ lowest wages were below the OLW and 16 colleges say they do not intend to increase wages to align with the OLW, which as of April is £11.35. Some colleges, including Christ Church and Balliol, have since told *Cherwell* that they will uplift salaries in line with the Oxford Living Wage this spring.

When Oxford Worker Justice requested information on wages in 2021, other colleges justified lower wages by saying staff had non-wage benefits like access to (public) parks or gifted chocolate at Christmas. Only ten colleges have an OLW accreditation, which is a scheme for employers to commit to pay the OLW. It should also be noted that colleges including Christ Church provide some monetary benefits for supplementary work including conference benefits.

A decentralised system

The poor pay stems in part from the prevalence of subcontractors in hiring



Oxford’s scouts. Most colleges use agency staff, with Keble and LMH topping the list of most agency staff employed. This reduces administration costs and makes hiring and firing more flexible, and scouts hired through agencies often experience unique challenges. Lucy, who works with Oxford Worker Justice, says that reporting to chains of authority in both college and the agency can make for a worse work environment.

When her colleague for the building takes leave, a scout I speak to has to clean four floors instead of two without extra remuneration. There is no direct line through which to express grievances to employers as colleges are not their direct employer. Furthermore, the University does not regulate the hiring practices of colleges because colleges are “independent of the University and are independent employers”. 2021 statistics corroborate the job insecurity subcontracted workers face. Agency staff at Corpus Christi, at that time, rarely stayed in the job longer than three months. Even those who are still in a job are not guaranteed consistent work and pay, as some colleges still employ zero-hour contracts, so staff are left without work for weeks at a time.

Lucy says no college is breaking the law on the living wage, but many do not or cannot provide details on sensitive topics like whether they use agencies, or details of measures taken during the pandemic for health and safety. Oxford Worker Justice launched a petition during the pandemic in response to reports that during the lockdown college staff had to work without Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Pam experienced this and says she was terrified to have to clean the bathroom a student with COVID was using.

I ask Pam why in her years as a scout she hasn’t heard talk of unions. “They think there’s no point,” she says. Lucy from Oxford Worker Justice echoes this sentiment. She believes the college system “creates a different dynamic to other [universities] where there is one institution to put pressure on”. The lack of a centralised employer creates an insular environment so scouts have no wider channel of interaction with those at other colleges. Oxford Worker Justice used to run small groups at the now-closed East Oxford Community centre with the hope

of directing workers to general unions like IWGB and UNISON that seek to represent college workers. Turnout to these meetings was, however, low.

Isolation, fear and inequality

When I reach out to friends to get them to put me in touch with their scouts, a common problem is the language barrier. At some colleges less than 30% of the staff are British. A majority of workers at St Anne’s in 2021, for example, were EU citizens. An old *Cherwell* investigation reported of colleges such as Jesus asking scouts to use Anglicised names, claims that were later denied by the college. I’m told that a college worker who spoke at a rally claimed that the norm of targeting immigrants for jobs emerged because they are least likely to complain, and most likely to fear the repercussions of speaking up. Lucy says it is clear that in more ways than one, “the system is designed for it to be difficult for them to ask for more ... to advocate for themselves”.

Up until the 70s, scouts at Oxford were called “servants”. I am struck by anecdotes about vomit in sinks and rotting food dripping through fridges, and Lucy tells me that overwhelmingly, “scouts just wish students just didn’t do sh*tty things that make their jobs more difficult”. An article in the Telegraph by a graduate argues that “the artificial bubble of college life at Oxbridge is perhaps unlike anywhere else in the world for how it compresses privilege and poverty”. Due to language barriers, memories of bad confrontations, and a sometimes fear-fuelled work environment, scouts may find it daunting to even tell residents

how hard the students make their work.

The pay gap at this world-renowned university between the yearly earnings of minimum wage workers (scouts, kitchen staff, porters, maintenance) and maximum wage employees (over £100K/year) will grow if more colleges do not commit to the Oxford Living (subsistence) Wage. For scouts, Lucy suggests that “the knowledge [of better pay at other colleges] is enough to get that increase”.

Scouts want fairer pay and better treatment. The system needs reform that favours people like Pam, who tells me that all she wants is “some bl**dy respect”.

*Name has been changed for anonymity.

Image Credit (above): Ushika Kidd

Image Credit (left): Oxford Worker Justice

The Oxford Worker Justice 2023 Salary Report for College Cleaning Staff

College	Median Salary	Lowest Salary
Merton	£26,598	Not Provided
All Souls	£25,638 (12.73ph)	£22,496 (11.17ph)
Lady Margaret Hall	£23,611	£21,294
Magdalen	£23,583 (11.71ph)	£23,583 (11.71ph)
University College	£23,020 (11.43ph)	£22,858 (11.35ph)
Jesus	£22,903	£22,149
Somerville	£22,879 (11.36ph)	£22,879 (11.36ph)
Keble	£22,840	£22,840
Pembroke	£22,672	£22,627
John's (St)	£22,315 (11.08ph)	£22,315 (11.08ph)
St Edmund Hall	£22,150.28	£22,149
St Hugh's	£22,133	£22,133
Trinity	£22,048	£22,048
Queen's (The)	£21,987	£21,840
Oriel	Not Specified	£21,840
Brasenose	£21,952 (10.90ph)	£21,952 (10.90ph)
Exeter	£21,952 (10.90ph)	£21,952 (10.90ph)
Nuffield	£21,671	£21,671
New	£21,294	Not Provided
Regent's	£21,255	£21,255
Green Templeton	£21,197	£21,197
Green Templeton	£21,197	£21,197
St Catherine's	£21,167 (10.51ph)	£21,167 (10.51ph)
Oxford university	£21,150	£21,150
Worcester	Not Specified	£21,150
Christ Church	£21,147 (10.50ph)	£21,147 (10.50ph)
Corpus Christi	Not Specified	£21,147 (10.50ph)
St Hilda's	£19,938 (9.90ph)	£19,938 (9.90ph)
St Anthony's	£19,938 (9.90 ph)	£19,938 (9.90 ph)
Stephen's (St / Hall)	£19,619**	Not Provided
Peter's (St)	£17,004**	£11,336**
Lincoln	£16,873**	£11,336**
Harris Manchester	£16,662**	Not Provided
Mansfield	£14,937**	Not Provided
Balliol	£14,430**	£3,463**

All of the numbers included in this chart were self-reported by colleges when asked to provide the median annual salary and range of salaries paid to cleaning staff and scouts hired by their college. The data was primarily reported in January 2023, therefore some salary changes may have been implemented by colleges since then.

Where wages have been denoted with (**) the colleges included part-time annual salaries in their reported figures.

Where colleges only reported hourly rates, these numbers were converted into estimated annual full-time salaries using a factor of 2,014 (as applied in Oxford Living Wage calculations) and the specified hourly rate was included in parentheses.



Women’s Rugby Cuppers

Flo Baker Masters

Right from the start, Worcester showed excellent structure in their play and displayed pace and ambition in their backline. The Worcester backs wasted no time in making an impact as Hewitt crossed the try line early in the game, putting the team ahead with a score of 5-0. A try by Watts further solidified Worcester’s advantage, leaving the game to 10-5 at half time.

A well-placed kick from scrum-half Masters and the skillful play of Preston and Watt resulted in

another try for Worcester, with Watt successfully grounding the ball directly under the posts. Maddy Kawalenko’s conversion extended their lead to 17-10, but two yellow cards shown to Worcester



players in succession put them on the back foot, leaving them to fight until the final whistle.

Corpus captain Webb proved to be a formidable force on the field, scoring two tries for her team in the 2nd half and keeping Corpus in contention until the very end. However, a missed conversion in the 80th minute left Corpus behind

In the end Worcester/St Catz emerged victorious with a 17-15 win over last years champions Corpus/LMH/Trinity/St Hilda’s.

Image Credit: Tabs Preston(left)
Nikola Boysova(right)

MEN’S CUP FINAL:

TEDDY HALL 31-25 SAINTS



The best coaches never play?

Oliver Hughes

Despite these hugely successful playing careers, neither Lampard nor Gerard have matched this performance as coaches. Lampard has had rather underwhelming spells in charge at Derby County, Chelsea and Everton. Gerrard enjoyed some success in his first role as a manager with Rangers, leading them to a title in the 20/21 season but moved on to Aston Villa in November 2021 where he lasted less than a year, sacked winning just 2 of their first 11 games this season. Both of these incredibly successful footballers have clearly struggled to make a triumphant transition to management and so join other high-profile English ex-players such as Wayne Rooney and the Neville brothers in failing to emulate the success of their playing careers.

However, the correlation between an unassuming playing career and a successful managerial one is clearly demonstrated by many top coaches like Jurgen Klopp (Liverpool) and José Mourinho (AS Roma). Neither had football careers at the top level.

Coaches such as Mourinho, Klopp and even Still have gained fame because of their success in management in the same way that Lampard and Gerrard did as players, and so were left completely unburdened by the expectation and pressure of the media when starting out. Even football’s other most successful managers Carlo Ancelotti and Pep Guardiola avoided this pressure when they became coaches, although both had far more successful playing careers than either Klopp or Mourinho. Despite their success, they never reached the heights of players like Lampard and Gerrard in terms of both achievement and status, with these two being figureheads of England’s golden generation of footballing talent. Starting a coaching career out of the scrutinising spotlight of the media allows a new manager to slowly develop and gain invaluable experience as an assistant coach to other successful managers, something that all four of football’s highest-achieving managers have in common. Lampard and Gerrard both bypassed the opportunity to develop this crucial backroom experience, pressured into accelerating their managerial careers by an over-expectant and impatient media and so have left themselves unequipped to deal with world-class opposition or a bad run of form.

Whilst no one is saying that “the best coaches never play”, it does seem to be the case that those ruling the current footballing landscape were not the most successful players and were very careful to transition gradually from the vastly different worlds of playing and coaching.

MEN’S BLUES TRIUMPH IN 138TH VARSITY

Men’s Blues reign victorious for the third year in a row with 2-0 win in a mixed day for OUAFC



American football Varsity Blues Bowl

Jessica Cullen

This weekend sees Oxford Lancers take on Cambridge Pythons in the 16th American Football Varsity Bowl. Set to be played on the brand new Lancers pitch at university parks, the game promises action, suspense and a memorable afternoon in classic Varsity fashion.

Last year’s Varsity ended in frustration for the Oxford side, after narrowly losing to the Pythons, and the focus this year bring the trophy back to Dark Blue grounds. Many key players are set to grace the field such as Bill De La Rosa, a receiver, whose catches are promised to astound, GB Allstar Joel Chesters, the resident quarterback who is sure to make some amazing plays, and David Ojeabulu, the team running back, who is known to break ankles and tackles alike.

DATE:13.05.23, KICK OFF: 2PM

OUAFC Varsity report

Monday’s football Varsity at Oxford City’s Raw Charging stadium provided mixed results. The Cambridge women emerged comfortable victors, whilst the Oxford Men’s Blues won for the third year running. After a disappointing cancellation of the Football Varsity scheduled at Leyton Orient, all teams had to refocus for a Football Varsity Round 2.

The men’s Blues were clear favourites for this match. Despite missing some of their best players due to injury or absence they had a strong start. There were some great performances, such as the Oxford goalkeeper, Harry Way who made some incredible saves, and Alfie Cicale who scored the opening goal with great flair. Fidan Suljik elevated the score to 2-0 and centre-back Noah Hudson, was named player of the match. The Oxford Blues Men’s team put on a great performance and won their match comfortably in what was a real team effort. They were worthy winners and were presented with the trophy by Oxford University Vice Chancellor, Professor Irene

Tracey, CBE, FMedSci.

The women’s game got off to a shaky start as both teams attempted to find their feet and Oxford built some promising attacks. However, an injury to Cambridge’s centre back, Arden Dierker Viik, around the 25th minute saw play take a 15 minute break and it was Cambridge who capitalised, scoring two goals before half time, and a further two in the second half. Cambridge’s Neve Mayes was name Player of the Match after her hatrick. The Oxford Blues were ultimately outplayed by Cambridge’s structured and effective build-up play and clinical performance.

Women’s captain Jessica Cullen stated “although an unfortunate result, the varisty does not reflect to success of this team and the great season we have had. I am very proud to have captained these talented girls.”

A large congratulations to event organisers Ore Jacobi and Ashley Chee for a succesful event.



What happens at Port and Policy?

Paul Furey went to the Oxford University Conservative Association's infamous Sunday drinks social so you don't have to.

A crowd of eager onlookers encircle a suited man like they are watching a schoolyard fight. He is giving a port-fuelled passionate advocacy for the invasion of France. This is Port and Policy.

Every Sunday of term the Oxford University Conservative Association (OUCA) holds their famous Port and Policy event. Since 1994 it has attracted the most conservative—and some not-so-conservative-minded students from the University to attend. The alumni of OUCA include past Prime Ministers such as Margaret Thatcher, David Cameron, and Theresa May, and high-profile MPs like Jacob Rees-Mogg and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt.

On Facebook OUCA promises “a night of vigorous discussion and plenty of port to go round”. On the first Sunday of Trinity term they hosted a specially themed Port and Policy to mark the eve of Saint George's Day—suitably patriotic. They had a first motion to match that spirit, “This house would slay the dragon”. Additionally, they advertised “This house would cross the picket lines” and a secret third motion to be revealed on the night.

The venue is St Giles' Church on Woodstock Road. Members of the OUCA committee give assurances that they are usually able to procure the Oxford Union and that this was simply a temporary setting. It certainly did not give the impression of the home of Oxford's nearly one-hundred-year-old conservative association. It was more like a tacky parish hall with board games on display on the shelves. It was no bigger than my tutor's office.

Arriving slightly after the posted start time of 8:30pm, we are immediately greeted by a very keen treasurer. He is excited to tell us we are paying the first entry fees (£8) under his reign. At this point, it is clear we are the only people here besides the obligated OUCA committee members.

It is also clear that I am underdressed compared to the rest of the attendees who have stuck to the lounge suit dress code in a stricter sense. But no paying customer is turned away from OUCA when they have cash in hand.

They are busy folding up tables, clearing the hall, and stocking a makeshift bar with port. At the front of the church hangs a ten-foot Union Jack and a five-foot Saint George's Cross. In front of them stands a small table with an empty bottle of port and cutting board.

We stand around in groups until a bellying voice, the voice of a character we would later learn to be the political officer, sounds out: “get some alcohol!” The bar was open.

OUCA offers three options for port: fine white, tawny, and ruby. We found none to be particularly appealing. Further research priced each bottle at £5 a pop.

Eventually the church hall slowly fills up, and around 80 people end up being in attendance. Shortly after 9pm the proceedings begin. The political officer grabs our attention by using the very sturdy, empty bottle of port as a makeshift gavel and smashing it against the chopping board.

With no microphones in place, Port and Policy relies on the strength of the speaker's ability to shout to be heard. About half of the people speaking possess this ability, the rest get lost in the chatter between onlookers and the disinterested port enthusiasts.

First are some announcements. These cover the policy of no photos being taken as well as the news of a party to be held that week. The theme—Thatcher's Golden Years. They also announce the policy on heckling. It is very much encouraged.

For any “good conservative Thatcherites” the crowd is to shout out “sound!”, as opposed to the boos that serve as the response to a “commie Blairite”. If any

committee member speaks it is good practice for the crowd to shout “Resign!”.

The first debate begins: Would this house slay the dragon? The political officer bangs his gavel and calls for anyone in the crowd to speak in proposition.

The first speaker gives his interpretation of the dragon and why it should be slain. “The dragon is the Chinese Communist Party - Burn it to the ground!” He is met with cheers of “sound!”. When he finishes, the political officer pounds his gavel again and then calls for a speaker in the crowd for the opposition. This process repeats itself until the debate finishes.

Most speeches are no longer than a few sentences, a whole debate seemed to average about half an hour. A key difference between the debates at Port and Policy and, say, those at the Oxford Union, is that no one takes the debate at Port and Policy seriously. Everyone who steps up to speak is, by and large, doing it for a laugh.

A speaker in opposition to the motion proclaims “we should banish the snakes, not slay the dragon - accept Saint Patrick, not Saint George”. He is immediately followed by a speech in proposition, “we are Protestants today” he cries out. “Slay the Antichrist!” Port and Policy debates don't shy away from current political events. It is suggested that the dragon could represent “a useless civil service that can't be told to do any work” in solidarity with Dominic Raab.

There were proposals to not slay the dragon, but simply fox hunt the dragon. Or not slay the dragon, but simply slay. However, the most convincing argument seemed to be that the house should not slay the dragon, as what is a dragon if not a Tory? “It just sits on a hoarded pile of wealth”. Nonetheless, the ‘ayes’ took the motion decisively: this house would slay the dragon.

The debate that followed was titled “This house would cross the picket line”.

There was now noticeably less interest from the crowd as the chatter grew and the queue for port lengthened. Nearly all speakers were inaudible so we resorted to mingling among the attendees. Most were regulars at Port and Policy. “What else would you do with £8 on a Sunday?”

Indeed, a few were more liberal-minded, who boasted they only came to laugh at and, when they went up to speak, rile up the Tories. It was all in the spirit of good fun and much less serious, they told us, than the “Beer and Bickering” at Labour Club. Fittingly, a commotion of “boos” erupted from the debating circle as another speaker exclaimed proudly, “the best thing Margaret Thatcher ever did was die”.

The second debate ended with another victory for the “ayes”: unsurprisingly, this house would cross the picket line.

Finally, it was time for the long-awaited secret third motion to be revealed. It didn't disappoint. “This house would invade France”, the political officer roared. This was the type of absurd motion that recaptured the full crowd's attention. It set off the starting gun for a competition for who could make the most outrageous statement and get the biggest roar from the spectators. What proceeded was an onslaught of smears on the French nation advising invasion.

“They smell and are stupid”. “We'd have a good time doing it.” “F*ck the froggy b*stards.” “We must cross the Channel for the croissant. Seize the croissant!” “This house would invade France because this house is a gamer.” One rallying cry played into the gender makeup of the observers. “We will dominate France, like you would like to be dominated by a woman. Many of you have never seen a woman in the flesh!”

There was concern that the motion did not go far enough. “As has been seen, the Channel is too easy to cross. It should be made wider. Destroy France!” A small contingent maintained throughout that France did not actually exist. “France is a lie propagated by Big Cheese.”

