

Cherwell

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Hussain on page 6:



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YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW: Oxford colleges' responses to FOI requests

Selina Chen reports.

Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000, members of the public have the right to request certain information from public authorities, which are legally required to comply unless an exception applies. This investigation into ten *Cherwell* investigations over two years examines 310 FOI requests and finds that the average non-responses rate for Oxford's undergraduate colleges is 25%, with five colleges failing to comply with half or more.

What is the FOIA?

"The traditional culture of secrecy will only be broken down by giving people in the United Kingdom the legal right to know," wrote then-Prime Minister Tony Blair as preface to the 1997 white paper "Your Right to Know" setting out proposals for a Freedom of Information Act.

Beginning in 2005, the FOIA enables anyone to ask public authorities – including all publicly owned companies, educational institutes, and government branches – for information such as documents, meeting minutes, or email correspondences, to which they are entitled a response within 20 working days. Exemptions apply in certain cases, including when data would breach national security or individual privacy or cost excessive resources to compile.

The policy document continued: "Openness is fundamental to the political health of a modern state. This white paper marks



a watershed in the relationship between the government and people of the United Kingdom. At last there is a government ready to trust the people with a legal right to information."

Five years after the FOIA came into effect, Blair called his past self a "naive, foolish, irresponsible nincompoop" for supporting the act. He alleged that journalists used the FOIA as a weapon, and indeed the act helped expose many

of Blair's scandals. In response to Blair and other politicians who have echoed his critique, media outlets published lists of stories revealed through FOI requests, such as the 2009 scandal over MP's expenses that led to multiple prison terms and resignations as well as the development of a new parliamentary expense system.

Oxford University's past compliance with the FOIA has brought such information to

light as the persistent gender gap in finals and the university's treatment of animals for science research. A 2018 *Cherwell* story using FOI requests – to which half the colleges failed to respond – found that heads of college had claimed college expenses for personal spending at exclusive gentlemen's clubs.

Artwork by Selina Chen

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Landlords will close ATIK Oxford in June

Éilis Mathur reports.




Cherwell can confirm that ATIK Oxford is set to close down at the end of June this year. Student club representatives were informed on Saturday 6 April that the nightclub would be shutting down, which was later confirmed by Rekom, the parent operations company of ATIK.

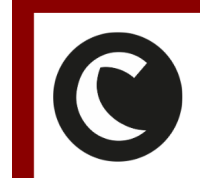
A spokesperson from Rekom told *Cherwell*: "Unfortunately the landlord has decided that ATIK will close on 30 June." While it will remain open for Trinity term, the nightclub will have closed its doors before Freshers' Week 2024. As a result, Oxford colleges will no longer be able to book club nights there and will instead look to alternative locations, such as Bridge and The Varsity Club.

ATIK will be closing due to a disagreement with the landlord. Rekom told *Cherwell* that the landlord plans "to redevelop Cantay House into offices" and although "we offered a number of solutions to enable ATIK to remain open...all of our proposals to continue trading were rejected by the landlord."

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NEWS SHORTS

Lincoln College Library set to reopen after extended closure

Lincoln College's main library will be opening at the start of Trinity Term, after being shut since the beginning of the academic year.

The library was closed over the 2023 long vacation to begin renovations and was initially scheduled to reopen at the beginning of Hilary but encountered "delays arising from archaeological investigations."

The Bursar, Alex Spain, told *Cherwell*, "We expect the Lincoln College main library to be open to students from next Wednesday, 17 April."

Councillor Mike Rowley announced as new Lord Mayor

On March 18, Councillor Mike Rowley, an University of Oxford alumni, was announced as the new Mayor of Oxford. He will succeed Lubna Arshad who has held the position for the past year.

Councillor Rowley will be Oxford's first openly gay and neurodivergent Lord Mayor. He is familiar with the City having completed a BA in Law in 2000 at Wadham College.

He said: "It's a tremendous honour and privilege to be nominated to be Oxford's next Lord Mayor."

The forthcoming Lord Mayor has chosen three charities. They are Yellow Submarine, who encourage the socialisation of people with learning disabilities, Seesaw, a grief support service for young people, and Love Barton, a Christian charity tackling systemic poverty.

Non-profit group urges Oxford colleges to become more sustainable

Good Food Oxfordshire (GFO), a non-profit group who campaigns for a healthy and sustainable food system in Oxford, are asking for support from Oxford University colleges. Their OxFarmToFork project promotes local food producers and GFO is calling for colleges to sign up. Currently, 18 colleges purchase produce through this scheme, which works to connect producers and chefs in the local area. GFO aims to sell into more Oxford colleges as well as expanding to Oxford schools and hospitals.

Zero Emission Zone lowers air pollution, report shows

Emily Henson reports.

With the introduction of the Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ), the Oxford city centre has seen reduced pollution and traffic levels. A new council report has found that, between 2021 and 2022, air pollution reduced by up to 18% in some areas.

The ZEZs are currently located around Cornmarket Street and are in operation from 7am to 7pm every day, charging up to £10 per vehicle. The report shows a 28% decrease in traffic during operating hours, as well as a decrease in overall traffic.

The ZEZ scheme was introduced in 2022 to improve air quality within the city. Drivers of petrol and diesel vehicles, including hybrids, are charged to enter the zone. Oxford is currently the only city in the UK operating a ZEZ, with similar schemes in other locations, notably London, having been extensively criticised.

While Oxford as a whole saw an air pollution reduction of 8%, areas within the scheme saw dramatically bigger reductions: 12%, 14% and 18% on New Inn Hall Street, Cornmarket Street and St Michael's Street respectively.

County Council Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development

Strategy, Judy Roberts, has said: "The zero emission zone pilot has had a positive impact in a small area of the city centre. We can apply our learning from the pilot when we now start to look at expanding that area in future and bringing the benefits of cleaner air and less traffic to more residents and businesses."

Plans to expand the ZEZ have been proposed, with it potentially stretching from the train station to University Parks and Magdalen College by 2026. Both the Oxford Green party and the Conservatives have criticised the plan, with the Greens branding it "greenwashing" and the Conservatives voicing concern about the impact on the cost of living crisis. Recently, councillors have expressed concerns about the lack of electric buses and the possible impact on local businesses.

The Oxford Local Plan 2040 aims for the city to have net zero carbon emissions. Other steps taken include the introduction of electric vehicle charging points, a full electric bus fleet and lowering the use of vehicles by encouraging walking, cycling and working from home.