The main stumbling block for OUCA was that a sizable proportion had their hearts set on the restoration of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. “If we are going to invade a neighbouring republic, let it be the Irish people.”

In the end, the ‘ayes’ won for a third time. This house would invade France.

With the final debate concluded, at almost precisely 11pm, the OUCA committee congregates to the front of the hall and belt out ‘God Save the King’. With that, everyone heads to Spoons to finish the night.

The main feature of Port and Policy is students LARPing as ultra-conservatives for a laugh. Their outrageous declarations always lapped up by the crowd. Nothing is said in seriousness. But as seen in the strong representation of OUCA alumni in UK governments past and present, these people are likely to go on and lead the country in some capacity in the future.

It is a stark realisation that the speeches decreed at Port and Policy will inevitably echo into the behind-closed-doors discussions in Westminster offices.

Artwork by Tom Godfrey



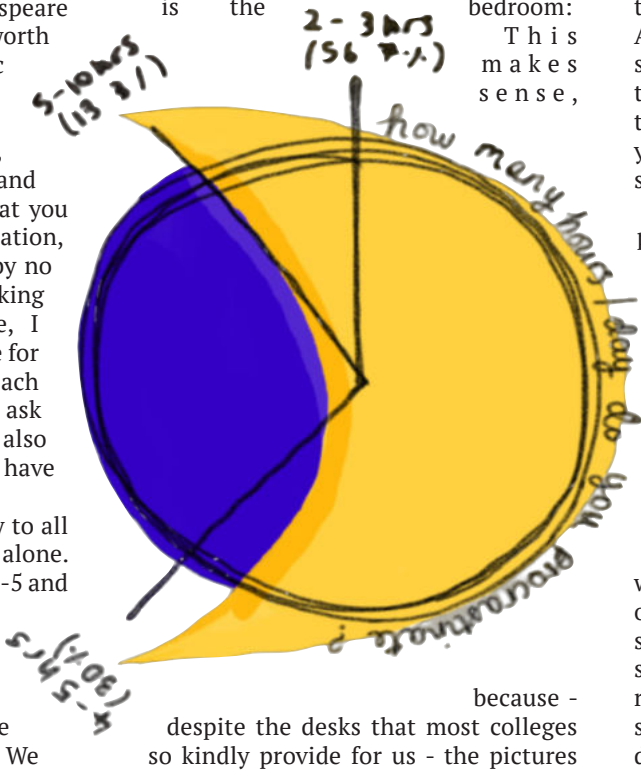
Artwork by Ushika Kidd

All findings are taken from the 31 responses to a survey that was released early Hilary Vac 2023.

Before I begin on my journey, exploring the depths of Oxford’s culture of procrastination, I would like to make a confession. This vac, I was supposed to write 2 essays, rewrite 2 collection essays, watch 10 Shakespeare plays and read the *Prelude* by Wordsworth (a total of 13 books). I spent this vac rewatching *Friends* for the 3rd time, finishing another fantasy book trilogy, sending self-tape auditions, keeping up with #escapril, baking and writing this article. I say this so that you know, when it comes to procrastination, I am highly experienced and I am, by no means, speaking as an outsider looking in. Because of this chronic issue, I thought that it would be appropriate for the beginning of Trinity Term, to reach out to fellow procrastinators and ask them about their experiences and also to share any advice that they might have that could help us.

The main point, however, is to say to all those who procrastinate, you are not alone. When given the options of 0-1, 2-3, 4-5 and 5-10 hours of procrastination, just over half of the responses to the survey claimed that they procrastinate 2-3 hours a day (56.7%) with no reports of people procrastinating between 0-1 hours. We

all have a tendency to procrastinate. This might not sound like a huge chunk of the day, but this is disregarding the hours of lectures, social commitments and classes we might have. 2-3 hours can feel like a lot with the endless string of things we have to commit to. So what do we do to span the time between being given the assignment and rushing to hand it in? The scene of the crime for most people who responded to the form is the bedroom: This makes sense,



on the pinboards just look so cute and make us think of that time we spent in France and “oh! Where were the pictures for that again?” or “I wonder how much a trip to Spain would cost” or “I should really reply to those messages” (unrelated to the train of thought but a present thought nonetheless”). Social media is also the leading contender as a method of procrastination with 20 out of the 31 responses saying that they use social media to procrastinate - especially scrolling. And your bed does just look so comfy and a perfect place to pursue all of these various trains of thought. Bonus: you’re nice and warm and not stressed!

A few more fun ways of procrastination included cleaning, baking, and even making playlists. Methods of procrastination even vary if you’re just one person: “Cleaning/tidying, chatting, doing other things I need to do instead of work, making playlists, lying in bed staring at the ceiling, crying” Honestly, we are so creative in the ways we choose to procrastinate that “doing other things instead of doing work” really sums it up perfectly. Procrastination is such a beautifully diverse activity that can range in time taken and activities chosen so that we can spend as much time NOT doing work as possible.

“100% of respondents agreed that Oxford burns them out...”

Despite this, 90% of respondents also reported that they would say that their procrastination is an issue. So why do we procrastinate? Simultaneously, 100% of respondents agreed that Oxford burns them out, which is where we can see a common denominator. Something that we can all agree on when we’re talking about the City of Dreaming Spires is that it is, whilst beautiful, VERY hard work. Ironically, being in an environment that’s so academically intensive, procrastination can make us feel so inadequate and we begin to lose faith in our academic ability. One response that echoed many others, encompassing the experience of how Oxford might fuel our procrastination was that they often procrastinate when “in situations of immense stress”. Although having some level of pressure might give a well-needed push in the right direction, the stress of our lifestyles is perpetual which means that even if you know that there is a deadline, this makes procrastination worse. Another said that they are more likely to procrastinate “when I have a piece of work I’m not enjoying”. However, in this TED-Ed Video, they answer the question “Why do you procrastinate even though it feels bad?”,

they take a more psychological approach to answer why we subject ourselves to the endless cycle that is procrastination? The answer is that it's because, for a lot of people, we care a lot about the task at hand which means we stress ourselves out and do our best to avoid it (because not trying means not failing) until it's too late to do our best. This is more echoed by the response that they most procrastinate in situations "When I really care about the work and it's important to me."

This intensity causes a frustrating cycle of putting something off, and then being so behind on work that there's no point in starting it at night when the day is finished so you might as well try in the morning but then it's 3am and you're sitting in your room, a 24 hour college library or a creepy computer room trying to finish the essay in time for your 9am tutorial which you know you're going to be too exhausted to interact with anyway. A few responses also said that they often leave things too late and end up rushing things like essays, which, in turn, leads you to feel inadequate and not completing your best academic work. One person described how procrastination "ends up making my work so much more stressful than it has to be".

It also means that the standard of the work you submit goes down:

"I end up rushing work and submitting subpar essays, sometimes past the deadline"

There's is something deeper in this observation, especially when we talk about Oxford students, who are often already perfectionists before we get here. There is something really terrifying about the aspect of trying your best in a piece of work and being told that it's still not good enough. Maybe in an essay subject, you spend days researching and working on answering a question, only for your tutor to turn around and say they don't like it. That possibility is always looming and that's so disheartening.

Procrastination means that you don't give yourself enough time to finish the piece of work, you always have the excuse that you didn't have sufficient time to do it and there's no risk that your best work might not actually be good enough. The heavy workload that we are given in the first place lends itself to this cause because we become students that become used to churning out pieces of work that are not actually perfect and will probably not be your best work.

"In this case, it's important to remember

that you're not procrastinating because you're lazy, it's a freeze/flight response from when you're being put in a situation of intense stress."

This was one of the best pieces of advice that was given by one of the respondents. This is especially important when we're considering the

role of perfection and the pressure to achieve it causing our procrastination getting worse. My own advice to you would be that this idea of academic perfection is completely artificial. There is someone that's to be better than you doing each thing that you strive to do but that's okay and it doesn't make your contributions to your subject/society/field any less important.

Some people also highlighted how your procrastination can be used as something helpful:

"In these cases [when work is boring], use procrastination as a signifier for what you're not enjoying but also what you probably need to concentrate more when trying to focus."

In a university when we're trained to research all topics of our field in depth, it's helpful to look at procrastination in this way, especially for those of us who are given option papers, so that we can see, through our procrastination, the routes that we really don't want to be pursuing.

Thankfully for me and, I hope, some of you, the respondents also offered a lot of practical advice. Whilst the bedroom draws you in with the comfort of a warm bed, for many people who responded to the form, going to the library is a popular way

for place for them to go to stop procrastinating, or even planning study groups with friends. I can attest to the fact that being around other people who seem to be working so vigorously keeps me accountable for persevering in the

work that I need to be doing and stops me from going onto Instagram on my laptop. This person highlighted how to keep yourself accountable in more ways than this:

"Commit to being in a public space where other people can see me, make lists detailing out my tasks, timetable in times to work and also to relax and see other people"

Surrounding yourself with people and making plans with them to study can give a bit of structure to your time and can also help to make sure you commit to leaving time to study because another person is involved.

If you're a bit more of an introvert and find it better to be on your own then some others advised the Pomodoro technique or "turn [your] phone off and focus on doing a small task to start! Once I have some momentum going then I might also be able to do the bigger tasks."

A few of the responses also included people who had ADHD and they also had advice for others: "Try to plan things, remember to take my ADHD meds, use other people to hold me accountable"

One way of using others to keep yourself accountable, especially if you have ADHD is "Body doubling (have some-

one around me so it motivates me to study)." Body-doubling is a self-help technique, popularly advertised for those who have ADHD, where someone anchor's you to your task (by conducting it with you) to ensure you don't get distracted.

One thing that I would advise against is to "motivate [yourself] through fear and panic". This is especially important when we can see

how a lot of people's procrastination stems from their fear of imperfection. Using that same fear to push yourself is only going to perpetuate the cycle that we are working so hard to avoid. If you take anything away from this, please remember that you need to give yourself a break and not work yourself into burnout.

"Your brain needs a break, and even though some procrastination like scrolling is probably unhealthy for you, it's also useful to not be constantly analyzing things or committing to projects (as you do in your degree). Just because you aren't doing work doesn't mean your time

is wasted or you're not being productive"

In many ways, procrastination is our brain's way of saying that we're overdoing it and that we need to give ourselves a break. This is your reminder to keep telling yourself:

"You're not lazy and you're not alone!! You work hard regardless."

Even "treat yourself after [the work is] done" because you'll be rewarding yourself for ensuring that you've worked hard and it will become something that is a bit less stressful.

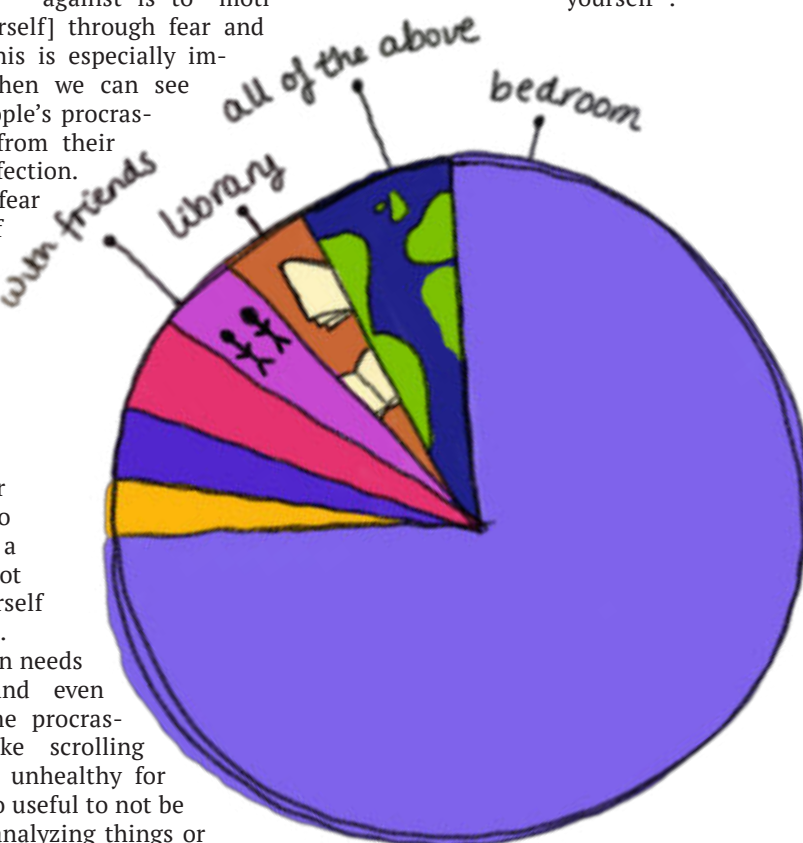
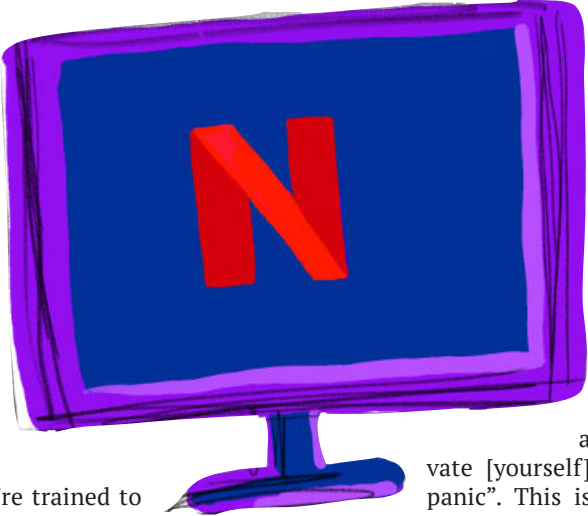
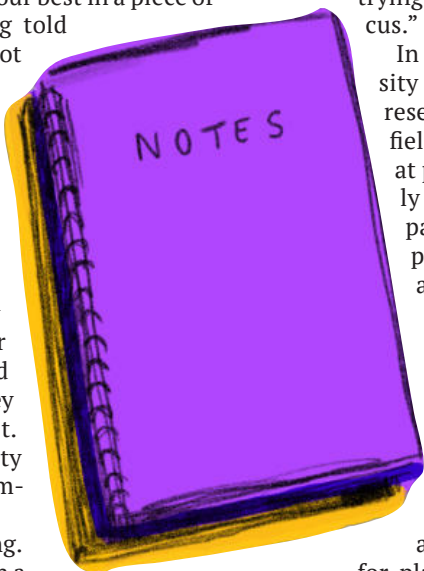
Procrastination, whilst the bane of the Oxford education system, is actually something

that we can use to our advantage. So, to all of my classmates, friends, and fellow procrastinators, please, take a moment to procrastinate this



evening, crochet, bake cookies, reorganise your pin board and...

"Remember why you're here and doing what you're doing. Don't let anything snowball and if you need to be in a moment of procrastination or a moment away from everything allow yourself to! Learn how you best get back on track and don't keep it or any other pressures to yourself".



Should Oxford students vote in Oxford local elections?

Who even cares?

Nyat Aron-Yohannes

I am barely here six months of the year. I am only familiar with places that are within a 20-minute walking distance from my room. It's the reason I have never been to St Hugh's (sorry, not sorry). So why should people like me vote in the local elections? Only actual residents of Oxford, those that live here all year round, should be eligible to vote in its local elections. As for students, if you want change, go to the Student Union.



Vote, but I won't

Zoe Abereojie

With the greatest consciousness that I may one day change my mind, I'll admit that I currently have no plans of ever voting. And if I ever do I'll give my vote to the Green Party. It's just so much effort for something that I know will change very little. Voting, however, is important and as a politics student, I feel it is important to encourage everyone I know to engage. I know that my vote is unlikely to influence the election result. That being said, for me to continue not voting relies on you all voting, so for the sake of sponsoring my desire not to vote, you should all carry on, I suppose.



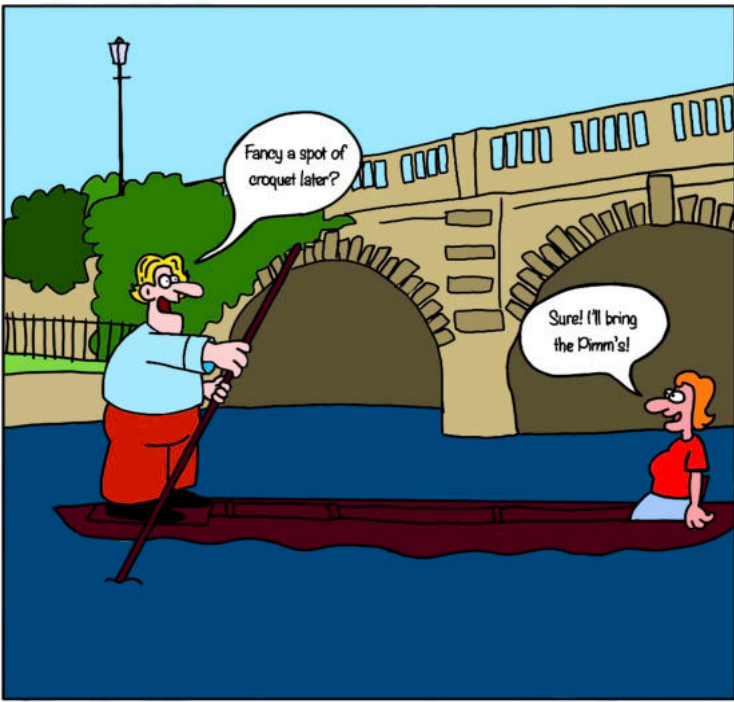
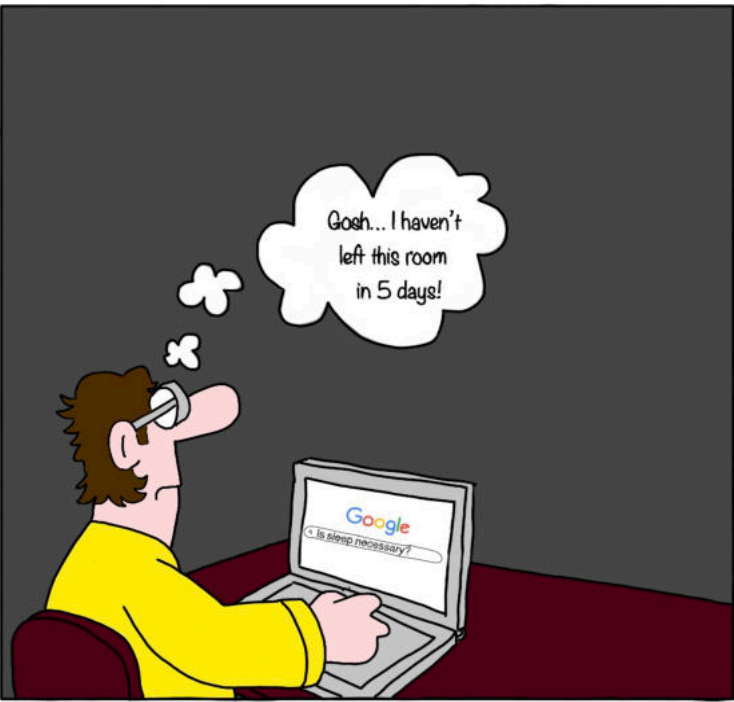
Vote, but be authentic

Freddie Maud

As students, we are some of the most opinionated, intellectually active members of British society. Daily, we take to social media to share our views for a variety of reasons – popularity, conformity, and generating controversy. Voting is our chance to test ourselves in the most sacred, legally-binding instrument of public opinion. It allows us to find out, for good, if the views we promote are really our own.



The two types of students at Oxford:



T.R.G.

The problem of gerontocracy

Martin Commy

As Jeremy Hunt ushered in a new era of austerity, it seemed like nothing was immune to the chancellor's axe. Taxes were to rise, spending on public services reduced, the energy price cap reined in. As the principle of "sound money" reared its head once more, nothing was off the table in a desperate attempt to get spending under control.

Nothing, that is, apart from pensions. For the poor, children, and disabled, the treasury door was firmly shut; but just as he was taking food off the tables of the hungry, Hunt was busy lavishing riches upon the elderly. Not only is the pension "triple lock" to remain in place – guaranteeing a 10% rise in pensions, year on year, costing the treasury tens, if not hundreds of billions – but the limit on pensions savings has been scrapped, costing the treasury a further £2.75 billion in the next five years.

This is despite the fact that are few groups in British society who need extra government help less than pensioners. A quarter of pensioners are millionaires, many more than are in poverty (indeed, poverty among pensioners is around half as common as among children); since 2010 pension funds have doubled, while wages have remained nearly static. Unlike Millennials or members of Gen Z, Boomers also had the luxury of growing up in a world where nearly everyone could afford a house, and where one job was good enough for life.

Not only is investment in pensions at the cost of everything else unfair, it is economically illiterate. Spending on education, childcare and infrastructure is an investment that guarantees a brighter, richer future; while pensions are of course necessary to prevent the old falling into poverty, increased spending on them offers no long-term economic benefits.

Pensions, however, are only one manifestation of a problem that runs throughout British political life. Virtually every single major political event over the past decade can only be understood with reference to the complete dominance of the elderly over the debate. Brexit, for instance, will be completely disastrous for young people: it will reduce long-term GDP by as much as 10%, while devastating academic research and reducing opportunities for immigration. For the old, however, Brexit means fewer immigrants and an easier time holding onto a nostalgic concept of British exceptionalism; the only real downside is a little more bureaucracy when going on holiday.

Time and time again, the interests of a youthful many have been neglected in favour of an elderly few. What the young need more than anything else is a growing economy; but for the old economic growth is difficult and disturbing – it means noisy construction projects, radical, worrying change and increased immigration - with most of them never to enjoy its positive effects. Almost every economically

irrational decision taken by subsequent Tory governments – Brexit, the lack of spending on infrastructure, a refusal to reform planning laws – is in fact supremely rational when viewed through the lens of strengthening their elderly voting base.

It is clear, therefore, that British politics increasingly resembles a gerontocracy – rule by the old. What is less clear is how to fix it. The most important step is to increase voting turnout among the young. The reason government after government neglects the interest of anyone of working age is because, politically, it's far less beneficial; in 2019, over 75 year olds had a turnout not far off twice that of 18-24 year olds. Also

crucial is to give the old a stake in an expanding economy. The triple-lock, while a brilliant piece of rhetoric, is a misnomer; our current pension system instead resembles a skeleton key, wielded by the old to raid the country's coffers at every opportunity. A solution first proposed by the Economist, so perfect as to practically be genius, is to link pension growth directly to economic growth. Many would've been more hesitant to opt for

Brexit if it meant potentially seeing their pensions shrink by thousands of pounds.

British politics, therefore, is captive to a special interest group of doddling old grandmas and zimmer frame wielding grandads. Until this group's undue influence is weeded out, Britain's status will remain the same; a declining power, destined to end up as the "Sick Man of Europe" once again.

“It is clear, therefore, that British politics increasingly resembles a gerontocracy”

“The most important step is to increase voting turnout among the young.”

The Debate Chamber

Georgie and Freddie go head to head, debating whether Summer Vllls is overhyped.

There are absolutely no reasons why the descriptor “overhyped” should be associated with college rowing. As any lycra-clad, stash-mad, atik-frequenting college rower will tell you, Summer Vllls is the highpoint of sport at Oxford.

After months (or weeks) of intense early morning training, fuelled purely on hall breakfast hashbrowns and raw team spirit, this is what it all comes down to. This is what makes all those caught crabs worth it. Four days of bloodthirsty competition in a Hunger Games-esque knockout to see which college can sell the cheapest Pimms, steal the most flags, and provide the face of OxRow’s next “sexiest gurn” shitpost. What could be better?

Picture this: it’s a sunny Wednesday morning and over the dulcet tones of the commentator ripping into some poor Men’s 3 boat, you take in the scenes. Fellow students are indulging in barbecues, drinking, laughing. Your friends have turned out to support the team and, as you squeeze, catch and kill down that river, the boat chugs along, driven by the free speed goggles that your cox made you wear and the adrenaline of eight self-satisfied athletes in their prime.

The race may have ended, but the fun’s not over yet. You cycle home, eager to get online and see how today’s showings have boosted your Fantasy Summer Vllls chances. Someone’s tagged you in a comment on OxRow – time to read up on the latest Ori-el-Christ Church controversies for tomorrow’s erg room chat.

Tucked up in bed with the overnight oats prepped for the morning, you slip into sweet, sweet dreams about the glories of youth, thinking up sconces for Saturday’s formal dinner and fantasising about meeting your rowing crush on the cheese floor. But first – to do it all again tomorrow; you wouldn’t change it for the world.



Summer Vllls. Fun for all the family – rowers, marshals and spectators alike. That is, for the time the boats are actually spent racing. Having stood on the side of the Isis as a marshal last summer, I can say with relative confidence that I spent no more than a few minutes actually watching the progress of boats along the river. The rest of my time was spent engaged in activity far removed from the joy of witnessing our finest sportspeople in action.

For one, I can safely say that a hell of a lot of my three hours perched on the riverbank was passed shouting into a radio microphone – generally, I might add, pointing out things that were actually preventing races from going ahead. Ducks, swans, mini-cruises with tea parties going on – you name it, it was out in full swing that day, only too willing to wade aimlessly before a now-futile army of college boats. One would think

such irritants might have been cleared before the day in question. Alas, it was not to be.

Now, as I am sure many will point out, what I have just outlined has more to do with the role of race marshal, whose number makes up only a small, even negligible, proportion of participants in the week’s events. Presumably, then, a marshal’s preoccupation with shouting commands down their mic has little bearing on the overall Summer Vllls experience. Right?

Wrong. One swan on the water spells not only the heroic marshal being called into action. It may well mean another 20 minutes of twiddling one’s thumbs for every single spectator that day. Sure, if you’ve five quid to spend on a bite – and I mean quite literally one bite – of a burger, conjured up by some amateur chef ready to rake in a handsome sum before the day’s end, then you can of course fill the time this way. Let’s be honest, though. Waiting is never fun. Least of all in the sweltering heat, where standing itself becomes a feat of Herculean proportions.

I could go on, but my rant must end somewhere. All that remains to be offered is a warning. A warning to all race-lovers. Be prepared for a day of shouting, sweating, standing and waiting. Oh, and a few minutes of racing, if you’re lucky.

The college gap: Could it ruin your Oxford experience?

Oli Sandall

Beyond just academics and number of quads, do the often ill- or uninformed college choices we make on our university applications significantly affect our “Oxford experience”?

Does your college have a popular bar or JCR? How are the sports teams (or lack thereof)? How social and expensive are your accommodation(s) and (formal) hall? Many (or all) of these questions are often only made apparent once your college choice is locked in. So, what exactly is the problem, or is it even one at all?

Equally important is the question of whether the college system itself negatively impacts your overall “university experience”? If you don’t play a sport or aren’t extremely outgoing and sociable on nights out and active in societies, you might find it quite difficult to form or join a tight-knit friend group outside of your own college. You will arguably never be as close friends with someone as that person is with those who they cook and eat with, go to formals with, and pre-drink or get ready with for nights out and other events. So, does the college system benefit or hinder you in expanding your social circle? It’s different for everyone, but I don’t think this should limit your “Oxford experience”.

The college system evidently offers many benefits. Lots of colleges provide accommodation of some form across all years of study so that you can avoid having to deal with difficult landlords. Hall and formal hall are privileges not many other universities afford their students (and if they do, at a cost). College-comradery is perhaps the biggest

benefit of them all; being able to connect with someone simply because you are members of the same college. College patriotism is very real. I found myself calling college “home” after only three weeks – sorry Mum. I love my college, but sometimes I feel that I am more a student of Somerville College than of the University of Oxford. But is that an issue?

It isn’t for me, but only because I have been lucky enough to find a small group I get along well with in college as well as some out-of-college friends through my niche subject choice (German and beginners’ Czech) and other connections here and there. Yet, for many, the college system can feel limiting. But isn’t this the case at every university? University is equally about making friends as it is learning how to live independently and, at times, be lonely. I don’t think it’s fair to blame the college-system for limiting your social network. Sure, some people are fortunate enough to find a large, but close friendship group in their college within the first two weeks. Those people are incredibly lucky, but it doesn’t mean that if you aren’t part of these groups, you’ll never find friends.

So, what exactly is limited by your college choice? Things like location, architecture, and approaches to certain traditions (such as wearing sub fusc in formal hall) can easily be researched before applying. I am, for example, extremely lazy and the proximity to both Wellington Square and the Taylorian were indubitably deciding factors when applying to Somerville. However, I didn’t know that the college bar is, quite frankly, not very exciting, nor is it one of the cheapest. And though the food in hall is great, it is also relatively expensive. But then again, everyone has access to a kitchen. Each college has its pros and cons

– that’s the nature of the system.

I was initially inspired to write this article because I found myself criticising my college and my own “Oxford experience” without really taking time to consider what it really is that I am criticising. Sure, it would certainly be great if the meals in hall were closer to <£3 (as it is in some other colleges) than the £4.52 it is in Somerville. And, of course, it would be great if Somerville was known for more than just its weird brutalist structures and the fact that it is “Maggy T’s” college.

But this article is not about the merits and demerits of my own college and instead about the fact that though the college system is not perfect, it itself cannot single-handedly ruin your “Oxford experience”. Indeed, whilst a quick five minute browse of Oxfess and Oxhate will result in numerous submissions of people criticising their own college – and some of

them do, in fact, touch on real issues like discrimination – most of them are tedious or are, in the grand scheme of things, unimportant and often out-of-touch first world problems. Instead, it is the people you surround yourself with and your willingness to socialise beyond your college that can define your experience. Though some people find such socialising difficult because of their college choice, I still think that the college system affords more benefits and privileges to the average student than it does disadvantages.

Beyond the veil of college patriotism, do you think your college offers the same opportunities other colleges do, or would you like to switch colleges if you could? I don’t think I would change ... or maybe that’s just because I know I can’t.

Image Credit: Philip Allfrey/ CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



CHERBADLY

Expansionist Balliol College Invades Trinity

A large force of Balliol College JCR members surrounded the walls of neighboring Trinity College late Tuesday and advanced into Trinity territory in the night. According to the elected general of the Balliol forces, the Balliol JCR “needs more territory to ensure superior social lives for all our members,” and has determined that Trinity College is occupying land that, according to a sharp revanchist outlook not backed by most academics, historically belonged to Balliol college members. “We are trying to set things straight and ensure the glory of Balliol forever,” said the general, who is a second-year reading Classics.

Trinity College, according to sources, was not prepared for the attack and its defenses crumbled rapidly. “We will have our revenge and restore our sovereignty,” said one Trinity student who had fled the oncoming Balliol forces and was taking shelter at Knoops across the street. “Trinity has a right to persist and requires its territorial integrity in order to continue hosting killer commemoration balls,” continued the student as she sipped her hot chocolate and looked longingly toward her occupied homeland.

The Oxford Student Union condemned the invasion as representing a flagrant disregard for inter-college norms, and

pointed to an 1891 statute that bars colleges from forcibly taking social event territory. “We urge the Balliol College JCR to see reason and pull its forces out of Trinity territory without incident.” Nearby New College, concerned about Balliol’s long term ambitions, has threatened to form a coalition of colleges to respond to the invasion. “We believe that force only responds to force, and the inter-college community must not stand for this,” said a representative from New.

Balliol forces, however, have remained firmly entrenched in Trinity’s Kettell Hall, which sources say they intend to turn into a new, expansive college bar for exclusive Balliol use. The President of the Balliol JCR has attempted to justify this action by insisting that, “Balliol will share this new, epic bar space with guests from other colleges and will use the space more effectively and equitably than our neighbors could have” - a narrative the Trinity JCR-in-exile vehemently rejects.

Trinity forces have regrouped in University Parks and appear to be preparing for a counteroffensive with equipment provided by New College, though New has publicly denied its involvement. It seems unlikely, for now, that peace efforts in the form of a proposed MCR formal swap between the belligerents will be successful.

John Evelyn

With the chaos of the first two weeks of term not letting up quite yet, there truly is never a dull moment in the Union. The last fortnight has been particularly biblical in its proportions. With JCRs across the university chiming in to condemn the invitation of a particular Speaker, nothing seems to be letting up quite yet.

The weird incel cult who call themselves RO world met to elect their new glorious leader, ready to face all the challenges of an uncontested election. A conclave met, and the white smoke from above Frewin Court declared that the era of the public schoolboy should grow stronger still. Limp Dick’s snuggle buddy thus gained a promotion from Jersey PR to Jersey RO. Much like John the Baptist, he hails from the Garden of Eden as the much longed for son. As the new papal authority, we’ll have to hope he’ll stick to his home roots and help the Union avoid (not evade) electoral malpractice.

Some say that every masterpiece has its cheap copy. It seems that a certain 70s Pimp may have taken inspiration from The Masterchef’s second #COMEing, where some say he has sought biblical inspiration. Reportedly running for Treasurer with nine (male) Seccies and two (male) Standing candidates, the 70s Pimp is perhaps something of a pound-shop Jesus to The Masterchef’s Disciples. We’ll have to see if the members buy it, or if they choose to hop on the Flying Scotsman instead.

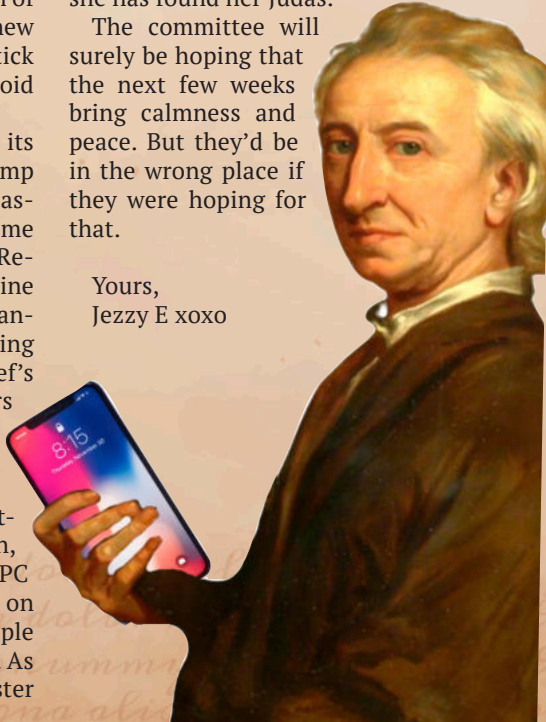
Yet the hottest election of the term looks to be that to take over from Pint-Sized Thatcher. With the Snow Queen, TriniTory, Ginny Weasley, Research NPC and more all allegedly hoping to take on the job, JE wonders just why so many people want to run around after speakers all day. As the charming and venomous Glynnmeister

found out, you have to do more than that to get into the illustrious Bicentenary celebrations, if that’s what they’re after. The Consultative Church will have to cast their verdict later this term, and these candidates will surely be spending their forty days and forty nights hacking rather than being left in the desert.

The religious imagery returned strong in the third week meeting of not-Sitting Committee. It appears The Heavyweight wishes to crucify Miss Congeniality and rally the Romans against her attempts to pass her absences. JE cannot possibly comprehend this move, given that it’s a whole term before he runs in an election against her! Time will tell if she can rise from the ashes or if she has found her Judas.

The committee will surely be hoping that the next few weeks bring calmness and peace. But they’d be in the wrong place if they were hoping for that.

Yours,
Jezzy E xoxo



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Freshers’ Freudian sleep

A fresher from Exeter college woke up in the early hours of the morning in the cocktail bar's bathroom

A FRESHER from Exeter College was locked inside the Freud Café last Wednesday night after a drunken trip to the restrooms led to a five hour long sleep on a toilet seat. The disoriented student awoke at 4:30am to find himself locked inside the bar, unbeknownst to his colleagues and the bar's staff.

The event took place at the Exeter Freshers' Ball. The fresher, who wished to remain anonymous, told Cherwell, "We bought drinks from the shop and it kicked in pretty quickly. I was very drunk and feeling quite ill, and thought I needed to be sick."

However, a trip to the bathroom saw him pass out in one of the cubicles, where he remained until the early hours of the morning. Describing his awakening, he said, "I was very drunk at this stage. Everything was dark, and I set off the alarm when I entered the main room."

The situation merely worsened when he triggered the fire alarm while searching for the light switch in the darkness. He was also unable to find a way out, since, as he noted in a commendation of the security system at Freud's that "everything was locked up very well."