Oxford City Council have told *Cherwell*: "The Council's Local Plan 2040 guides all planning decisions in Oxford for the next 16 years. It identifies that improving local air

quality, mitigating the impact of development on air quality and reducing exposure to poor air quality across Oxford is key to safeguarding public health and the environment. The plan also identifies that a range of measures will be required to improve air quality across Oxford, including the move away from vehicles with a combustion engine, reducing the emissions of existing and new buildings, and reducing

the emissions from public transport."

In the 2022 to 2023 financial year, the scheme made £702,940, which is being used to pay for its operation and to fund other County and City Council transport schemes, including those within the Oxford Local Plan 2040. Just over half of this income came from penalty notice charges, and the rest from daily charges.

Image Credit: Emily Henson.



Oxford University Liberal Democrats set to return

Enrique Normand Velarde reports.

The Oxford University Liberal Democrats (OULD) is set to restart this Trinity term. Their current president, Zaghm Farhan, a first-year University College student, spoke with *Cherwell* to announce the return of the society ahead of this year's general election.

Farhan stated that he had decided to bring back OULD after noticing "a lack of a 'Lib Dem' presence" in Oxford since beginning his time there, and he began work to revive the society last term. This recent period of inactivity was explained to be "due to a lack of committee members to take up roles". The society now intends to extend its office terms to a year under its new constitution in order to minimise committee turnover. The newly refounded committee is "keen to strike a healthy balance between socials and politics to generate interest from a vast range of people."

The term card will include a launch event with Oxford MP Layla Moran speaking and a session of 'Liquor and Liberalism', a "flagship debate and drinking event" which will continue fortnightly on Wednesdays. More guest speakers and joint-society social events are expected to be

announced on the full termcard, which will be released soon.

The Society's Vice-President, Heather Judge, is set to stand at the upcoming Oxford City Council elections in the Holywell Ward as a student candidate for the Liberal Democrats. Farhan hopes that the

activities of OULD will have "a substantial impact on campaigns in an area where the Lib Dems have a fantastic chance of winning seats."

The society has organised a virtual talk for former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg for this term.

Despite the society's political aims, Farhan assured that: "Our aim is to, as usual, occupy the centre ground and to be a home for everyone. Regardless of your politics, we want to see you at our events."

Image Credit: Cyril Malik.



Oxford University releases new mental health toolkit

Éilis Mathur reports.

During Hilary vacation on University Mental Health Day, The University of Oxford released a new mental health toolkit for students as part of a research trial led by the Department of Psychiatry.

The digital toolkit, named Nurture-U, is a national project that has already been made available to students at several universities across the UK, including Exeter University and King's College London. Around 200 students have taken part in the project, which aims to "find better ways to support university students' mental health and wellbeing."

Nurture-U creates "customisable plans and assessments" based on student feedback. It also directs students to university-specific and community resources. As a result, according to the Project Manager for Oxford, Dr Kevin Matlock, the toolkit can function "as a stand-alone, self-directed mental health aid or a supplement to ongoing counselling or pastoral care."

The toolkit is a collaborative project from six universities across the country, including Oxford. It is also funded by several Oxford University Research Councils, including the Medical Research Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Dr Matlock noted that in spite of a growing need for mental health support among university students, "many apps only provide general information." Nurture-U fills that gap by providing personalised wellbeing advice on areas

related to sleep, stress levels and exercise. It also tracks progress over time.

The toolkit's release to Oxford students comes as mental health issues rise among the student population. A survey conducted by Nurture-U found that 34% of Oxford students experience "high levels of anxiety and depression." Additionally, the 2022-2023 report from the Student Welfare and Support Service showed that it took up to 15 days for eight out of ten students to meet with a professional through the Service. Accordingly, part of Nurture-U's mission is to "identify barriers students encounter when accessing mental health and welfare services at Oxford."

Image Credit: James Morrel.



Oxford University Press American workers prepare to strike

Selina Chen reports.

The US National Labor Relations Board, an American government agency, has filed a complaint against Oxford University Press (OUP) on charges that OUP has refused to bargain and moved work overseas. News Media Guild, the union that represents the OUP USA, said that workers may organise a strike.

OUP, the largest university press in the world, employs over 6,000 people with offices in multiple countries. OUP USA, based in New York City, employs around 150 of them.

An OUP USA Guild spokesperson told Cherwell that the last starting salary counter-offer from OUP was \$46,826 in November of last year, an amount "far below" the New York City living wage estimated at roughly \$70,000. The current starting salary is \$40,000. Since OUP's proposed salary was "overwhelmingly rejected," the Guild has responded with three counter-offers, the latest of which was \$50,000.

The spokesperson told Cherwell: "We are willing to work with the Employer to attain a contract that is fair for both sides, but the Employer has been unwilling to be reasonable

in the last several months by refusing to budge."

OUP USA workers belong to a bargaining unit which is acting to bar OUP USA from relocating these workers' roles to outside of the United States without first negotiating with the union. Despite this, in 2023 the Guild learnt that OUP was hiring roles in the UK and India to perform OUP USA's work. OUP stated that "they were a 'global company' that would move work around in whatever manner they deemed necessary."

The Guild then filed an Unfair Labor Practice Charge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which investigated and found merit in six of the seven charges.

The spokesperson said: "The case will now move forward as the NLRB will now charge OUP with violating the law. The OUP USA Guild remains resolute in maintaining the sovereignty of our unit: bargaining unit work must stay within the bargaining unit, lest our unit get slowly eroded until we have few members and little power."

Cherwell has contacted OUP for a reply.

Image Credit: Jonas M / CC0 1.0 via Wikimedia Commons



Bodleian Libraries acquire rare Johann Sebastian Bach manuscript through Acceptance in Lieu scheme

Charlotte Dawson reports.

The Bodleian Libraries have gained ownership of the autographed manuscript of Johann Sebastian Bach's cantata for Ascension Day – 'Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein' through the Acceptance in lieu scheme. This scheme allows people to pay their Inheritance Tax by gifting important cultural objects to the state. The handwritten score is on display until 5 January 2025 in the Weston Library's Treasury as part of the free exhibition 'Write, Cut, Rewrite'. There are only three other Bach autographs in the UK: two are at the British Library, and the other is in Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum.

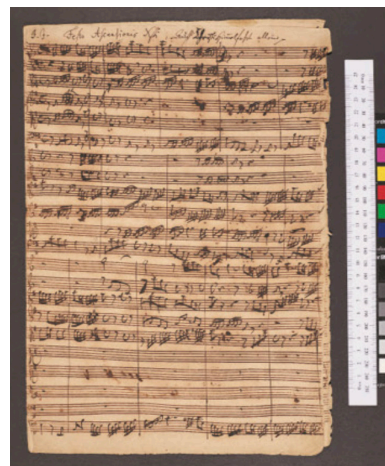
Today, Bach is considered one of the greatest Western composers, yet without his autographed manuscripts most of his music would have been lost. Very few of his compositions were published while he was alive; in fact, although 'Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein' was written in

1725, it only appeared in print 150 years later in 1878.