A call about the fire alarm alerted the police to the events. A report from Thames Valley Police issued to Cherwell said, "Police attended and could not see any signs of a break in and so contacted the key holder who attended." They entered the building only to discover the unfortunate fresher and mistake him for a burglar.

According to the student, the misunderstanding saw the police order him to "get down on the ground", but he "couldn't hear because of the alarms". Instead, he began to advance towards the officers, oblivious to their commands.

In the confusion the intoxicated student may have come close to being tasered by a pair of officers who did not know his intentions; after a third officer indicated this to him he finally obeyed the order.

The fresher said, "He handcuffed me and put me in the back of the police car. He asked, 'Why didn't you get down when we said to?', and I explained." He added, "I guess that was quite fortunate that I did eventually hear them."

A statement from the police claimed that when officers reached him, the fresher was "initially arrested while the property was searched for any damage or theft. He was then de-arrested".

The episode ended amiably with the first year being returned to his college by the police. He said that he returned to his bed safe and sound and no subsequent action occurred regarding the incident.

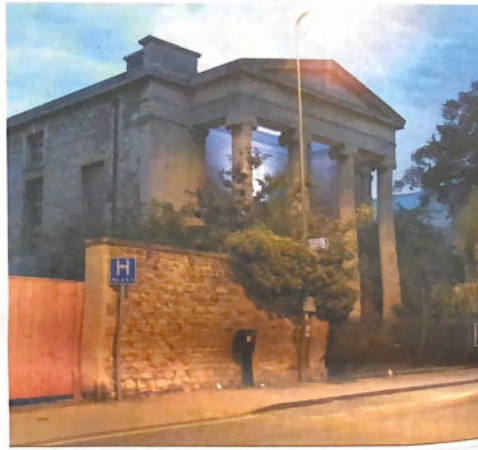
Students who have spoken to Cherwell about the event have had mixed reactions. Tom Stafford, a fresher from St Anne's College, commented, "It makes me feel bad by comparison. We obviously need to be hitting it harder."

However, St Anne's Entz rep Matthew Morrow, said, "I'm a-freud this guy only has himself to blame. All I can say is it must have been one hell of a poo."

One American visiting student and self-proclaimed amateur bartender said to Cherwell upon hearing the story, "There are no words to express my displeasure at the concept of the guy's inability to get down."

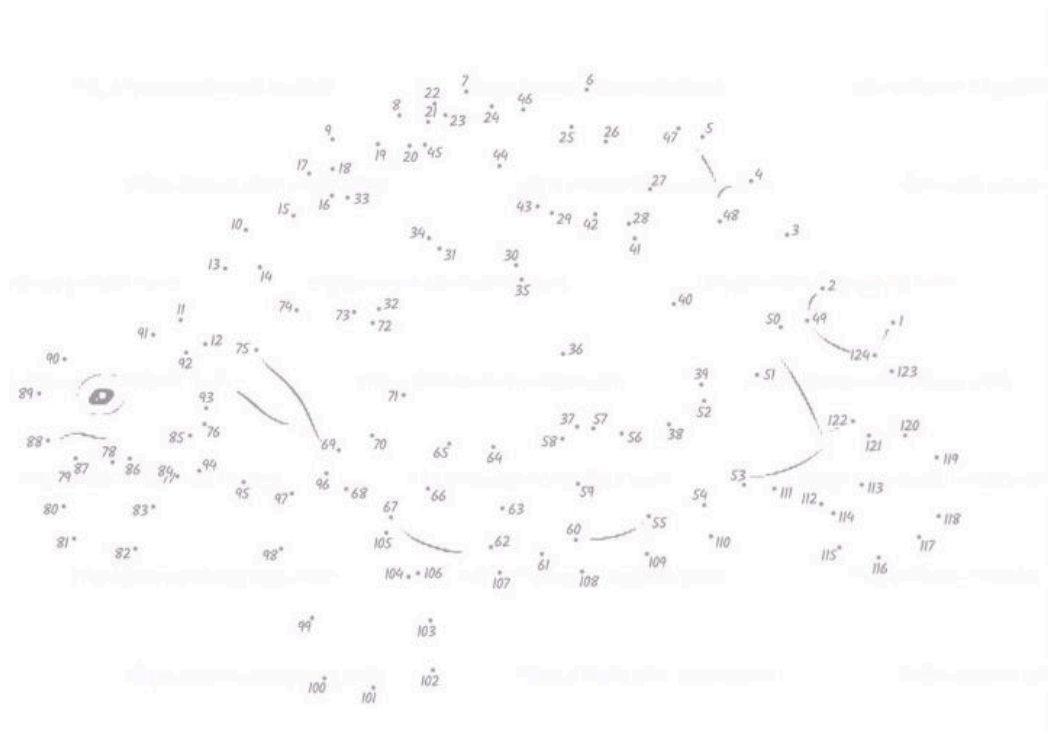
He added, "You'd think an establishment which mixes natural frequenting of the bathroom with alcoholic drinks would ensure the toilets were checked."

Thankfully, while the fresher reported that he thought during the crisis, "this is the worst thing that could possibly happen", he claimed



Dot to Dot by Sarah Beard

Creative juices completely drained? Want to feel artistic without any of the mental strain? Take your time and slow down with this dot to dot. This week’s theme is a whimsical Corpus Christi tradition which is taking place on the 28th May (come on Monty!).



Masthead

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Iustina Roman *Deputy Editor*

It’s undeniable that the University of Oxford and its students are very... unique (and this is probably much politer than most would put it). We very quickly become accustomed to this university’s systems and normalise certain traditions and terminology which would send anyone who doesn’t go here into a coma. Whenever my home friends visit and I have to explain what sharking means, or why our college principal makes us stand up to recite something in Latin before a formal, I too realise that this is all quite strange – and somewhat embarrassing. At the same time, our attitude towards the things which initially drew us to Oxford becomes jaded. Back when I was 15, during my first visit to Oxford, I tried to take in every detail, imagining myself as a student here and walking down the same roads which I’ve now grown tired of traipsing over every day. I’m no longer mesmerised all the old buildings and parks which my friends and family ooh and ahh over whenever they come to visit, though at the beginning I also felt the same way. Now, the Rad Cam is a crowded study spot reserved for an hour of studying and fifteen min-

utes of staring at the ceiling; Uni Parks is where I almost had a breakdown in public; Cornmarket Street is a place which should be avoided at all costs. Even the busker who torments us with his questionable vocals on a daily basis is the latest viral sensation on TikTok. Yes, funny during a fifteen-second clip, but try living next to him. I suppose we can’t help becoming immune to the charm of Oxford, given how much this place can make us suffer sometimes. However, I think that we tend to forget that life exists outside of Oxford – and not just during the eight-week term, because apparently that’s not enough for some people, who enjoy spending entire vacations here too. That’s right, we can escape (at least until the next deadline or tutorial)! Over the past week alone I’ve spent more time outside of the city, and I have to say that it has felt very liberating. For example, a short bus ride towards the north of Oxford takes you to the small town of Woodstock, where you can spend a relaxing day off. In this quaint town, you can stop for lunch in a local café and walk around the Blenheim Palace gardens, making it a great place for taking a short break from hectic student life. On the other hand, if you’re finding Oxford uninteresting, the Oxford Tube can take you to London

and back in a couple of hours for £16. Though there’s usually always plenty to do in Oxford, it can get wearisome and there are only so many bops you can go to before you realise that they usually all turn out the same. Being so insular, it’s easy to get too wrapped up in Oxford and its culture, so if it ever gets too overwhelming, just remember that it’s always OK to take a step back!



Listen our podcast, *Cherwell* weekly, on Spotify here:





Last weekend I went to the Balliol Ball. It was truly incredible – the committee did a fantastic job, and having been on the garden party committee last year, helping to organise an event that was half the size and a quarter of the budget, I can’t begin to imagine how big a task this was. So, when floods of negative and false comments started flooding a popular student platform with over 11,000 followers, I imagine it must have felt a bit demoralising.

At the best of times, Oxfess is a laugh. At the worst of times, it is a platform that actively facilitates harassment and bullying. I appreciate if some might read this and think, “it’s just not that deep.” In some ways this is true – some Oxfess content clearly isn’t meant to be taken seriously. But in other ways, the platform does have a responsibility to ensure it is not facilitating misinformation which can have a harmful impact on students. Clearly the moderators don’t take this responsibility seriously, as can be seen by their recent publication and mockery of an email asking the platform to delete some false statements it had published. This might “just be about a ball”, but it can also be a lot more than that, and can have a significant impact on a number of people who have to deal with the consequences. *Cherwell* has felt its fair share of Oxfess misinformation - off the top of my head I can think of two serious instances in the past week. *Cherwell*, or any publication for that matter, wouldn’t dare publish the statements that Oxfess regularly publish without doing our due diligence. So the question I’d like to ask is: Is it time for us to see some Oxfess accountability?

Izzie Alexandrou
Editor-in-Chief

Maggie Wilcox *Deputy Editor*



In spend my summers deep in the Northwestern Ontario wilderness, at a summer camp. On our small island in the Lake of the Woods, we have many strange traditions and inhabitants, including fairies. For curious campers, these magical creatures reside in the “Fairy Forest” behind the cabins. For staff, the fairies only appear once a session on the first night, when they are sometimes greeted by the elusive “snack fairy”. One thing we are told again and again at camp, however, is: “there is no cleaning fairy!”. This is not the case at Oxford. Our “cleaning fairies” are the

scouts, dutiful cleaners who deal with the supreme grime of undergraduates and lengthy demands of colleges. These workers are not silent, mythical creatures, however the fairy comparison is reflective of many students’ views and treatment of these workers. As the investigation in this week’s edition explores, many scouts are not paid the Oxford Living Wage, forced to clean without breaks and receive little job security or benefits.

However, I am not here to argue against the scout system or poor treatment of college workers, I hope you choose to learn more about this by reading our investigation on page 5. Instead, I want to briefly discuss a residential setting for young people where scouts, or dedicated cleaners of any sort, do not exist.

My summer camp is not a world renowned academic institution, to say the least. I do however believe that my campers and fellow staff members, all teens and young adults, truly learn how to keep their space clean. Without “cleaning fairies”, maintenance is not easy or glamorous, but it gets done. We have “Island

Appreciation” breaks, where everyone picks up garbage or tidies their corner of the island. Everyone pitches in to keep their space clean. We have a rota of cabins who help clean the dining hall and your personal space is your responsibility.

Keeping personal and shared communal spaces clean is part of learning and growing up. My camp, many others and indeed most universities, understand this. However, at Oxford and Cambridge- the two preeminent institutions of the UK and indeed the world- many students are deprived of the valuable lessons that accompany cleaning. It is evident from the state of many student kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms that these skills are sorely lacking. In a place which promises a top notch education, the university is frankly doing a disservice to its students in not instilling practical as well as academic skills.

I hope you enjoy reading our look into the scouts’ experiences and all the other fantastic pieces in this week’s edition. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to go tidy my room.

“Being delusional is the best form of therapy”

Internet sensation and influencer Mia Khalifa discusses her relationship with the feminist movement and the sex work industry after her talk at the Oxford Union.

Deborah Ogunnoiki

At 17:35 on May 3rd, I received an email from the Oxford Union Press that in about 2 hours I would be interviewing Mia Khalifa before her speech at the Union that evening. I paused mid-essay, suddenly struck by the fact that I had no questions prepared and was about to meet one of the most infamous - and, as we all saw at her speech, most stylish - women in the world. As I scrambled for questions, I realised that the image of Mia and the questions that people may expect me to ask were related to a past that doesn't really represent Mia for who she really is. Woman to woman, I wanted to know Mia Khalifa, whose real name is Sarah Joe, for who she is now, as a person, a human being, a woman, and a person of colour.

Entering the room at 19:55 pm I greet Mia who is all smiles. She's shorter than I thought she would be but much kinder. I tell her she looks amazing and she compliments my eyeshadow. While we bond over our love of Fenty I realise Mia truly is a girl's girl. She's the kind of girl that gets on better with other girls, a quality that I think is the greenest flag to spot in any girl.

We finally manage to settle down and I ask her what it was like growing up as a Lebanese girl, and how that influenced or affected her relationship with feminism. She told me, “it's really difficult to grow up Catholic and Middle Eastern because I feel like there's a lot of just inherent misogyny, inherent roles that get assigned to [you]. Like, daughters get treated so much differently than sons, which I feel like can be related to in so many other cultures, not just Lebanese culture. It's very much that in the Middle East. The man is the provider, the woman is the supporter, that kind of mindset. So my outlook on feminism growing up was what I was taught around me, which is why I feel like I had so much internalised misogyny. It took me a while to grow out of that, but I don't think it skewed my view on feminism.” We bond over our

experiences as women of colour. “I'm Nigerian,” I tell her, and we agree on how our cultures influence our views on how we should act as women and how we are perceived.

But our cultures also look down heavily on sex work and the adult entertainment industry, despite the hypocrisy in that men still often see women as sexual objects. I ask Mia how she relates or reacts, given her experience in the industry, to the increasing number of women getting involved in sex work, whether stripping or OnlyFans, and citing feminism and empowerment as their reason for it. Her answer is firm, speaking from her own experience in the industry, she answers, “I do not think it's an act of empowerment,

I think it's actually very dangerous to push that rhetoric. I think that it should never be a first option or something that's packaged as empowering or freeing or anything like that. I think that's very dangerous, and it's borderline grooming.”

I think there are empowering ways to do it once you're in if there are no other options for you, but I would never promote it as something simply empowering. Don't do it if you're looking to do something empowering.”

In November of Michaelmas Term 2022, the Union was visited by another personality who opened an OnlyFans account in 2021 just a few days after her 18th birthday, and allegedly earned over \$1 million in revenue in the first six hours, and an alleged total of over \$50 million. Facts like this put into perspective what Mia is saying in regard to grooming. In her talk at the Union, she elaborated on this, stating that the narrative that OnlyFans and being a sugar baby and other forms of sex work are being pushed to you young women as safe and easy ways to make money and express themselves, yet this is not the case. Mia maintained that it was “absolutely grooming”, and expressed a wish that young women would not turn to sex work unless they really had to for fear that that digital footprint would follow them for most of their lives.

Speaking of a digital footprint, it was time to ask Mia about what



she was most well-known for. In all honesty, I did not want to ask this question. Despite being curious myself, I knew too well what she had gone through at that time, and to ask her to relive that experience felt wrong. Yet, I ask, “You've been criticised by men for daring to have a sexuality and by women for supposedly misrepresenting them, for example, the hijab video. As a woman and as a person of colour as well, how do you react to the backlash from your history in the adult entertainment industry?”. Mia says, “I don't really get let it get to me too much. I know that I'm not the one who invented the fetishization of the hijab or of the Muslim culture or anything like that. In fact, it was straight white men who wrote the scene.”

What Mia is referring to is Orientalism, a term established by 20th-century Palestinian philosopher Edward Said. The term criticises the West's derisive depiction of The East. The over-sexualisation of Arab women found in movies, one of the most notable examples being Princess Jasmine from the Disney movie Aladdin, is a massive problem within the West. Men are obsessed with the idea of unveiling Muslim women, hence the market for it, not only in porn, but also in TV shows and movies which feature a female Muslim character removing her hijab for minute reasons, oftentimes irrelevant to the plotline. The over-sexualisation of Arab women doesn't stop there, Native American, East Asian, Black, South Asian, Romani and Latin American women are all victims of the over-sexualisation of their bodies and their culture. It is unsurprising that these groups of minority ethnic women experience rape and sexual assault at significantly higher rates than white women, with the National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community stating that one in four Black girls will be sexually abused before the age of 18. The fetishization of ethnic minority women is commonplace, and a dangerous phenomenon that puts women in danger, but Mia says it is important to remember that these stereotypes were invented by straight white men in suits. It was these men who were the ones who pressured her into that hijab scene when she was 21, despite her protests that it was wrong, as

she revealed in her Union speech.

Knowing this, it's unsurprising that Mia veered away from the sports world. “I was heavily involved. I had a sports show a couple of years ago, it was complex. And I was very heavily involved in the sports world up until about two years ago when I actively made a decision to kind of stop taking jobs that were centred around that, just because I feel like the fan base isn't one that I wanted to cultivate. It was young men, and it wasn't serving me. It's just not a fan base I want. So I realised the more sports I'm involved with the more I'm going to be exposing myself to that demographic. So I made a conscious decision not to do it anymore. It was a very difficult decision, like very difficult.”

So if she's no longer doing sports commentary, what's in store for Mia Khalifa? What does the future hold for the influencer and activist? According to Mia: “So much!” Her enthusiasm about her future is infectious as she tells me, “I'm launching a jewelry line. I'm doing a lot of things that I never dreamed I'd be doing, like speaking. Honestly. There's a lot on the horizon that I'm very much looking forward to the end. It aligns with me and who I am. And I'm also happy with the audience that motivates.”

As Mia seeks to cultivate an audience of women who are inspired by her and move away from the young impressionable boys who seek her content for laughs, she re-establishes herself and takes back control of her name, her social media, and her actions. Though she jokes that “Being delusional is the best form of therapy”, she advocates for going to therapy and mending your mental health, which is just as important as your physical health.

Her talk at the Union resonated with many audience members, from women to fellow Middle Easterners, enjoying both Matthew's questions and Mia's answers. Consequently, we look forward to Mia's future and all that she hopes to achieve as her talk at the Union signifies her first step to building a better audience.

Image credits: Oxford Union

“I think it's very dangerous, and it's borderline grooming...”

“I know I'm not the one who invented the fetishisation of the hijab or of Muslim culture”



“I was told never to tell this story”: In conversation with Suzanne Kianpour

Discussing women at the forefront of war reporting and peace building

Io Oswald and Wong Yi Xuan

Suzanne Kianpour is a Foreign Affairs journalist whose work has taken her to over 50 countries. She has reported in war zones and followed presidential scandals. Her work in uplifting women's voices in conflict zones has brought a new tone to conflict reporting worldwide. Wong Yi Xuan and I, representing the Oxford Human Rights Student Society and Oxford Society for International Development, collaborated to ask Ms. Kianpour about her life as a war zone reporter.

Oswald: As a young person, you were interested in politics and international relations. How did you decide on journalism as the best way of expressing your political voice?

Kianpour: I was actually told never to tell this story by one of my bosses, which is exactly why I'm going to tell it. When I was in about fourth grade, we had Current Affairs Friday. So we had an assignment every Friday where we had to go and take a newspaper and find an article and clip it off and hand write a summary of the article and then present it in front of the class. I loved Fridays specifically because I got to look forward to this. I basically do this for a living now. I grew up during an era of a lot of conflicts, and I realised how important documenting history is and how important being an impartial witness is. That's really what drove my decision to go into this part of journalism. Of course, I was just getting started in journalism when the Arab Spring happened. And then the rise of ISIS. My first real foreign posting was in Lebanon, and it was quiet when I arrived. And then suddenly next thing you know, there's this Islamic extremist group that was wreaking havoc across the region and they're chopping heads off an hour away from where I was living in Beirut.

Oswald: How has the world of journalism changed since the time when you came into it?

Kianpour: I mean, so much. Now there are so many outlets, and it seems like every day somebody's starting a new news outlet and it's great. There's a whole other ecosystem when it comes to social media and new social media outlets coming up. I see the upside in that. Particularly in my work, it has never been easier for sources and contacts to get in touch with journalists. When I first started in journalism, the U.S. economy was in the worst recession since the Great De-

pression. So, my family thought it was crazy - I had just graduated from university and education was pretty expensive in the U.S. But I said, "I promise it'll work out". And sure enough, a year later, I was following Obama around and meeting Kobe Bryant. But at that time, I didn't have as many options. Now students interested in journalism have so many options. With the emergence of A.I., I think the media landscape is going to change even more. I personally think it's a positive development. Others might not agree.

Oswald: How do you see the role of journalism changing with AI?

Kianpour: The reason why I think it's a good thing is people will pay for good content. Because of this fear of A.I., there's less room for mediocrity. Everyone has to be on their game, and thinking creatively. You need to be thinking about what you can deliver to your audience that a robot can't. And I say that as somebody who hosted an episode of the BBC's inquiry, which was all about killer robots and the rise of AI in warfare, and I am still optimistic. So I think that's saying something.

Oswald: You've been to many countries and have had an extremely broad career. How do you change your approach to navigate those shifts between cultures in your journalism?

Kianpour: I think that being from a diverse cultural background has been an asset for me. My dad's family is Iranian, and so when I have been speaking to foreign policy officials who are not exactly friends with the US, and they've found out that I'm Iranian, there's an element of intrigue, but there's maybe less mistrust.

As a woman, you have better chances of getting the stories of the women who are in the war zones. Oftentimes they have the most profound stories, but they're less likely to open up to men. So I'm grateful that I've come from a background where I can sort of manoeuvre between cultures. But even in the U.S., some parts of the country just feel like a completely different world to others. Being from the southern part of the country, when Donald Trump was elected and I was doing stories about MAGA country, I would approach people and they would first see me with a bit of suspicion because they would say they saw the BBC as a bit of an elitist. But then when they found out that I'm from Georgia, they would soften.

Oswald: You've done a lot of

work in your journalism on uplifting women's voices and finding their stories. As a female journalist, have you ever struggled with asserting or demanding your legitimacy in those kinds of political spaces?

Kianpour: I've found that sometimes it's good if you're underestimated because then they're off their game and you can use that to your advantage. I've taken that to work for me rather than getting offended by it. And I think one's work speaks for itself. And it's also one of the reasons why I felt that it was important for particularly women and conflict stories to be amplified. So that was really one of the roots of Women Building Peace because I was going to these conflict zones and I was talking to these women and I didn't see them. I didn't see those stories amplified. There was this U.N. women's statistic in early 2022 that to this day, still, only 25% of stories have women as the subject. So, I mean, we still have work to do. So seeing women amplifying the stories of women not only in leadership but also connecting them with women. In the case of my program, in the conflict zones and literally facilitating the conversation between two people who would normally not have access to each other lifts them up. I hope that more women join me in contributing to more of that.

Wong: I wanted to ask about your views on the protests in Iran. How are they going right now and what do you think is the future of these protests?

Kianpour: So I've just recently published an article in Politico magazine called 'The Women of Iran Are Not Backing Down', and that stands. This revolution is a revolution, and it is the first women-led revolution. Iran is no stranger to protests. But this time it's led by the women, it's supported by men, and the regime is losing ground and they know they're losing ground, and therefore they know they have to reform. There are factions within the regime who have admitted this and are advising the supreme leader. I've had sources tell me this who have knowledge of these conversations and have had the conversations themselves.

In the opening of the article, I talked about my last trip to Iran which was in 2007 and even then, me and my cousin were also part of the rebellion because we were trying to wear as little hijab as possible. I saw how the women were quietly protesting using fashion, frankly. They were slowly pulling at the thread of the hijab which would eventually begin to unravel one of the pillars of the regime, and that is what's happening now and they know that, and that's why they're in crisis mode.

It's not a matter of "change is coming"—change has already happened, change is in the past. The ones who don't want to wear it aren't wearing it and the ones who do want to wear it are. Some say it's over because they're not pouring into the streets like they were in the fall, but that's not true—a revolution isn't "you're in the streets marching every single day". We'll see how it unfolds.

Wong: I wanted to pick up on something you said about the women themselves leading the protests—how does that specifically contribute to the longevity of the revolution?

Kianpour: I think it's a battle of wills, right? The authorities are banking on the women giving up, and they're not going to give up. This isn't a political movement—and by political, I mean they're saying "we don't want the regime". It's less about politics; it's about civil rights. The regime really miscalculated, they thought they would get away with what they've gotten away with in the past, but nobody is forgetting the amount of people who have died. That's why women are continuing to lead the charge.

Wong: I also wanted to pick up on something in the "Women Building Peace" series—I

listened to the episode on the Colombian peace agreement. What do you think women-centric conflict resolution looks like, and do you think it's a trend we can expect to continue seeing in the future, or is it still very tentative?

Kianpour: Well, I hope that we see more of it in the future. I think that the reason why we decided to do an episode on Colombia even though Latin America is largely ignored by the media unless it's something going off in Venezuela—I'm thinking specifically of American news—that was the perfect example of why women need to be at the table when it comes to peace negotiations. But also, we often speak a lot about women in peace; I did a story of women in the Iran nuclear deal, the women who actually brought home the Iran nuclear deal. But I also want to focus on the role for women in power when it comes to building peace. That's what it really comes down to. There is power in being able to be at a table to bring about peace. I think, to go back to the women of Iran, there was a huge coup. This cohort of women who managed to get Iran kicked off the UN Committee for Protection of Women's Rights, which is pretty ironic. That in and of itself is an example of why women should have a seat at this table.

Wong: On the topic of protests more broadly, you recently posted on your stories about social media as the new organising tool for protests. What do you think is the role of social media in protests now, and how do you think they'll shape the evolution of protests in the future?

Kianpour: I think I also posted this on my social media that there are days where I'm so sick of social media, and I'm just like "why do I have to keep this up?" But then I remember why—because it's literally a lifeline for people. It is important because this is a tool for getting your voice heard. For the women of Iran, the 2009 Green Revolution, which was a political movement about having the right to free and fair elections, was the Twitter revolution. This time around, the women-led revolution in Iran is on Instagram. It's all Instagram, and so much of the reporting I've done came from random people just sending me DMs and voice notes. At one point when the protests were happening every single day and it was really bloody, I was waking up to voice notes every single day. If it wasn't for that, I wouldn't know what was happening in Iran even though I was 70 kilometers away from it because I couldn't get in; they weren't letting Western journalists in. And so social media is a really important tool—I find it as a double-edged sword, and it's here to stay. It'll evolve, but it's here to stay.

Wong: I also just wanted to ask—and this is kind of bringing in things from Women Building Peace and the articles you've written about the desire of the Iranian people to keep telling their stories—what's the role that storytelling plays in advocacy?

Kianpour: There was a time where a friend told another friend that they had heard this amazing podcast called "Women Building Peace" and it was the Ethiopia episode. It was so moving that they had to turn in to pull over into a driveway and continue listening to it. When I hear stuff like that as feedback to the journalism that I've put out into the world, I realise how important storytelling is. It's not just the story—it's also how you tell it. For me, for "Women Building Peace", it was of utmost priority to really focus on the stories of the people living the story on the ground in the conflict zone. It's about the story and the person and what they've experienced. There's this quote that I can't remember now, but I love this quote and think about it often and I think it's a big part of why I do what I do: "tell the story of the mountain you climbed because it could be a page in somebody else's survival guide". I think that that can resonate across so many different kinds of stories. Storytelling is so important and I think it's important to be protected and that's why I keep doing what I'm doing.

Full article available online at [Cherwell.org](https://cherwell.org)
Image credit: Moticcate Media Group

“
Being from a diverse cultural background has been an asset for me...



The Source

my thoughts have been stolen
stretched out
stretched out
on the other side
of the cocktail table
yeah
that's no good
I can't see them past your
cigarette smoke
puffing and puffing
the squeal of your sax
laced in cigarette smoke
yeah
that's no good

'MeifawentbackhometoMars,ourno-smoking
area became a smoking zone again, and life
returnedtothesamedailyroutinejustlikebefore.'
—Jet Black, Cowboy Bebop

you're a fiend
and I love you for it
keeping medistracted
stretched out
play it
got to get rid
yeah
there go my thoughts
ba-dum ba-dum
puffing and puffing
I can't see them
stretched out
behind the club door
ba-dum ba-dum

on the other side
stolen stolen
stop
I'm stolen
behind the door
the two the three the...
past the smoke
grab my coat
pushing past the other folk
past cigarette...
take a toke
stretched in
stretched... in
...
back on the other side.

Stretched Out

by Dylan Squires

Image Credit: Angus via Flickr

Art

Judith Kerr: Forgetful cats, anarchic tigers

Ava Martin

Merely mentioning *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* evokes images of baked goods, warm kitchens, and a perpetually snarky-looking tiger in the minds of most people, and yet this year marks an entire century since the birth of the tiger's creator. Judith Kerr's illustrated works, including *The Tiger who Came to Tea* and *Mog the Forgetful Cat*, have remained in print since their publication, a remarkable testament to their, and her, endurance. This begs the question, what about Kerr's art remains so relevant? In 100 years, how have so many generations become so enamoured with her work?

In answer to this, one of the most distinctive elements of Kerr's art is its quirk and humour. Looking closely at any depiction of Mog's face is objectively hilarious: her bemused smile and eyes seemingly devoid of any thought are instantly captivating. A quick google of *Mog the Forgetful Cat* is enough to display Kerr's skill for capturing the whole range of feline expression. What Kerr drew was amusing too: a few years ago a tweet about Kerr's work went viral. In it, Mog's family have called the police on a burglar who is depicted, despite his obvious criminal behaviour, with a nice cup of tea. The casual and innocent humour in Kerr's work has undoubtedly influenced its consistent popularity: a cat pulling a funny

face is funny to anyone regardless of age or generation.

Humour is not the only thing that makes Kerr's work so distinctive; the warmth of her images makes them universally appealing. When considering her art, my mind is always drawn back to the scene at the end of *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*. In this, Sophie and her parents walk to a restaurant after the tiger has finished wreaking what can only be described as unspeakable havoc on their lives and home. After what was presumably a deeply traumatising experience for both Sophie

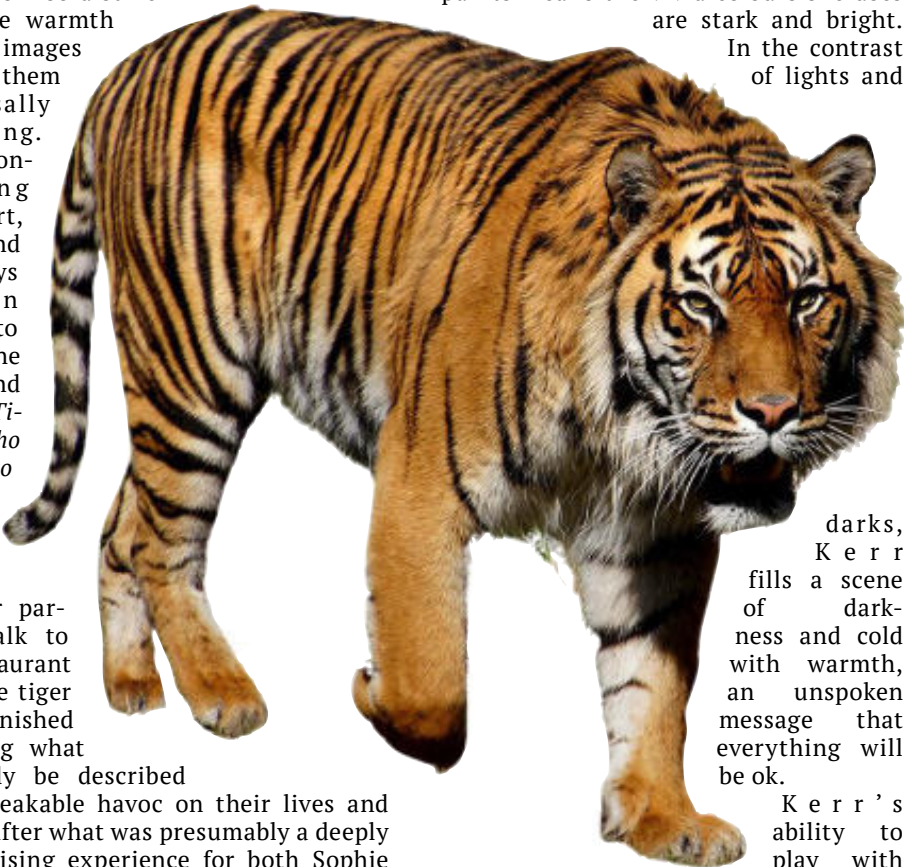
and her mum, the warmth of the street-lamps' cuts through the darkness of the road. Kerr's use of dark lines and gouache paints means the vivid colours she uses are stark and bright. In the contrast of lights and

darks, Kerr fills a scene of darkness and cold with warmth, an unspoken message that everything will be ok. Kerr's ability to play with

tonal differences points to another re-sounding skill in her work: ambiguity. The complete absurdity of the domestic scenes portrayed in her work including a massive tiger has led many to speculate about potential meanings behind her art, with some arguing the tiger may be a stand in for the gestapo, based on her childhood experience fleeing Nazi Berlin. Kerr herself has reiterated the tiger is just a tiger, however his sarcastic and secretive grin allows for constant reinterpretation generation to generation: whatever the tiger may be in your own life, Kerr illustrates it with a constant gentleness. Images of a tiger sitting down to tea and cake have clearly been enough to entice and confound viewers for years.

Ultimately, the consistent success of Kerr's work lies within its inherent charm and warmth. Skimming over the pages of *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*, the tiger has a consistently evil expression. The ensuing anarchy, however, feels safe: the gentleness of Kerr's illustration containing any potential threat within the pages of her books. Kerr makes clear that despite ransacking tigers, despite mischievous pets and despite the possibility of burglars there is hope, warmth and humour always, a message just as relevant now as it was thirty years ago.

Image Credit: Bernard Spragg via Flickr/ CC0 1.0



“A successful exploration of the play’s tension and comedy”: A review of Macbeth

Kian Moghaddas

The Pilch is a dark and gloomy place. One day I went in there at 9am, and when I came out at mid-day it was like seeing daylight for the first time. It’s an appropriate place for a heavy tragedy about murder and betrayal. The world of *Macbeth* is effectively constructed by letting the bare darkness of the Pilch do the heavy lifting, augmented by the powerful lighting and sound, both of which remained interesting and effective throughout.

This was a production of *Macbeth* that brought out the tension and the humour. As *Macbeth* (Leah Aspden) returned from the murder, the audience listened in stunned silence at the horror of his immediate regret. When Lady *Macbeth* (Juliette Imbert) urged him to return the daggers to the scene, I felt a sudden and ill-timed urge to sneeze, but I couldn’t ruin this moment. “I’ll go no more: I am afraid to think what I have done,” I heard in one ear from *Macbeth*. And from myself in the other: “Don’t sneeze, Kian. For God’s sake, don’t sneeze.”