The document is one of the best-preserved Bach manuscripts, as the damage has mostly been contained to the edges. It was last owned by Sir Ralph Kohn, a successful medical scientist who fled Nazi Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933 and settled in Britain. He was a great music lover who owned an impressive collection of manuscripts, of which this was the most precious. He wanted this precious cantata manuscript to go to a UK institution, which his descendants have ensured with this donation. It was previously exhibited at Buckingham Palace as the piece was performed in the early 2000s for King Charles III, then Prince of Wales.

Unlike other Bach cantatas, for which he often recycled movements from previous compositions, the music for this one was all new. Professor Robert Quinney, Organist and Tutorial Fellow in Music at New

College, Oxford describes how "[it] ranges from the dazzlingly energetic opening chorus and triumphant bass aria to the intimate duet for alto and tenor."



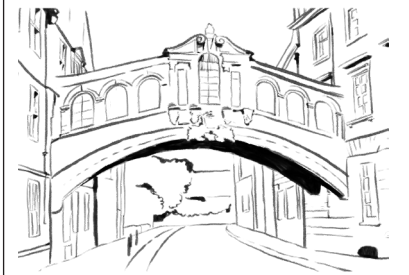
The music was evidently written with great haste, as lines are drawn with little concern for alignment and precision. Alterations were visibly

made after scratching or crossing out text, and his hand or sleeve left noticeable smudges. The manuscript still has annotations from Bach's eldest son Wilhelm Friedmann, and pencil marks from the printers as they prepared the publication of the work.

The document will be digitised and made available through Digital Bodleian, the platform the Library uses to share its online collections, and through the Bach Digital online portal. For now, it is displayed in the exhibition 'Write, Cut, Rewrite', which studies the importance of drafting, reviewing and editing in literature. It stands alongside "abandoned works, discarded ideas and notes and scribbles" from prominent authors like Mary and Percy Shelley, Jane Austen, James Joyce, Raymond Chandler, Ian Fleming, Samuel Beckett, and John le Carré.

Image Credit: Flint Culture via Bodleian Libraries.

CROSS CAMPUS



Cambridge to investigate the imperial legacy of Museum of Zoology

The University of Cambridge is advertising for a PhD student to launch an initiative investigating the imperial roots of the Museum of Zoology. They hope by acknowledging the history and background, people will feel more represented by museums. The successful candidate will receive £19,000 to help them explore how items in the plant and animal collection, such as tigers and dodos, relate to European colonial history.

Yale students hunger strike against weapons manufacturing

Yale students have been demanding the University and Yale Corporation divest from weapons manufacturing involved in the war in the Gaza Strip. As part of their ongoing effort, the Hunger Strikers for Palestine have begun a hunger strike a week before the Yale Corporation's last meeting of the semester on April 20. Despite Yale University's policy banning them from investing in weapons retailers, they have not divested from weapons manufacturers. The most recent hunger strike at Yale, taking place in 2017, lasted four weeks.

Imperial College London to vote on logo after widespread criticism

Imperial College London released a new logo as part of a rebranding project which was met with backlash from students. A petition calling for its replacement has received nearly 8,000 signatures and it has been the subject of ridicule on social media. As a result, Imperial has halted the rollout of its new design and the Union Council will be voting on whether to seek more feedback before continuing the rebrand.

Amal and George Clooney speak at Oxford's New Theatre

Jakub Trybull and Emily Henson report.

Amal and George Clooney made an appearance last Friday at New Theatre in Oxford as part of the Skoll World Forum annual summit. The couple discussed their work at the Clooney Foundation for Justice, storytelling, and the consequences and importance of speaking out against

dictators and oppressive regimes.

Amal Clooney, who is an alumna of St Hugh's, is a barrister specialising in human rights cases. Her most notable clients include high-profile journalists such as Julian Assange, Maria Ressa, and Mohamed Fahmy, as well as former world leaders Yulia Tymoshenko and Mohamed Nash-eed.

She spoke about supporting ISIS victims in German courts: "In every case, my clients have come and put

themselves into witness protection programmes, some of them are illiterate. They take the stand, they're speaking in a foreign language, and for days they're staring down in court the person who can help them enslaved, who abused them, and they tell their story in a way that nobody else could.

"At the end of the trial is the time of the verdict. And the judge says, 'You're guilty of genocide' in an international courtroom and sentenced him to life imprisonment. He then faints, and she sounds strong. It was just amazing."

"My wife's a badass", George added, "the only person to put ISIS on trial, the only one."

The 2024 Skoll World Forum is the 20th "annual gathering where the world's most influential social entrepreneurs and thought leaders come together to exchange ideas for a better world." The forum has previously hosted speakers such as Malala Yousafzai, Desmond Tutu and Jimmy Carter. The 2024 forum also hosted other notable speakers such as Dame Jacinda Ardern, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland.

The forum was set up by the Skoll Foundation which was founded by

ex-eBay president Jeffrey Skoll. The foundation had an endowment of \$1,127,000,000, as reported in 2018, which it uses to make grants and investments intended to reduce global poverty.

The Skoll Foundation told Cherwell: "Oxford's Skoll Centre has always played an integral role in bringing people together to progress the agenda for global socio-economic innovation and is constantly striving to improve how we can impact positive change across the world."

The Clooney Foundation for Justice focuses on achieving justice for victims of human rights abuses, especially those who had their rights violated during warfare. Amal Clooney discussed the tightening of abortion laws within the United States, such as the recent revival of a law from 1864 banning nearly all abortions in Arizona.

In October, the Clooney Foundation for Justice filed a case in Germany requesting an investigation into the crimes committed in Ukraine. Beyond this, they have previously defended protesters in Hong Kong, prosecuted a warlord in the Democratic Republic of Congo and represented journalists in Belarus.

Image Credit: Jakub Trybull.



Landlords will close ATIK Oxford in June

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In response to the closure, a spokesperson from Rekom told Cherwell: "We are absolutely distraught for the local community, student market, staff and management, businesses on Park End street that rely on ATIK to support their business and the late night economy as a whole."



This negative reaction has been echoed by students. An Oxford University student told Cherwell: "ATIK and Park End nights are such a big part of the city and university's social scene, it's a real shame to see that go."

Rekom is still in the process of finding a solution. However, they told Cherwell: "...as it stands we are preparing for the last three months of ATIK Oxford."

Image Credit: Meraj Chhaya/ CC-BY-2.0 via Flickr

Oriel College removes 18th-century painting

Tom Gardner reports.

In March, Oriel College removed an 18th century painting featuring a Duke with a black servant in the background. Critics have said that the painting was removed over fears that it would offend students, while Oriel has maintained that the move was due to the college's ongoing renovations.

The Duke, Henry Somerset, graduated from Oriel in 1763 and was a benefactor to the college. The painting features him and a black servant boy positioned behind him and holding the Duke's crown.

The spokesperson told Cherwell: "Due to extensive renovation

"...the painting was removed over fears that it would offend students."

of our senior library where the Duke of Beaufort's painting is normally hung, we have loaned the painting to Badminton House for safekeeping."

The college is currently undergoing extensive renovation to the bar, dining hall, and kitchen. The Senior Library, where the painting had been housed, was converted to a temporary servery and dining hall prior to the painting's removal.

Badminton House, the ancestral home of the Duke's family since the 17th century, has no modern connection to Oriel.

It is unclear why the painting was not rehoused in college during the renovation period. The college did not reply to questions of whether other paintings were removed during renovations or whether the artwork would be returned in the future.

Alexander von Klemperer, a former PhD student at Oriel, had called for the removal of that painting and one other, also featuring a black boy in the

background, prior to its removal. He said: "while both images are products of their time, they are also racist depictions of people of colour as subservient and to

"...it is unclear why the painting was not rehoused in college..."

some extent dehumanised. The way in which portraits and people are represented in a space can deeply alter how comfortable or welcoming that space is to people."

Oriel has previously been criticised over its handling of past benefactors, most notably in the case of alumnus Cecil Rhodes. After calls to remove its long-standing statue of Rhodes, Oriel opted to keep the statue and to erect a plaque contextualising Rhodes' legacy.

Other Oxford colleges have also

taken steps to remove contentious artwork. In 2017, Balliol college removed a portrait of 'colonialist' statesman George Curzon from its dining hall. And in 2021, members of Magdalen MCR voted to remove a portrait of the Queen from their common room after it was deemed a symbol of "recent colonial history."

Image Credit: Steve Daniels / CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



Oxford's complicity in colonialism

Ebony-Coco de Lara comments.

The removal of a portrait depicting the second Duke of Beaufort (and his black servant) by Oriel College confronts an interesting question regarding the college's relationship with the legacy of the Empire. More importantly, and by extension, it provokes relevant discourse on the nature of the University's historic complicity in colonialism. A conversation that is often 'swept under the rug' by those who wish to divorce the present from the gaping wide, open wounds of the past.

That is, of course, on the basis that Oriel intends to store the portrait away permanently. They have made no implication, so

far, that they will do so.

It is an uncomfortable truth that the University we call 'home' provided somewhat of the 'means of production' for the operation of the Empire – educating those who were 'destined' to direct its trajectory. Animating a systematic regime built on an explicit power dynamic between those who governed and those that were governed. Racial hierarchy and brute force were the mediums in which this power was solidified.

Oriel College has long been in liaison with some of the key pioneers of this moment in history. Cecil Rhodes, arguably the most successful colonial statesman, stands prominently displayed at the college's high-street entrance. A physical manifestation

of their historic ties to Britain's troubled past.

Yet, commentary on the nature of this involvement seems non-existent. Oriel College, and the University, should be obliged to address the problematic history they were implicated in. Especially in a manner that extends merely the permanent taking down of a painting. The legacy of Empire exceeds that which exists in history books. It is present in the politics, media and perceptions we indulge in. The way in which we view our world. Does it not, then, deserve to be a relevant topic of discussion?



Your right to know: Oxford colleges' responses to FOI requests

continued from front page

Oxford University, alongside the Russell Group and Universities UK, attempted to gain exemption from FOI requests in 2016.

However, a report by the Independent Commission on Freedom of Information ruled against it. Later this month, the University will go to court in order to defend its blocking a FOI request about the identity of an anonymous donor who gave £10m to establish the Oxford Nizami Ganjavi Centre.

Today, Oxford University has guidelines on FOI requests and consistently responds to *Cherwell*. Colleges, like the University, are public authorities and thus accountable under the FOIA. Yet the collegiate system allows individual colleges to slip through the cracks. Although non-compliance cases could land in the Information Commissioner's Office and ultimately in court, many colleges fail to consistently respond – and face no consequence for their inaction.

Oxford Colleges' Track Records

Cherwell conducted an extensive search through past investigation records and gathered data on ten FOI requests going back to Trinity Term of 2022. Topics of inquiry included rules regarding rustication, college banking practices, vacation storage, lack of heating, mental health,

donations, rent increase, Van Noorden inflation Index figures, college heads' salaries, and accommodation costs.

For each request, a college is coded as "compliant" if they responded to the request, declined the request per exemption, were not sent a request, or asked *Cherwell* for a clarification to which *Cherwell* did not respond.

"Many colleges fail to consistently respond – and face no consequence for their inaction."

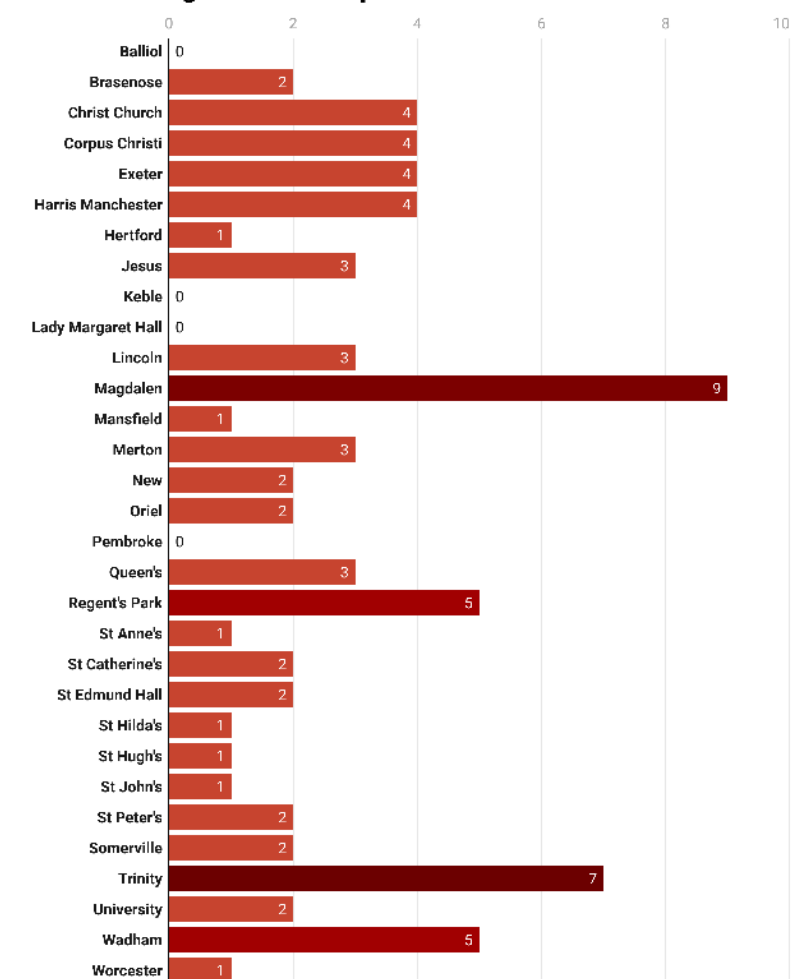
The latter two are rare – only applicable to four instances in 310 data points. This investigation did not seek to quantify the helpfulness of received responses, which also vary.