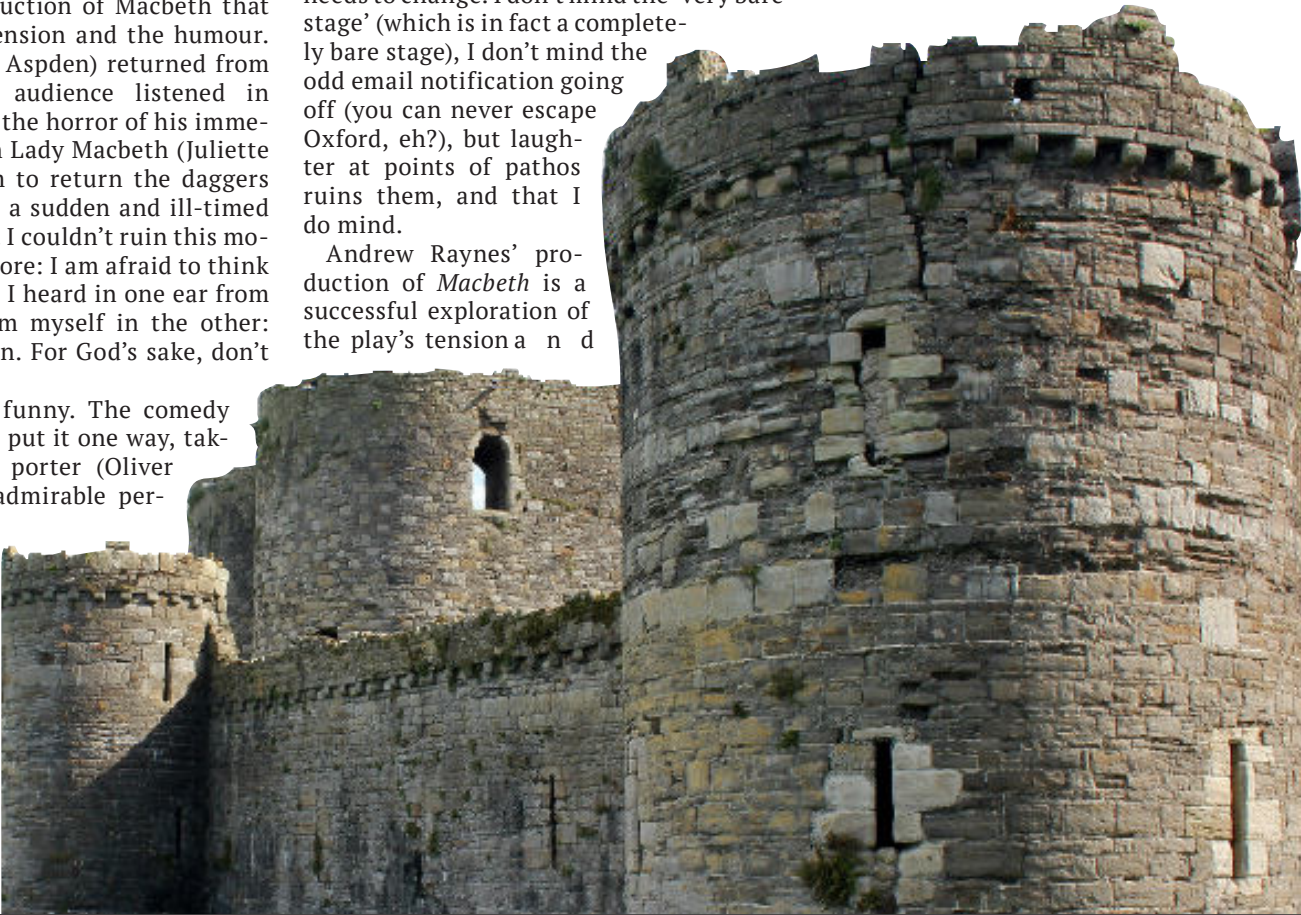
But it was also funny. The comedy of *Macbeth* was, to put it one way, taken seriously. The porter (Oliver Tanner) gave an admirable performance, and the audience loved it. “I pray you, remember the porter”, I was warned, and don’t worry: I have. I also remember *Macbeth* raising laughs throughout the play in unexpected but

appropriate places. Then there was the less appropriate laughter, perhaps, in response to Malcolm (Ethan Bareham) telling Macduff (Hetta Johnson) that “there’s no bottom, none, in my voluptuousness”, which had many of us chuckling away, me included, I confess, even by the word “bottom”.

In general I think the flaw of the production is that there was humour at some points where there shouldn’t have been. No one should be laughing when Malcolm discovers that his father has been murdered. If that is happening, the tone of the scene needs to change. I don’t mind the ‘very bare stage’ (which is in fact a completely bare stage), I don’t mind the odd email notification going off (you can never escape Oxford, eh?), but laughter at points of pathos ruins them, and that I do mind.

Andrew Raynes’ production of *Macbeth* is a successful exploration of the play’s tension and

Image: Beaumaris Castle via Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 2.0



What’s on...

XIAO

16-20th May, Burton-Taylor Studio

With an all BAME cast and majority BAME crew, *Xiao* centers on a dynamic often seen in east Asian families, a parent disapproving of the person their child is dating. We hope to bring this cultural aspect to the BT and Oxford community.

THE SEAGULL

16-20th May, Burton-Taylor Studio

Set on a crumbling Russian country estate, *The Seagull* follows the struggles of an egotistical young writer and the declining Russian aristocrats surrounding him. An examination of jealousy, love and despair, Chekhov’s first major play remains an astoundingly relevant modern classic.

THE MANDRAKE

23-27th May, Burton-Taylor Studio

It’s a sunny morning in Florence. The wily Callimaco wishes to sleep with “a wise young woman” — Lucrezia. This wise young woman is married to an old fool, Nicia, and the action of *The Mandrake* centres on the trick that Callimaco and his fellow schemers play on him.

“A refreshingly different production”: A review of Sisyphus House

Stage

Katie Peachey

Sisyphus House is an original rom-com by students Abbie Nott and Megan Bruton. The show intersperses scenes following two different relationships (which take place in the same house); one set in the Tudor times between two noblemen, and the other in 2023 between a university student and a young council employee. In both eras, the would-be romantic interest attempts to make a claim on the house (for ownership in the Tudor era, and to seize it for the council in the modern day), which is emphatically opposed by the respective protagonists. Predictably trope-y? Yes. But this is fair enough given the writers made it clear the story should emulate YA fiction: and it certainly did so.

The charm of the production was in the

idea that the titular house had been witness to all sorts of burgeoning relationships throughout its tenure, and this was sweetly conveyed through Nott and Bruton’s writing. Particularly impressive was the dialogue between Arthur (Joshua Gray) and Francis (Alex Bridges), which felt very period-appropriate. Rowena Sears’ costumes for the two Tudor leads were delightful, yet the all-black (and very modern) costumes of the ensemble were slightly jarring at times. Eliana Kwok’s set design was minimal but effective, with the entire story set around a table in a particular room of the house. At times I was left wondering if the tube of pringles were intentionally left on stage during a scene between two Tudor nobles, but I suppose this added to the “time-bending” nature of the production.

Special mention must go to Carys Howell, whose performance as Kit injected a livening burst of energy into the show. Howell’s

performance was believable and comedically well-timed, providing harmony to Kate Harkness’ Robin. Another particularly enjoyable performance came from Phoebe Winter, whose occasional asides as Francis’ absentee (and adulteress) wife were funny and well-choreographed. This was another instance of good staging from directors Jake Dann and Matilda Kennedy.

The overall aesthetic of the show was pleasing to the eye, no doubt thanks to the lighting design from Rei Ota, which helped mark a shift between the Tudor era and the modern day (though it would probably be hard to miss given the costumes worn by Gray and Bridges). Equally enjoyable was the sound design from Teia Currimbhoy. While the scene depicting a party in *Sisyphus House* was mildly awkward, I was pleasantly surprised to find it was underscored by a song by The Strokes.

The ‘rom’ element of the rom-com was, at

times, left to be desired. The script relied on inference rather than physical or verbal confirmation that either of the couples were actually together, and while an audience should not have to be spoon fed plot-lines, I think more could have been made of the relationships between the respective couples. Robin and Ben, for instance, in 2023, spoke about being “friends” at the very end of the play, which was puzzling. Equally, the chemistry between Gray and Bridges as potential secret lovers was mostly lacking.

Despite this, though, the show was heartwarming and enjoyable, and the cast and crew should feel proud. It was a refreshingly different production, in terms of both writing and staging, and a very pleasant experience.

Image Credit: Franz Von Stuck via Wikimedia Commons

Kitchens, Drag Racing, and The Cure: A review of boygenius’ debut studio album

Lou Newton

Since its release in January 2023, boygenius’ *the record* has collected perfect scores from DIY, NME, and Rolling Stone, setting the band up for The Tour this summer and landing them a set at this month’s Coachella. Compared to the ache and emotional purge of the 2018 self-titled boygenius EP, this full-length album represents a fading of anger and a confidence found in healing from past mistakes. The record is a masterclass in learning to understand your own and others’ emotions, celebrating above all the power of friendship (yes, the type of friends who make out in short films directed by Kristen Stewart).

Through boygenius, the boys - Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers, and Lucy Dacus - resist the cruel reduction to the ‘sad girl music’ narrative so often pushed onto them as individual artists. The trio take their name from the “archetype of the tortured genius”, wishing to channel in their own lives and music the confidence of the male artist who has been “told since birth that their every thought is not only worthwhile but brilliant”. This album both embodies this spirit - urging us to “be the boygenius”



- whilst challenging its toxicity by portraying the true experiences and difficulties encountered by each artist along the way. *Emily I’m Sorry* conveys Phoebe Bridgers’ feelings of guilt towards a past love, Emily Bannon (the breakup of their polyamorous relationship resulted in grooming allegations and a messy defamation lawsuit against third member of the relationship, Chris Nelson).

Essential to boygenius’ unique sound is the extraordinary blending of voices - stripped down to a cappella in the record’s first track *Without You Without Them*, a texture first demonstrated in the EP with *Ketchum, ID*. Through harsh panning and raw ambience, *Without You Without Them* evokes the intimate vision of the three women gathered around a single microphone, gently harmonising to the fluid rhythms of Lucy Dacus’ lyrics. With the almost-familiar, swaying metre of some old forgotten tune, *Without You Without Them* is a tender celebration of the folk and the feminine - a recognition of past generations, grateful for how things have turned out despite how things may have once been.

The album’s second track, *\$20*, throws us straight into a punchy, determined groove that somehow feels equally youthful and volatile, changing between a seven and five beat pattern that allows a decisive punctuation of Julien Baker’s phrases. Building to a screaming climax and underpinned by shuffling, polyrhythmic drumming, this song’s vocals are rem-



iniscent of Bridgers’ *I Know The End* or Dacus’ *Night Shift* - a pure and unadulterated catharsis of emotion.

The trademark production style of each artist is present throughout all of the album, but none more obviously than the waterlogged, echoing drums of Bridgers’ 2020 album *Punisher* in the tracks *Emily I’m Sorry* and *Revolution 0*. The summer radio single of the album has to come in the form of *Not Strong Enough*. With references to kitchens, drag racing, and singing along to *The Cure*; framing self-aware, pessimistic lyrics in an upbeat, pop-rock form; this song is one to drive to with the windows down.

The record confidently declares its influences. It includes a portion of Leonard Cohen’s *Anthem* on his namesake’s song, and even credits Paul Simon as inspiration for *Cool About it* (a track which uses the melody from Simon and Garfunkel’s *The Boxer*). But the most striking interpolation (in my opinion, the best song on the album) is inspired by boygenius’ own repertoire. It comes in the form of the album’s final track, *Letter to an Old Poet* - an allusion to the title and content of one of Dacus’ favourite reads (Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet*).

This song brings together past, present, and future - it reprises the lyrics of popular track from the EP, *Me and My Dog* into a crushingly hopeful expression of emotional growth, sending the finished album out into the world with a

reminder of where boygenius came from, and where it may be going. Bridgers’ weary opening verses are met by the determined supporting vocals of Baker and Dacus - she begins to sing boldly and unapologetically, remarking “I’m better than you / And you should know that by now”. At the culmination of the song, instead of wanting to be “emaciated”, as in the matching lyrics from *Me and My Dog*, Bridgers sings that she is ready to be “happy” - the capacity for which she might not yet have, but decides to pursue.

Listeners who have the vinyl LP release of the record are treated to the exclusive experience of an early locked groove on the final word of this album (“waiting”) - a deliberate effect that sums up the journey towards hope that this album represents and brings the artists physically into the room with us, reassuring the listener that they are not alone. the record is undoubtedly a spring album, emerging from the bitter winter of the EP with a somewhat tentative confidence that propels their sound towards the summer of warmth, hope, and growth. boygenius urges us to deeply understand ourselves and those around us and to let go of pain when we are ready, revealing to us that although past wounds can and will begin to heal, we cannot heal them alone.



Image credit: David Lee via Wikimedia Commons

Books

In defence of Holden Caulfield

Kate Monaghan

Before I reread *The Catcher in the Rye* last week, I hesitated. The dominant narrative around the book is that it’s one you love when you’re sixteen and roll your eyes at thereafter. I hesitated because of how much I had loved it at sixteen and how much I didn’t want to ruin my opinion of it - but I reread it anyway. And, although I feel more distant from Holden, I like him now more than ever. So why does everyone else seem to grow out of it?

There’s the idea that Holden represents trivial teenage discontent, that the book’s gripes are akin to “Ugh, Dad, I’m sixteen now, you can’t make me come home at 11pm, it’s oppression and it’s ruining my life”. An *Electric Lit* article from a few years ago expressed this idea: “If you’re a white, relatively affluent, permanently grouchy young man with no real problems at all, it’s extraordinarily relatable.”

Okay. No real problems? Yes, Holden is a rich, privileged, white boy. Yes, by allowing himself to fail out of multiple elite boarding schools, he wastes opportunities not available to most of his peers. But no real problems? I have never understood the accusation that Holden is whiny. His brother just died of leukaemia. He overheard a schoolfriend’s suicide. His panicked reaction to Mr. Antolini’s advances towards the end of the novel heavily implies that he was molested as a child. Not exactly small fry.

I don’t tally the bad things that happened to him to try to justify Holden’s anguish. His anger and sadness would be equally valid had he led the rosy prep-school life of privilege that

Electric Lit accused him of. His life is not just his own: he represents the post-war malaise, the emptiness and alienation, that hangs over all of Salinger’s stories. Holden hates the movies, not because he’s a pretentious brat but because they symbolise the rapid advance of consumerism and atomisation. Anyway, no real problems? His problem is that he has a very real mental breakdown. (If you missed it, the entire book is a monologue delivered to a psychiatrist.)

The book also draws criticism for being the supposed Bible of angry young men: boys who - it’s implied - are misogynistic, manipulative, and misguided. If such young men do see themselves in the book, they’re reading it with their eyes closed. Where does this idea that Holden is angry and manipulative, or a rebellious intellectual, come from? He never presents himself as a misunderstood genius, nor does he come across as one. On the contrary -

he’s a total loser, a boy with no friends and no direction, who can’t talk to anyone sincerely except his twelve-year-old sister. When Sandy and Maurice, the prostitute he doesn’t have sex with and her pimp, claim he owes them five dollars, he doesn’t swindle them out of it: he turns into a snivelling mess and gets punched in the stomach. Suave and smart? Not quite. And misogynistic? I’m not saying Holden is any kind of feminist, but neither is *Catcher* a woman-hating novel. There’s a recurrent theme of Holden feeling sad for all

the women he sees being mistreated by men. The only real friend he ever seems to have had is Jane, a girl. And far from being the prophet of masculinity, Holden doesn’t fit in with it at all: you think most teenage boys in the fifties were openly crying all the time and talking about their feelings?

Holden is not a bad person: he’s scared, lonely, and adrift. Even if his internal monologue is critical, all his real-life interactions are unfailingly kind. He wants and tries to help people. He is vulnerable and sensitive - which makes people uncomfortable. Understandably so: people paint Holden as manipulative because

histrionic emotion can be a manipulation tactic. But not always. Sometimes it’s just the human condition. Teenagers don’t know what to do with these intense emotions, letting them run free, which is why your first break-up makes you feel like you’re dying. Adults learn to repress them to keep

themselves sane, and don’t like to see this intensity reflected when they open *Catcher* again.

Saying that *Catcher* is only for angsty teenagers vindicates Holden, who wants so desperately to preserve the innocence of children, to save them from becoming jaded and inauthentic and unempathetic, as he sees the world around him becoming so. Isn’t it a sign of loss of empathy, not maturity, to grow out of caring about a scared kid just because you aren’t one anymore?



Saying that *Catcher* is only for angsty teenagers vindicates Holden

Top 3... Fantasy reads

1. Six of Crows

The duology follows a group of six criminals who attempt to pull off a heist in the corrupt city of Ketterdam, facing challenges both external and internal as they navigate magic, politics, and betrayal. The books are full of action, suspense, and complex characters, and are set in the same universe as author Leigh Bardugo’s *Grishaverse* Trilogy.

2. Piranesi

This is a standalone novel by Susanna Clarke, set in a mysterious, labyrinthine house that stretches endlessly in all directions. The eponymous protagonist, Piranesi, is the only inhabitant of the house, and as he explores its mysteries, he uncovers the truth about his past and the purpose of the house itself.

3. A House of Salt and Sorrows

Erin A. Craig’s work is a young adult fantasy novel that reimagines the fairy tale of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*. The story follows Annaleigh, one of twelve sisters who live in a haunted manor by the sea, as she tries to uncover the truth behind a series of tragic deaths that have plagued her family.

Why Oxford's fashion gala was better than the Met's

Monty Jones

The Met Gala, the event most consistently capable of bringing the richest and most famous together under one roof, is intended to embody and celebrate the very best of the fashion world. Yet on this year's first Monday of May, its peculiarly toothpaste patterned carpet hosted a disappointing assortment of reshaped looks and virality-hunting gimmicks. This was certainly a revealing insight into the current state of an industry that has increasingly prioritised paying deference to established elites and promoting overconsumption over celebrating real creativity. Those with as dysfunctional a sleep schedule and as committed a penchant for self-punishment as I, who watched the entirety of *Vogue's* coverage, may have begun the next day with a degree of pessimism regarding fashion's value as a medium. However, Oxford's very own Fashion Gala the following night presented an uplifting alternative, showcasing a medley of refreshingly original designs without requiring the Met's exorbitant cost or starpower.



A lot of the varied success of both events should be attributed to their leadership. Anna Wintour, since taking command of the Gala's operation in 1995, has prioritised a conservation of the status quo over championing new innovation, epitomised in this year's theme "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty". Since he was a close personal friend and ally of Wintour's, guests were invited to "honour Karl" in the gala's dress code. Lagerfeld, a man whose past comments have ranged from fat shaming to islamophobia and covered a great deal in between hardly seems worthy of honour; the looks inspired by his legacy, and the vague nothingness of the "line of beauty" stimulus also failed to do so. The predictable nods to Lagerfeld's signature aesthetic, in a steady stream of monochrome suits and ties peppered with ponytails, quickly grew old. The odd appearance of cats whether vaping, decapitated or naked and silver, whilst briefly amusing, similarly failed to deliver much of a lasting impact and managed to traumatise a poor dog in the process.

Alternatively, co-Creative Directors of Oxford's Fashion Gala this year, Shaan Sidhu and Harvey Morris elected to celebrate another recently departed icon of fashion, Vivienne Westwood, through the theme "Buy less,

choose well". A quote from Westwood herself, its message sharply contrasts the level of excess the Met has increasingly encapsulated, whilst exemplifying Westwood's lifelong commitment to sustainability. It also speaks to the intentionality of her designs, coupling visual spectacle and technical mastery with meaningful statements: in one of her own Met Gala appearances, she famously pinned a picture of activist and whistleblower Chelsea Manning to her dress, a degree of social consciousness sorely missed in this year's lineup. That spirit of self-expression and innovation was powerfully captivated by the Oxford Fashion Gala's almost twenty designers who worked tirelessly around work and exams to deliver an incredible variety of carefully crafted looks, from Miles Davis emblazoned trench coats to bare footed fairies (because why on earth would a fairy require shoes?). I myself had the great honour of wearing a suit by Tariq Saeed that has made me seriously question the inclusion of shirts in my wardrobe. Unlike

the stylists to the Met's stars, who crawled around on all fours adjusting lengthy trains and avoiding the cameras, these designers' hard work was rightfully recognised with a final walk down the runway.

In the end, The Met Gala suffers under the weight of its own pomp and circumstance, readily apparent in its all-important media coverage. The line of reporters and photographers asking the same questions to uncomfortable-looking celebrities, who try to recollect why Lagerfeld was in fact their personal hero, makes for tortuous watching. Whilst interviews in Freud's green room/kitchen may have been cramped, they at least captured a sense of occasion and personality; it is perhaps here where the Met falls most egregiously short. It fails to live up to its premise as a gala, intended at its core to be a celebration and what one might hope would be a good time. Yet watching the parade of A-listers awkwardly make their way up the carpeted steps, I couldn't help but echo some of their own sentiments that they could sorely benefit from a drink. Perhaps next year they'll give it a miss and grab one at Freud.

Image Credits:
Tosin Olusoji

Female Rage: Too normal to be so rare

Film

Iona Blair

A quick glance at the TikTok search results for "female rage" tells a very interesting story - women, shouting and expressing their anger without shame, presented as though this is something shocking. But is female rage really so different to men's anger, or do we just see it less on screen?

When I see the words "female rage" I think of two scenes. Mia Goth in *Pearl*, screaming, "Please, I'm a star!" and Toni Collette in *Hereditary* - "Don't you ever raise your voice at me! I am your mother!" Both of these moments are emotional climaxes of films full of bubbling anger, which the characters have pushed down until it explodes. They lead to violence, chaos, and disaster. And they are directed at men.

But what makes these scenes so special, other than the fact of women, rather than men, being loud angry? Women's place in society - expectations of docility, homemaking, and submission - make these moments more shocking, and of course Collette and Goth are both incredible actresses, but scenes like this are a dime a dozen in movies starring men. Just look at cult classics like *Fight Club* and *A Clockwork Orange*. These are films full of violence and rage, enacted by men, and yet the phrase

"male rage" is rarely if ever used to describe them.

When people we relate to lash out at the world around us, the fictional world they inhabit lets us forgive them, even if they are violent and hateful. Is Pearl's murder spree justified? Of course not. Is Annie's outburst at her son okay? It's not so bad as murder, but still hardly the best example of good parenting. Yet we look at these characters as examples of the power women can hold - this violence is symbolic, encouraging not real-life murder but emotional release.

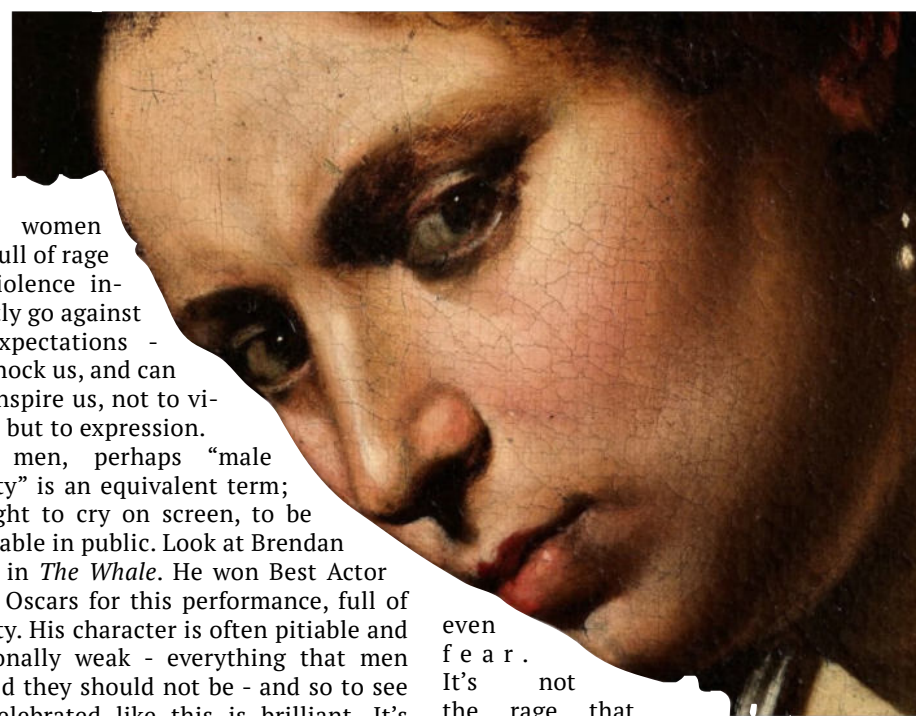
The same goes for many films with rageful men. The Narrator in *Fight Club* is, in my opinion, one of the great protagonists of our time - emotionally complex and compelling. Of course, he is violent, but from the very first scene of the film we understand why; he is a victim of a world that encourages male aggression, discourages healthy coping mechanisms, and stops him from getting the healthcare he needs. His actions wouldn't be justifiable in the real world, but on film, his rage is satisfying. Like Pearl and Annie, he isn't a role model, but a symbol.

Why is it, then, that "female rage" is such a topic of conversation and "male rage" isn't? As far as I can tell, it is for two reasons: first, women are presented as angry in media so much less often, and second, women's role in society more generally as peacemakers and caregivers means we don't associate

femininity with anger. Films that allow women to be full of rage and violence inherently go against our expectations - they shock us, and can even inspire us, not to violence but to expression.

For men, perhaps "male fragility" is an equivalent term; the right to cry on screen, to be vulnerable in public. Look at Brendan Fraser in *The Whale*. He won Best Actor at the Oscars for this performance, full of fragility. His character is often pitiable and emotionally weak - everything that men are told they should not be - and so to see him celebrated like this is brilliant. It's satisfying in the same way that women's anger is. It lets us see the true range of human emotion, beyond what society expects of men and women.

Female rage might be an overused term, but it speaks to something I'm sure many women understand: the desire to be listened to, and treated as deserving of attention and



even fear. It's not the rage that is shocking, but the brashness of its presentation. It is something true, something honest, and something we all relate to.

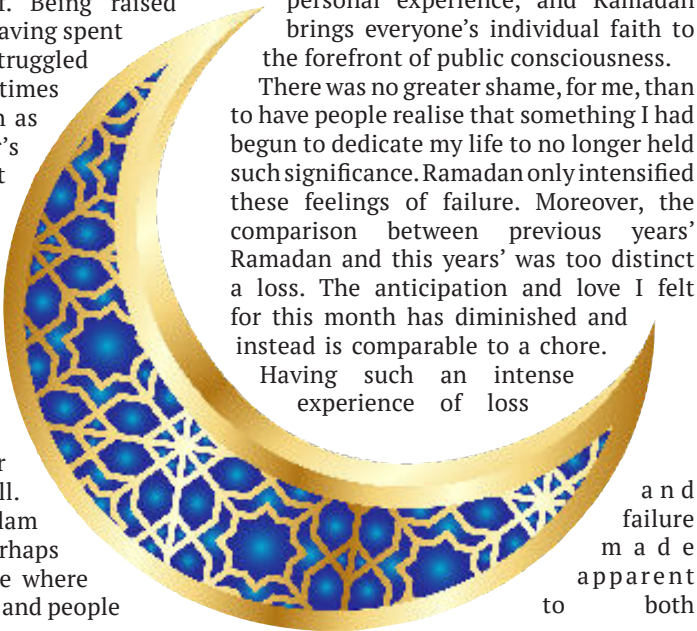
Image: Judith Beheading Holofernes' by Caravaggio (c.1598-9)

Why I was ready for Ramadan to end

Halima Saeed

Ramadan is the holy month in which Muslims around the world fast from sunrise to sunset, and where all possible distractions – such as music, excess entertainment, food, and drink – should be removed to focus on what is most important: one’s relationship with God. Not only is Ramadan often heralded as the best time of the year for Muslims, it is also one of the few parts widely acknowledged by non-Muslims. It must be emphasised, however, that the month of Ramadan should not be limited to a one-size-fits-all experience.

I sit here writing this midway through the 22nd day of fasting, exhausted and unmotivated. For most Muslims, the ability to connect with God during this holy time is highly appealing. But in my experience, fasting without this underlying motivation is just starving yourself. Being raised within Islam but equally having spent my life in the UK, I have struggled with my faith many times before, but never so much as in the lead up to this year’s Ramadan. It’s almost exclusionary seeing everyone’s excitement for the month as they decorate the houses and plan hosting the evening meal for the family while I feel no connection to it at all. I’ve struggled to keep up with my prayers, or read any Qur’an at all. Dedicating any time to Islam is starting to feel futile. Perhaps selfishly, I wait for a time where people’s faith is less overt, and people



expect the overtness of your faith less too. I can’t help but feel like a fraud whenever I participate in any aspect of Ramadan, yet a failure whenever I don’t.

Practising Muslims often describe their religion as a lifestyle rather than a practice. Never is this clearer than within the month of Ramadan, and the subsequent holiday of Eid. As Ramadan rolls on, Muslims heighten their practice of Islam and integrate their belief into the very fabric of their lives. Any participation in Ramadan on my part lacks such belief and commitment; it’s almost as if I’m lying.

It feels ludicrous to fast and take part in other acts of worship when my connection to faith is merely familial. Not participating, however, is somehow equally problematic. If a Muslim doesn’t engage with Ramadan, then it is clear to all – believers and non-believers alike – that they are ‘failing’ in their faith. Dealing with the strength of your belief is an extremely personal experience, and Ramadan brings everyone’s individual faith to the forefront of public consciousness.

There was no greater shame, for me, than to have people realise that something I had begun to dedicate my life to no longer held such significance. Ramadan only intensified these feelings of failure. Moreover, the comparison between previous years’ Ramadan and this year’s was too distinct a loss. The anticipation and love I felt for this month has diminished and instead is comparable to a chore.

Having such an intense experience of loss

and failure made apparent both to

family and friends made this Ramadan unbearable, and I yearned for its end the way I had previously anticipated its arrival.

Despite this, there is much I love about Ramadan, such as the practice of giving plenty of charity, or making more of an effort with family and friends. Cooking for people is something I enjoy immensely, and it is only appreciated more within this month. But a core tenet of Ramadan is seeking to develop one’s faith, something I haven’t done and do not particularly desire to do. As a result, I have found that this month can feel rather lonely. And this is only my experience; I do not begin to explore the experiences of people with no family or no Islamic community around them, or people with eating disorders who may struggle more during this month, for example.

Oddly, there is a greater popular awareness of religious denominations and variations within the two other Abrahamic faiths. The sects of Islam, however, are less acknowledged. This can mean that the nuances of Islamic life are lost in public perception, and a simplified understanding of Muslims and their beliefs are generally held. Ramadan is a personal journey, so the experience of one person will likely never be the same as the experience of another. I understand that many people had a wonderful month in terms of worship and self-betterment, and I wish them a blessed Ramadan and Eid. However, I personally could not wait for it to end so that constantly maintaining a façade of piety and faith would end with it. As awareness of Islamic practices grows, it is important to realise that the experiences of Muslims are as diverse and varied as the number of people within the faith itself, and that Ramadan is not only a physical struggle, but also a spiritual one.

TOP 5 Funniest Sex Stories

The Girlboss Queen

5 One time this guy was eating me out. In the middle of it I said, out loud, “Oh, slay”. He stopped and went “What?”, and I said “Nothing sorry please keep going”. He’s literally never spoken to me again.

The #1 Fanboy

4 Got with a guy who told me he was ‘really proud’ to have slept with me.

Member of Team Drizzy

3 Before I had sex with a girl, she was in my bed and turned to me and said, quoting Drake, “21, can you do something for me?”

The Nic Fiend

2 I was going down on a guy and saw a light flash above me from the corner of my eye. Thinking he was taking a video, I stopped to tell him off only to see that he was taking a hit of his vape. Not wanting to ruin the mood, I asked him for a hit and we continued...

The Karate Kid

1 A guy I got with told me he did MMA (mixed martial arts). He asked me if I wanted to see some moves so I said sure. He got up fully naked and swung his leg over my head, nearly knocking me out. Never again.

Aries 21 March - 19 April

Self-discipline is key right now. The term is well and truly underway, so keep motivated and remember that you really have got this!

Capricorn 22 Dec. - 19 Jan.

You’re finding yourself in leadership roles this week, Capricorn. Remember that good leaders listen and learn, too.

Aquarius 20 Jan. - 18 Feb.

Do what needs to be done this week. It might be an essay deadline that’s hard to meet or getting your laundry done, but make sure you get done what is essential.

Pisces 19 Feb. - 20 March

You’ll hit your stride this week with Trinity, so don’t forget to help out people who aren’t quite there yet.

Taurus 20 April - 20 May

A Capricorn moon this week opens you up to new possibilities. Take advantage of them.

Gemini 21 May- 20 June

As we really hit the middle of term, know how to pace yourself so you can keep momentum for all eight weeks.

Leo 23 July - 22 Aug.

Work with what works, Leo. Stick with your routines, and it will pay off, making this week go easily and uneventfully.

Virgo 23 Aug. - 22 Sept.

The Capricorn moon encourages you be open emotionally with those closest to you this week, helping you become closer.

Cancer 21 June - 22 July

Mercury in retrograde ends this week, helping to smooth out any miscommunications you’ve had recently.

Libra 23 Sept. - 22 Oct.

Have you been crushing on someone? This week, the end of Mercury’s retrograde helps you to be honest about your feelings.

Scorpio 23 Oct. - 21 Nov.

Communicate, collaborate, concentrate. This might be a busy week, and term is no longer just beginning or close to ending, but keep focused and things will settle.

Sagittarius 22 Nov. - 21 Dec.

Look out for your wellbeing this week. Whether you have exams starting soon or need a night in for self-care, let yourself have that break.

HOROSCOPES

Settling In...

Devil-DHD

Maddy Bellucci

I’m not going to discuss the sexy and aloof “sorry, I tap out when I’m bored, so it’s your duty to keep me entertained,” kind of ADHD but rather, the less glamorous version which (with affection) I refer to as devil-DHD – the kind of ADHD that quite often leads to inevitable shame and debauchery. As I am actually one of them, I hold these specimens very close to my heart.

When around a Devil-DHD person, you might find yourself hearing outlandish lies, leading you to believe that it could be pathological. They may tell everyone how they went to Berghain this summer and had the time of their life, when you – who were on that Berlin trip with them – know full well that the colourful pop-music dance bar you went to was assuredly not Berghain. If you are kind, you let them have it, if you are my best friend, you say “huh? Maddy, what the hell are you on about, that was not Berghain.”, leaving them the joy of ten unimpressed pitying faces. The truth of the matter is, to a traditional ADHD brain, the name of a club or a location often lodges itself in a dark and fastened safe that floats somewhere at the back of the mind. The key to the safe conveniently remains at the location itself (I have keys in Italy, Berlin, Milan, Amsterdam, London). The memory of the event or the feeling, however, is often crystal clear, almost palpably vivid and

tangible in our sensory consciousness. It’s the where, what, when, and why that fail us. But to a Devil-DHD, this extends beyond mere memory-loss, and becomes an opportunity to get creative.

It’s a known fact that people with ADHD are more creative. Countless studies (*Scientific American*, *Psychology Today*, *ADHD Institute* and many many more) sustain that “98% of case studies found that adults with ADHD had a higher rate of creative achievements compared to adults without ADHD in their daily life.” And it’s true. I get so creative with my lies that sometimes I wonder whether I should begin writing them down to keep up. My therapist with impressively large gums loved it. She got to help me with so many mind-blowing problems. Whether they were real or not was neither here nor there. Her face, and gums, would light up in a huge, Cheshire-cat smile. “Tell me more” she’d muse, as I told her about the time I once got forced, in Milan, by a drug dealer to deal several drugs to people because he had a warrant after him and couldn’t take the risk. I did go to Milan – I can’t take credit for that – but the rest was all a product of my resourceful imagination.

Another thing that goes hand in hand with the condition is hedonism. Imagine a slightly narcoleptic brain that falls asleep every so often (while your outer-shell

appears awake). Then suddenly the brain briefly wakes up again but on steroids. We need to make the absolute most of these few awakened moments. Everything needs to happen fast (men, don’t take that too literally). We need to grab every chance by their hyperactive balls, before it’s gone and Cinderella’s carriage becomes a pumpkin again. These are the times you might find us running to the bar for the seventh cocktail, trauma dumping on a captured victim, and interrupting people like it were a quiz and our buzzer was “oh that reminds me!” It can come across rude, or just plain annoying, and I am aware of this, but dear neuro-normatives, you need to understand the urgency. To understand, you must take into account all of the lower moments (there are many), that occur when the brain is asleep and unstimulated, when we zone out, and for that reason become alienated from the conversation, emitting an icky series of unanswered “who? When? What are we talking about? What? Guys?” that get depressing to hear, even for us.

It is during our lower moments that your phone might begin to ping with eight consecutive “what are you up to tonight?”s followed by a painfully desperate “drinks on me if you come out”. All I can advise

is for you to tap into compassion. Even if you choose that you do not wish to take us up on our pleading tequila shots spam, an “Oh! Sorry can’t tonight, but definitely tomorrow!” will do, even if it is a lie. We aren’t ones to judge lies and this’ll give our restless brains somewhere to rest, at least until tomorrow. It’s really that simple. It’s when there’s nothing stimulating us and nothing immediate that we begin to wonder why we tried so hard to win the sperm race in the first place. It really does occasionally get that dark up there. An ADHD-er who is self-aware might journal and may have devised certain coping mechanisms, but there is no miracle cure to the overwhelming deserts of boredom and nihilism that we so often stumble upon.

The unhealthier Devil-DHDer will resort to quicker and more harmful measures. A vape addiction will become a good friend and getting batshit drunk on nights out, a BFF. A need for immediate gratification will often turn us into people we don’t necessarily want to be: self-centred, disinterested, debauched.

So, because my boyfriend Mr. Vape is waiting and my brain’s about to tap out, I’ll wrap it up here: yes, there’s the whole fun-loving “I’m quirky” side to ADHD, but behind the veil of hyperactivity there’s also a lot of despondency and pain. (Which reminds me of the painful time I went paragliding and the rope detached, leading me to fly straight into a mountain and I got escorted back to land by an emergency helicopter that happened to be flown by Monica Bellucci – my aunt.)