For the exemption, *Cherwell* had asked for a list of all donations above a certain amount received by the college. This triggers FOI Act's section 12, where "cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit." Many colleges rightfully refused to compile this data.

A college is only coded as "non-compliant" if they ignored *Cherwell's* FOI request.

Only four colleges responded to every request: Balliol, Keble, Lady Margaret's Hall, and Pembroke. On average, colleges don't respond to 2.48 out of the 10 requests. Four colleges failed to comply with half or more requests: Magdalen (9/10), Trinity (7/10), Regent's Park (5/10), and Wadham (5/10).

Oxford Colleges' Non-Compliance with FOIs



Created with Datawrapper

Your Right to Know

Cherwell has given colleges with the lowest response rates the opportunity to challenge any data point and made corrections accordingly.

Trinity's senior tutor told *Cherwell*: "I'm sorry to learn that Trinity's FOI response rate has been lower than that of most other colleges over recent months, and I'm grateful to you for drawing this to my attention. My colleagues and I will review our internal systems to see where they can be improved."

Asking for an internal review is usually the first step to addressing dissatisfaction with a FOI response, followed by referring the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office. If the response is still unsatisfactory, members of the public could take the authority to court.

After looking into the matter, the PA to Regent's Park Principal told *Cherwell* that three of the five unresponded FOI requests were "forwarded to relevant colleagues but did not receive the necessary



information to respond." The other two were missed in the inbox.

The Wadham FOI officer told *Cherwell*: "A lot of information is already in the public domain. You don't need an FOI for that. We feel that [*Cherwell* searching online] would be a better use of our staff members' time, as well as that of the *Cherwell* News team." The officer asked *Cherwell* to look in

places such as the college's website and published reports.

The student told *Cherwell*: "Trust is a key factor in the relationship between colleges and students, and this is enhanced by transparency and open communication."

Magdalen did not respond to *Cherwell's* request for comment.

Artwork by Camille Simon

Exclusive: Nancy Pelosi, Jose Mourinho, and Patrick J. Adams to speak at Union

Emily Henson reports.

Cherwell can exclusively reveal details of the Oxford Union's Trinity 2024 term card. Speakers include 52nd Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, football manager Jose Mourinho and actor Patrick J. Adams.

Nancy Pelosi will give the Benazir Bhutto Memorial Lecture, and then later participate in a debate on populism with PoliticsJOE journalist Oli Dugmore. Pelosi, a Democrat, has held the position of Speaker for a total of eight years over two terms. She has enabled the passing of landmark bills such as Obamacare, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and repealing the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Notably, she presided over both of President Donald Trump's impeachments.

Football manager Jose Mourinho is one of the most decorated managers in the sport. Recently added to the Italian Football Hall of Fame, he has led both Porto and Inter Milan to Champions League wins, being the youngest manager to reach 100 Champions League games. While he was overseeing Chelsea, the team broke the record for fewest goals conceded in a Premier League season. He has also managed English teams Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspurs, as well as Real Madrid and Roma.

Patrick J. Adams has previously starred in 'Suits', receiving a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination for his role of Mike Ross. Adams

co-produced the show from the third season onwards, also directing several episodes. In 2022, he performed in the Broadway revival of 'Take Me Out', which received a Tony for Best Revival of a Play.

This term's debates will include a debate on the future of the European Union, one on whether Britain is still a fighting military force to mark the anniversary of D-Day on the 6 June and a comedy debate with Caspar Lee and Tom Rosenthal. Additionally, floor prizes available include a night's stay at Store Hotel with cocktails and breakfast, and a three course meal at The Perch.

There will be a panel on judicial interference with a Pakistan Supreme Court Justice as well as one on the upcoming American election. The Rt Hon. The Lord Sewell of Sanderstead will deliver a talk entitled 'The End of Race – The Real Drivers of Black Success'.

Socials will include a Midsummer Night's Dream themed ball, a piano concert and reception sponsored by Kawai and a beer garden.

Discussing the upcoming term card, Oxford Union President Louis

Wilson has told *Cherwell*: "I am delighted to present the term card for Trinity 2024 at the Oxford Union. We have endeavoured to reflect the diversity of voices within our membership for our events this term. There is the opportunity to challenge Nancy Pelosi one day and learn from Jose Mourinho the next."

"I am particularly proud to celebrate the Union's military heritage with a debate to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings. I sincerely hope everyone can find an event or social which they are interested in."

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Bring back pride in the Midlands!

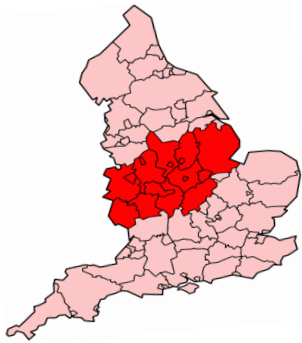


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CHERWELL

Laurence Cooke discusses the Midlands' presence in Oxford in this week's editorial comment spotlight

As a Coventrian myself – although I'm yet to meet anyone who uses 'Coventrian' in any way but ironically – I'm disheartened by the lack of pride in the Midlands name at Oxford. I watch jealously as Northern Soc and West Country Soc share news of jolly socials, game nights, and general outbursts of regional jingoism. Midlanders need a home in Oxford, somewhere to malign 'Birmingham/chlamydia' jokes and call 'bread rolls' batches or baps. I would revive MidSoc myself if I wasn't busy enough writing rants like this for *Cherwell*.

But why have pride in the Midlands? Beyond our great location (it's so easy to leave), we have contributed Shakespeare, rugby, and the bicycle to Oxford life. Yet no Oxford college is named after a person or place from the Midlands. Since Oriel is one of our link colleges for outreach, it's only right that MidSoc lobbies for a name change to Wolverhampton College with immediate effect. What could go wrong?

I'd love to make a more serious point about the underrepresentation of Midlanders at Oxford, but true to form, we're middling, with less students than London or the South West but more than the North East or Scotland. Still, not everywhere in the Midlands is the same. The Pret/Greggs distinction will serve you well in ascertaining if you're in the Southern-vibes-Midlands or Northern-vibes-Midlands. The same goes for a person who claims to be from Coventry but is actually from Stratford-upon-Avon or Leamington Spa. Warwick University causes the most issues with its Southern-vibes name (Warwick) but Northern-vibes location (Coventry) – just enjoy the confusion: it's the Midlands, and we're proud of it.

Why the SU failed (and how we'll fix it)

Danial Hussain

“People may say the SU is unsalvageable. In the current system, they may be right. But... through fundamental reforms, it can change.” – *Danial Hussain, Presidential Campaign Manifesto.*

When I wrote those lines, I was in the same boat as many students are now, feeling both disillusioned and disappointed with the Student Union (SU).

Disillusioned, because the SU's engagement with the average student seemingly amounted to little more than a free pizza voucher at the Freshers' Fair – a symbol of its distant and seemingly unimportant role in the broader university experience.

Disappointed, because I firmly believed the SU was meant to be much more than this. It seemed natural that in a university of 39 distinct colleges, a collective student voice through the SU could wield more significant influence than the isolated efforts of any individual common room. Yet, this vast potential was going unrecognised, which was a disservice to the students.

So, to help bring about the change I believed was necessary, I decided to run for President.

Once elected, it quickly became clear that I had underestimated the magnitude of the task at hand. Systemic factors, which I thought could be an asset in improving the SU, were, actually, holding back much of the necessary change.

Yet, at the same time, it was clear

that there was a route to overcoming them. Working with Campaigns, Sabbatical Officers, JCRs, and MCRs demonstrated how Oxford has so many talented, ambitious people working individually to make things better for all of us. The SU just needed a better structure to channel this commitment and enthusiasm together, so I got to work.

Now, just over a year after my election, the SU has announced its Trans-

“I had underestimated the magnitude of the task”

formation Plan, which has two simple aims: to resolve the systemic issues and unleash the SU's potential.

What's holding the SU back?

Election after election, the pattern seems to repeat: candidates pledge to reform and increase engagement in the SU, only to leave students disappointed by the absence of real change and cementing a sense of scepticism about whether the SU can genuinely reform.

I felt it too, and that's precisely why the SU has introduced the Transformation Plan. It isn't a quick fix for recent problems or a response the university has insisted on. The plan reflects months of dedicated work, initiated by my push for an independent review of the SU, and now acted upon by the Trustee Board and staff.

We aim to tackle these issues –

which are the cause of this recurring cycle of promises and unfulfilled expectations – head on, with a concrete pathway which tackles the core issues at the heart of the SU. The issues which perpetuate these systemic challenges are twofold: a lack of a clear identity as well as the failure of fundamental institutional structure.

What should the identity of the SU be?

Oxford SU is different from most Students' Unions. Operating within a collegiate system, there is already student representation in the form of common rooms in every college. Our SU must supplement their strengths and recognise their limitations.

a) Making Common Rooms as effective as possible

At Oxford, common rooms manage responsibilities that a traditional Student Union would. Students run for these positions because they care about their colleges, but might not have the right experience or training. This presents an opportunity for the SU to leverage its collective strength in helping common rooms fulfil these roles.

b) Supporting students beyond the colleges

As integral as colleges are to Oxford life, students' experiences extend beyond them. Issues can extend between colleges (such as college disparities), courses, and departments. There are also communities other than colleges, such as the socio-economically disadvantaged and those from specific ethnic backgrounds.



Representation is needed in all these aspects of Oxford, and the SU should be there to provide it.

What structure should the SU have?

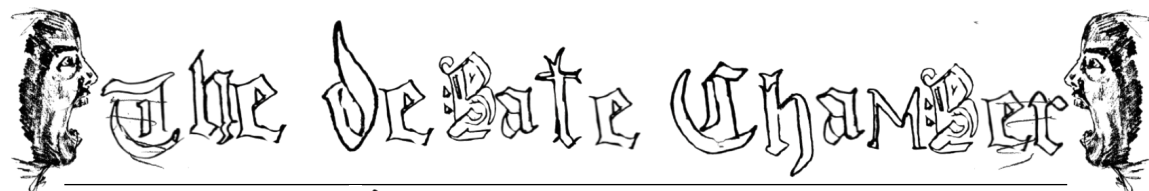
A new structure is needed to reflect this SU's identity. This approach would integrate Common Rooms directly into the SU's decision-making framework and enable all students to advocate and lobby the University and Colleges on issues important to them. This would ensure that the SU remains responsive to student concerns and actively involves them in shaping policies. Over time, this setup would allow for policy development over a number of years, making lobbying far more effective.

Conclusion

To all those who were like me—disillusioned and disappointed by the SU—now is the time to get involved.

I have always believed that the SU could be so much more, and we now have a unique opportunity to realise its full potential. Only then can we build an SU that represents the very best of our university and its students.

Read the full article at [Cherwell.org](#)
Image Credit: Oxford University Student Union



Lara and Alfie go head-to-head, debating whether collections should be at the start or end of term

Whilst writing this, I should probably be revising for the six hours of collections I will be treated to at the end of next week, followed by an essay due on Monday. This is the slightly unpleasant 'welcome back' that we are all used to, and would likely rather not be. It makes sense not to want collections at the start of term. They loom over the latter part of the vacation, before making for a hectic week which would rather be spent catching up with our friends.

And yet, if we are to have collections, I would much rather this than the alternative. Like most, I will never be a person that enjoys exams, but at least having them at the start of term means they can serve their purpose. There is usually more time to revise, rethink, and catch up

on reading over the vacation, so that you can get valuable feedback on something you have had longer to prepare for. Without this, 'collections' would essentially become extra term-time essays, only repackaged by a time limit. The end of term would be a frantic rush of deadlines, with little time available in the lead up to do much about it. All of collections' negative associations would remain at the end of term, just without much of their benefit.

On top of this, if collections were at the end of term, colleges' short accommodation leases would leave little time to celebrate. Instead of enjoying days free of deadlines, our final memories would be of staring down at an exam paper.

At the end of the day, isn't it better to rip off the plaster than to rub salt in the wound?