But in all seriousness, have a heart for us little lying devils. We mean well.

Send

To: The offices of English Language and Literature [@ELL Fac]

From: Aaliyah Khan

Subject: Out of Library Notice

Dear all,

Recently, Roland Barthes sent me a postcard where he described the picture on the other side. There was ‘An old house, a shadowy porch, tiles, a crumbling Arab decoration, a man sitting against the wall, a deserted street, a Mediterranean tree’, he wrote, ‘this old photograph touches me: it is quite simply there that I should like to go’. In response, I write: ‘A twenty-five pound return flight, a slow week of term... It is quite simply there that I must go...’ And so the only option really was to go, and so I write back that I am on my way, that the old house should expect me, that the shadowy porch would be lit, that the deserted streets will soon be filled.

And then Philip Levine sent me some of his poetry on the back of a note, writing ‘Some things you know all your life. / They are so simple and true / they must be said without elegance, meter and rhyme, / they must be laid on the table beside the salt shaker, / the glass of water, the absence of light gathering’. And I thought how on Earth am I supposed to know these things I am to know my whole life, those simple and true things, when I am surrounded by meter and rhyme? So I am going in search of tables with salt shakers and glasses of water falling out of panes of light beyond the poetic.

Also, Virginia Woolf wrote to me with a quote, saying ‘[her happiness] silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, it is enough! It is enough!’ What I think she meant to say is that beach days are waiting for me, filled with silvery waves and vanishing sunsets and bursting lemons and pure delight.

And so if all of these writers say I should really take a break, you know, I think I just might. I mean, it is only the third week of the Trinity of my final year*, so there is nothing important keeping me here.

With love, (from Didcot Parkway)

Aaliyah
Sent from my iPhone

Ashmolean

Flynn Hallman

I wondered who
had rolled
the mat
along
the cobbled stone,
and left her there

curled
beneath
an umbrella
in her wheelchair,
smoking
in the rain,

so I waited,
watched the
evening grow,
caught a
passing cyclist
reeling home,

until someone reflected
in the glass
came and drew
the window curtains to
and said, before I had
a chance to ask,

‘we’re closed’.

Swiss Chard Lemon One-Pot Chicken Thigh

Over the next few weeks, Angus Beazley is going to bringing us his recipes from his year abroad. Angus is a passionate cook and his first is my favourite kind of recipe for entertaining - a delicious chicken one-pot!

Serves 4
INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken thighs, bone-in, skin-on
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 bunch Swiss chard, stems removed, leaves chopped
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 tablespoons butter

- Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken thighs, skin-side down, and cook for 5-6 minutes, until the skin is golden brown. Flip the chicken and cook for another 3-4 minutes. Remove the chicken from the skillet and set aside.
- In the same skillet, add the onion and garlic and cook for 2-3 minutes, until softened. Add the dried oregano, salt, and pepper, and stir to combine.
- Pour in the chicken broth and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, add the chopped Swiss chard, and cover the skillet. Let it cook for 10-12 minutes, until the chard is wilted.
- Return the chicken thighs to the skillet, skin-side up. Pour the lemon juice over the chicken and chard, and dot the butter on top of the chicken.
- Cover the skillet and let it cook for another 15-20 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and the juices run clear.
- Serve the chicken thighs with the Swiss chard and sauce spooned over the top.

Food News

- » **Covered Market Nights:** At long last the covered market is now open in the evening! Stop by Thursday to Sunday until 11PM and checkout the new Tap Market Social!
- » **Italiamo Ice Cream:** Summer is nearly here and Italiamo’s High St. store now has a great value selection of handmade Italian Geltato with all manner of toppings (go pistachio sauce and biscoff chunks!)
- » The new Subway on George St. offers **coffee and a cookie for £1.99** – It might just be the best deal in fast food!

A definitive guide to Oxford’s cafés

Oxford is home to a truly thriving and diverse independent café scene. Apart from London, I can’t think of anywhere else where so many different people bring their own coffee cultures to one city. The result? You can never grow bored of the endless variety of spots for work, food, catch-ups, and of course, great coffee. Here is Cherwell’s definitive guide...

High St. Café

This one is a true sleeper pick. Stay away in the winter when the door is open and heating is limited, pastries and cakes always look appealing but are overpriced. Coffee is Illy, reasonably priced, and generally well made but the crepes are the star of the show without a doubt. Sweet and savoury are on offer but the smoked salmon and poached egg is an all-time favourite.

Love Coffee

Love Coffee has been a Cowley Road stalwart for years but made the move to the top of the High Street last year. Open until 8 PM, it offers all manner of food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (shoutout to the chicken salads and club sandwiches). Greek coffee here is unrivalled anywhere else in the city and the sheer number of Greek pastries and cakes is extraordinary.

Italiamo

I’ve written an extended review and ode to this student favourite, but for the purposes of this piece I’ll stick firmly to coffee. The Italian beans, both decaf and standard, are superb and the Crick Crock, cannoli, cantucci and other bites all come in at around £2 for an ideal pairing.

Vaults and Garden

William Pouget has a little Oxford Eatery empire going that started with Alpha Bar and now incorporates Salsas del Sol and Chickpea. Vaults and Garden is at the high end of the price range for both drinks and food but the unique setting, both inside and out, does make it stand out.

Opera Café, by Deborah Ogunnoiki

Opera café is a quiet café situated on Walton Street just opposite the junction on Little Clarendon Street. I first encountered it on the walk back from Port Meadow with a friend, I had never heard of this little café before despite living on Walton Street myself. I knew what drink I wanted: Iced Caramel Latte with Oat Milk. A tough drink to get right, too much coffee and I’ll throw up, too much caramel and I’ll be bouncing off the walls. It’s safe to say they made the perfect latte, one so good that I have all my meetings and friendship dates in the Opera Café now. Absolutely nothing to do with the fact that it is a 2-minute walk from my bed...

Colombia Coffee Roasters, by Thomas Bristow

Colombia converted me into a coffee drinker. It’s a short walk from college and is by far the best coffee I’ve had in the city.

It tastes almost the same everywhere else, but Colombia has a rich chocolatey taste which is completely unique. Furthermore, the staff are pleasant and there’s a decent amount of seating. Located in the Covered Market, it is the perfect place to people-watch and procrastinate.

Art Café, by Aryemis Brown

“A peanut butter smoothie, please.” That was my very first order at Art Cafe on my very first day in the United Kingdom. The barista smiled warmly. “A milkshake?,” she replied. I have frequented the place for their peanut butter “milkshake” now for the past two years. It is second only to the kindness and passion of the wonderful staff. If I’m feeling especially adventurous, their Sexy Brazilian sandwich is delicious! I’m a creature of habit for those two, but may I also recommend their egg and avocado toast, English breakfast, and blueberry muffins – to be enjoyed inside or outdoors?

Jericho Coffee Traders

It might be small and seats are hard to come by but students across the city swear by these guys. They provide coffee for countless other cafes and their filter is superb but the charming spot on the High Street is open until five and ever-reliable.

Maya’s

Yet another place with a full written review and podcast, Mayas is a true coffee lovers’ café. Om will talk you through everything and anything on offer from countless different beans, to drip, filter, and superb hot chocolate. If you love your caffeine and need to kill some time, just pop in for a chat!

Peleton

THE Cowley Road café. A beautiful garden and great value high-quality coffee are punctuated by the best banana bread and cakes around. Simply sensational in everything it does.

Pret-a-Manger

Wow, there’s so much to say about Cornmarket’s Pret. One of four Pret a Manger’s in the city, this is where essays get written, deadlines get just about met, and union careers are born. Coffee? Overpriced and bang average. Atmosphere and wonky tables? Depressing to say the least.

Ole and Steen

I love Ole and Steen for their cakes, salads, sandwiches, and basically any kind of food they offer. The coffee is a different story. Terrifyingly expensive, synthetic-tasting, and often poorly made, stick to their Too Good to Go boxes and the teas.

Tick Tock Café

Tick Tock Café is an Oxford institution and the only real true greasy spoon still around in the city. Value is absolutely sensational and although the coffee might not blow you away, it sure tastes better at these prices!

Queens Lane Coffee House

Oldest coffee house? This debate is a little like the seemingly endless list of places that claim to be the oldest pub in London. The prices certainly reflect it but the food is high quality when it comes out the kitchen. The cakes share a supplier with Sofi de France and are certainly an indulgence for when you’re feeling fancy but bring your wallet!

Bbuona

Another place that I love so much it has its own full review, article, and podcast. As well as morning deals on pastries and coffee, the freshly piped cannoli are hands-down the best in town. The decaf coffee comes from a secret Italian supplier and is too on a different level. The owners are authentically delightful and the WIFI never falters.

McDonald’s

Fast-food? Yes. Great quality? No. I tell you what though, the taste is passable and the price is unbeatable.

Subway

I know, another fast food chain. I absolutely wasn’t planning on including Subway, but £1.99 for an acceptable Americano and cookie might just become my new go-to for when I need a pick-me-up on a budget.

Black Sheep

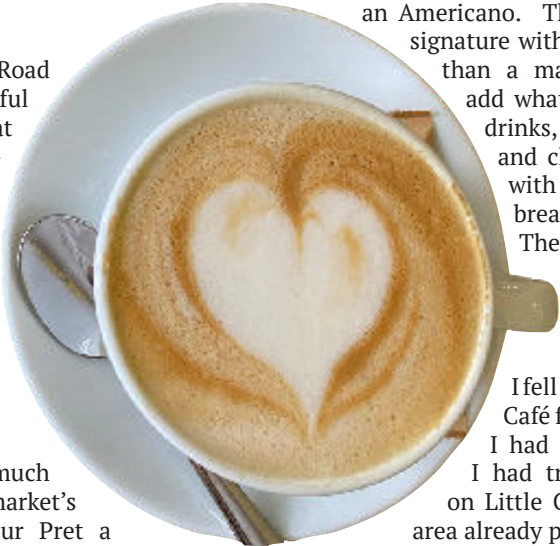
Since moving to the corner of the High Street, Black Sheep Coffee has found a whole new fanbase. This is the only chain that offers a genuinely high-quality variety of beans. The decaf is good too and the long-black is my choice for an extra-strong version of an Americano. The ‘black-hoof’ is their signature with just a little more milk than a macchiato, and you can add whatever you want to your drinks, from CBD to protein and chia. Food is good too, with Belgian waffles and breakfast baps standing out. The loyalty scheme is also better than most.

Tree Artisan Café by Iustina Roman

I fell in love with Tree Artisan Café from the very first coffee I had there, and I only wish I had tried it out sooner. It’s on Little Clarendon Street, in an area already populated by many well-loved cafés — but this doesn’t mean that it doesn’t stand out. In fact, you would be lucky to manage to grab a seat inside this cosy spot! Their silky oat lattes are among my favourites in Oxford, and this café is great for catching up with a friend or grabbing a quick lunch.

Horsebox

An even better option as we head into the summer for all of those walks around University Parks, Horsebox offers good quality grinds in normal drinks but has a pleasing rotating filter option. The current one is fruity and unique.

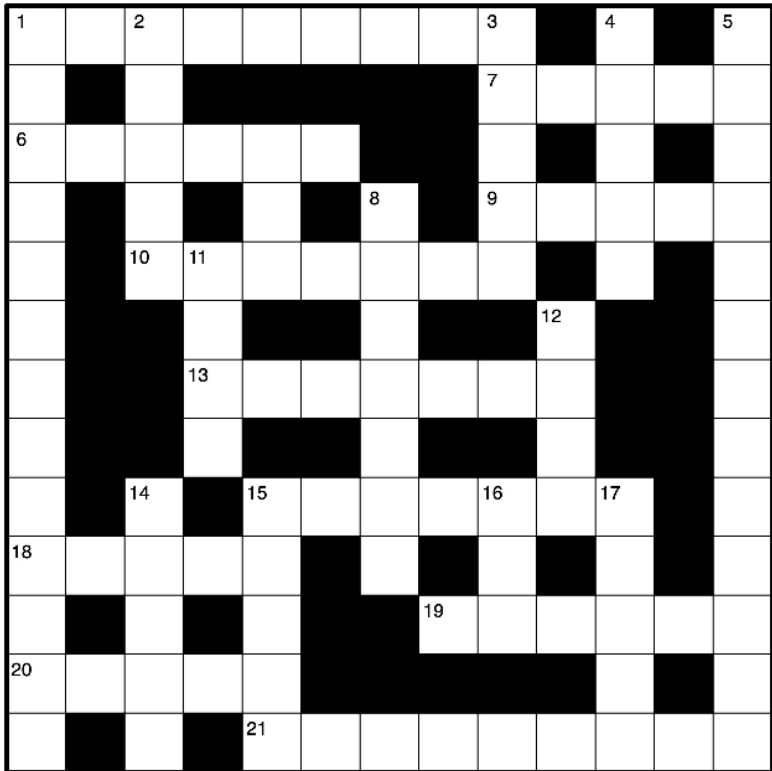


Kevin and Timmy

by Sean Hartnett



Cryptic Crossword by Sarah Beard



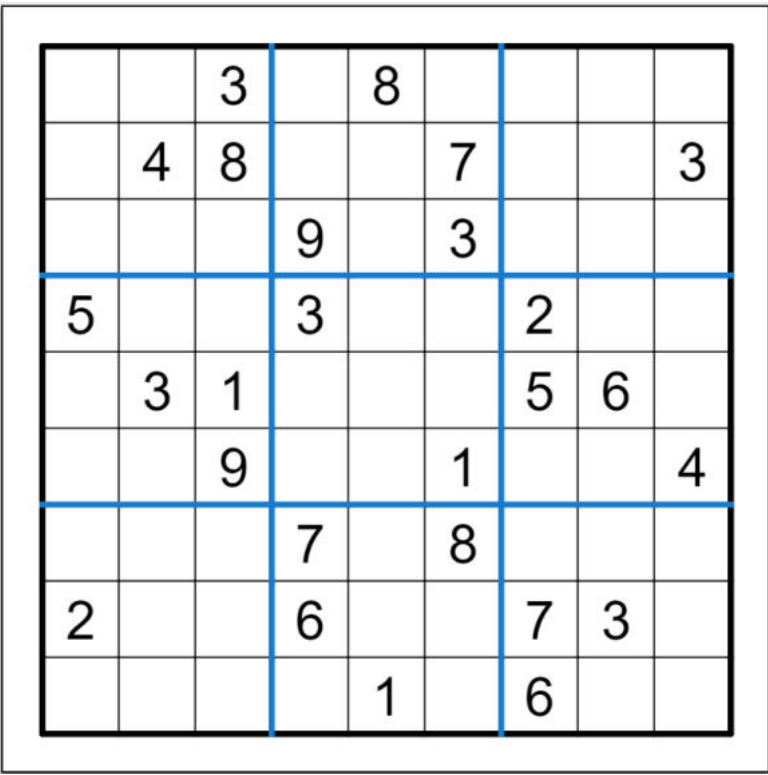
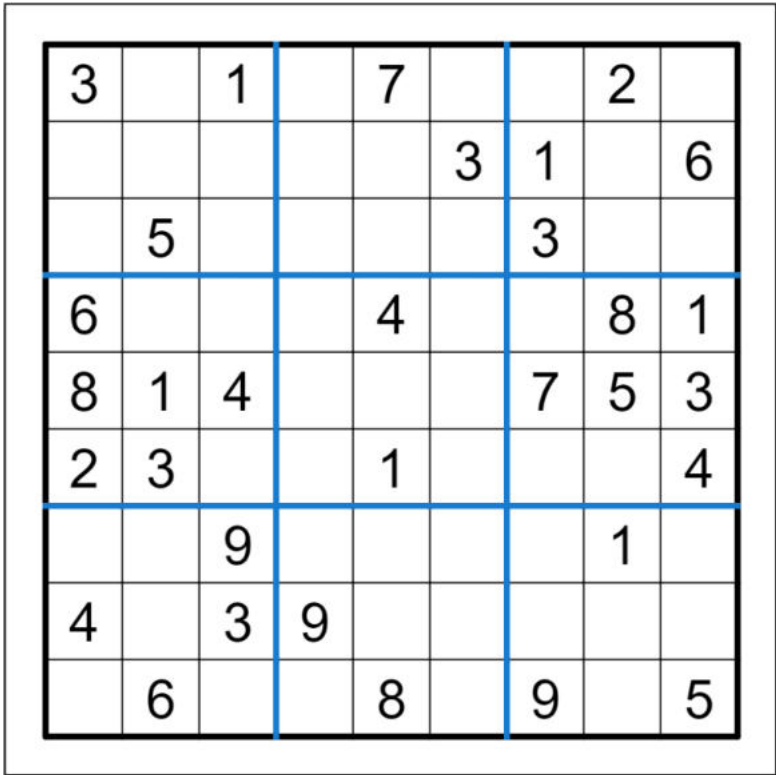
ACROSS

- 1. Like a Lebanese dance move? (9)
- 6. Love is most unethical (6)
- 7. Listen to the gold Italian god (5)
- 9. Icelandic mountain dweller makes provocative comments online (5)
- 10. Virtual princess' self-introduction calls government practices into question (7)
- 13. The best thing about an Oxford ball is the free measure of music (4,3)
- 16. Fältskog, Ulvaeus, Andersson, and Lyngstad see major changes - type of food (7)
- 18. Smelly dressmaker (5)
- 19. Disclaimer for grotto dining (6)
- 20. Rummage through to find a gun (5)
- 21. Device that measures the spicyness of the Nando's sauce is limiting (9)

DOWN

- 1. Worst case scenario, we'll go on the ultimate all-inclusive holiday! (2,1,4,6)
- 2. Intelligent computer system confuses fuel for garlic dip (5)
- 3. Exclamation about creative expression means the world to me (5)
- 4. You'd almost have to be a stupid person to find this phrase difficult to translate (5)
- 5. Type of disco along the seafront is an attraction (13)
- 8. This pop hit really wants a buzz (7)
- 11. Safety check for cow's car is a good academic exercise for law students (4)
- 12. Katya Petrovna Zamolochikova is such a bore! (4)
- 14. Speedy singer-songwriter (5)
- 15. Local track moves very slowly (5)
- 17. You've got a point! (5)

Sudokus by Lewis Callister



View last week's answers on the Cherwell.org