Ultimately, what this debate chamber is secretly getting at, is that the way Oxford organises itself academically is a point of tension and consternation for all students. My slightly radical suggestion that collections should come at the end of term is a symptom of this. The start of term that Lara is describing, with collections and then the first essay to crack on with all at the same time is no way to start any term.

My recommendation of having collections at the end of term would mean, unfortunately, revising during an already long eight-week term. Yet there is no doubt it would certainly add to the jubilation of the end of term, once completed. Academically, collections at the end of term, may leave one in a much stronger position.

This would force one to work a bit harder on the reading each week as well as generating some new ideas and arguments, only discovered through this end of term crunch.

Yet neither situation seems particularly ideal. This is because we are working within an impossible framework. Perhaps, changing the goal-posts entirely is the answer. One solution would be to have ten-week terms, eight of which would contain tutorials and lectures, with one week at the start and end of term to do some pre-reading or some revision. Maybe this system would be much kinder and, perhaps, more productive than what we are faced with now, leaving time for deeper learning and less anxiety.



Why you should be political

Roy Shinar Cohen

Many of us have been told that the only political thing we must always do, and the most important thing we can do, is to vote. Whenever we are called to duty by the ballot box, we must read about the candidates, decide, and mark a little piece of paper. I won't claim you should not vote. However, I believe just voting is far from fulfilling one's political duty. While change sometimes comes from the ballot box, more often it comes from direct action. If you want to cause change, you must do more than vote – you must act.

Whether you care about health-care, climate change, ongoing wars, or an annoying traffic light, political

questions are all around you.

Theoretically, or rather, hopefully, there is a politician or bureaucrat tasked with fixing the specific problem you care about. But that is far from certain. In many cases, when it comes to changing the status quo, these officials need to be constantly (and loudly) reminded that you need their help. In fact, they often need to be reminded that, essentially, they work for us. The way to do that is with civic engagement.

Civic engagement includes many things, anything between community group chats and protests outside politicians' homes. People across society are likely to find different issues they care about and diverse avenues to express their opinions – and that is the point! If every single person who cared about a problem actively sought a solution, our streets would be cleaner, our schools better, and our water fresher. To twist Kennedy's famous words, if we stopped asking what society could do for us, and started asking what we could do for society, I think we would all be happier.

This issue has been around for a long time, at least since the early nineteenth century, but I think it is uniquely important today.

Although 2024 is the biggest election year in his-

tory, with billions of people

around the world

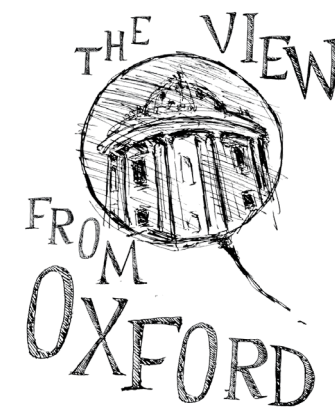
set to cast votes for all levels of government, democracies around the world are backsliding into crisis. Multiple regions are utterly devastated by wars, famine threatens the lives of millions, and unforeseeable extreme weather events are ever stronger. So many things seem to go wrong, and change seems almost impossible. But it is.

Changes, for better or worse, are brought about by people. Some peo-

ple start atrocious wars, others secure long-awaited peace. It is usually individuals who fight against all odds that create change, and it is often only in retrospect that we hail these changes as great progress. As Martin Luther King said: "The arc of history bends towards justice". Activists help ensure the arc of history bends in the right direction and reaches its destination as soon as possible. There are few individuals like King who led fights for liberation and independence, and we rightfully commemorate them. But, without many 'regular' people who followed them, they would not have made a difference. Only with the help of people who joined their struggle did the leaders and causes gradually become stronger.

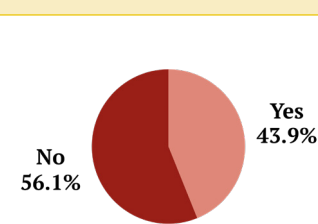
As Oxford students, we have endless opportunities to join groups in their ongoing struggles during our daily lives. Whether you are interested in national politics, human rights, climate change, or helping refugees, there are students already hard at work. A simple search on the Internet or social media can introduce you to the relevant society. These societies often organise discussions, lectures, protests, and campaigns. The beauty of it is that they always need more people, and new students are very welcome.

I suspect readers will already be busy enough, and that you won't entertain my argument much longer. So I will be very clear about what you will gain by joining such groups. By finding people who share a similar passion, you will find a community. By working on solving a problem you are passionate about, you will gain a sense of fulfilment. And, with a good community and that sense of fulfilment, you will have the courage to keep fighting for the things you love

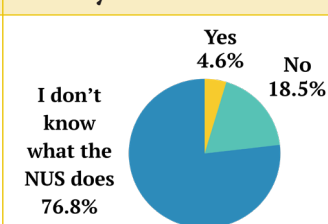


This week, we asked our Instagram followers...

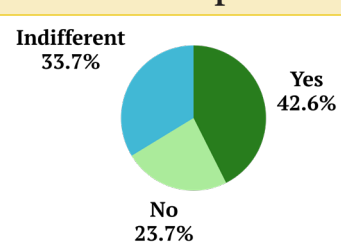
Did you watch the boat race?



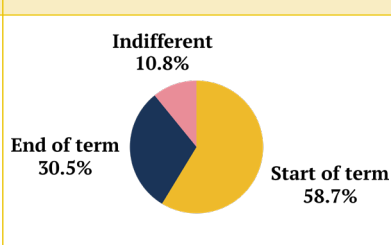
Does the NUS represent your interests?



Does the Chancellorship need to be apolitical?



Should collections be at the start or end of term?



even when times are hard. At that point, you will also be reminded where your priorities lie, which will help you get a better work-life balance.

Anyone who wants to see change in the world should want to support such groups, organisations, and societies. There is no single cause or way to act that is right. You could join a reading group, attend demon-

strations, sing in a choir – even share your unsolicited views, like I'm doing right now. What is important is that you try to make a difference based on what you think is right, and look for people who want to do it with you.

Image Credit: Manfred Werner (Tsui) / CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Far-right populism spreads to Portugal

Morien Robertson

The Portuguese elections in March delivered not only a resounding rejection of the corruption-riddled centre-left government, which a few years ago was viewed as an inspiration for progressive parties everywhere, but it also saw a huge surge for the populist far-right. This result means Portugal follows the trend of the rest of Europe, which it had previously bucked, with stark implications for both the future of the left and the liberal system of rights.

The centre-right Democratic Alliance (AD), a coalition of parties led by Luís Montenegro, leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), received 29.5% of the vote, whilst the incumbent centre-left Socialist party (PS) was close behind with 28.6%. The major shock, however, was that of Chega, the far-right populist party which got 18%, more than doubling its 7% showing in 2022: an unprecedented result for a party which was only founded in 2019 and

operates in a country long regarded as the exception in Europe due the lack of any far-right parties in Parliament.

For most of this century, Portugal has suffered from economic crises, governmental mismanagement, and related austerity measures intended to ensure fiscal credibility. The problems became especially severe after the 2008 financial crisis and the Eurozone debt crisis which started in 2009. Along with Spain, Italy, Greece, and Ireland, Portugal faced problems with repaying its public sector debts and in 2011 agreed a €78 billion bailout package with the EU, ECB, and IMF. The money came attached with 'fiscal consolidation policies' – strict austerity measures aimed at reducing governmental deficits which led to soaring unemployment, reduced public services, and public discontent with democracy.

Unlike in much of Europe, however, these socio-economic conditions didn't precipitate a rise in support for the far-right: the most prominent far-right party at the time, Partido Nacional Renovador (PNR),

got only 0.5% in the 2015 elections.

This is possibly due in part to their association in the minds of many older voters with the dictatorial Salazar regime, which only fell in the 70s and has left many Portuguese with a deep fear of a return to authoritarianism. Instead, the results were quite evenly split between left and right, and PS formed a minority government, supported by two far-left parties. Despite worries that this government would collapse instantly, it was very successful, profiting from favourable economic conditions which saw the reversal of many austerity-era policies, whilst sticking to the EU's tight budgetary constraints. PS and its then leader António Costa were seen as a model for left-wing governments – the New Statesman had described Costa as "popular, in power and pursuing a successful alternative to austerity".

However, in November last year a slate of corruption scandals forced Costa to resign and brought about early elections. The victory of AD reflects widespread discontent with

the corruption of PS, which follows a long line of kleptocratic incidents from both left and right. Yet reasons for the breakthrough of Chega now rather than in the previous decade, as with the rest of Europe, are less obvious. One explanation is the convergence of the mainstream parties, something best encapsulated by the former PSD leader Rui Rio saying in 2019 that his party was "not a genuine right-wing party." Whilst Montenegro has since distanced PSD from PS, there is still a broad economic consensus between the two major parties, with PSD considered much more moderate than other centre-right parties in Europe. Other reasons include the leadership of Chega's telegenic leader, André Ventura, who has had extensive media coverage, as well as the opposition directed against Portugal's liberal social policies, such as on LGBTQ+ rights, euthanasia, and drugs.

More broadly, there is a growing sense that the country is at breaking point, and positive recent economic data has done little to attenuate widespread anger with current economic conditions. Most of Chega's support is concentrated in

rural regions and smaller cities, and areas such as the Algarve which feel left behind and neglected, emblematic of the long-term effects of deindustrialisation.

Yet the party is still politically isolated: Montenegro seems to have stuck to his pre-election promise of not going into coalition with them, and instead AD will form a minority government, with Chega and PS choosing not to oppose Montenegro taking power. However, difficulties are already arising, with a dispute over the election of a parliamentary speaker, which saw AD fail to get their chosen candidate elected for the full term, illustrating the fragility of Montenegro's position. The passing of the 2025 budget also looms as a major challenge which will force compromise and negotiation on all sides. If PS and AD are unwilling to reach an agreement, Chega may become decisive in passing legislation, a monumental change for a country once considered free from far-right politics. Even if Chega remain excluded for now, the fall of PS is a sad tale of corruption and profiteering, something which only adds ammunition to anti-establishment populist rhetoric.

“What are the dominant narratives about the city, and what are they hiding?”

Amelia Dovell speaks to the *Uncomfortable Oxford* founders, Olivia Durand and Paula Larsson.

I’ve walked past the Clarendon Building on Broad Street many times – but I’d never thought to ask what it had been used for in the past. While today it innocuously houses the Bodleian Library admissions department, in the 19th century, its basement was used as holding cells for the university’s ‘Nightwatch’ police unit.

“It was separate from the city police, operating from sundown to sunrise. Its specific role was to apprehend suspect women who were walking on the streets of the city... This marked women, meaning it was hard for them to go into other types of employment.” Olivia Durand, one of the founders of *Uncomfortable Oxford*, explains to me.

“Even for several decades after female students were admitted – they couldn’t go out without a chaperone. They always needed to walk in pairs, otherwise they risked being apprehended by the ‘Nightwatch’.”

Untangling Oxford from its complicated, imperial past is a process which is certainly still in progress. One voice in the conversation is *Uncomfortable Oxford*: a social enterprise which seeks to uncover and tell forgotten stories of inequality within Oxford – as a city, and University. Founded in 2018 by two doctoral students, Olivia Durand and Paula Larsson, the walking tours cover a broad range of ‘uncomfortable’ topics and power dynamics: the legacy of the British Empire, the ethics of donation, the exclusion of women in academic spaces. I spoke to Olivia and Paula to hear how their doctoral research led them across academic thresholds, to public outreach.

The pair’s research seems strikingly relevant to contemporary politics. Olivia studies settler colonialism, comparing the USA and Russian Empires in the 19th century. “I started in 2014, looking at narratives of colonising coming to the fore in public discourse. Since 2022, this has emerged more prominently as the invasion of Ukraine has received more attention than the 2014 annexation of Crimea at the time.”

Paula studies the history of medicine, specifically the history of vaccination and medical power. “In earlier research I looked at how [vaccination] was forced upon indigenous communities within the colonial Canadian past”, a history which she herself was personal-

ly connected to. “When I learned about that, in my undergrad years, that raised a lot of questions about policy, of how it’s applied to communities as a whole... Who gets to say yes or no to a vaccine, and why?”

“For me, history was really about justice in lots of ways, and understanding better approaches to modern approaches to policy.”

“I want my research to have an immediate real world impact in some way.”

Both were drawn to Oxford for its specialised research centres – but also the name and the prestige which comes with it. “It’s a big name – it’s where people tell you that you have to go if you’re gonna study history successfully. It has an allure, largely because of its history in association with British colonisation, that has perpetuated the glory of ‘Oxford’ as a title.” Paula says.



“Oxford serves as this competitive branding in some way for you as a historian, to get a position or even to succeed in academia. That’s what we both wanted to do originally, as every youngster is told to do: go and do a PhD, become a postdoc, and then go into an academic setting. And our views have changed since then.”

She sounded rueful. I asked her to elaborate on her view of academic

careers.

“I think our view on it has changed largely from just the possibility of having one, which in the past I think would have been a lot easier to do. In the modern sense, especially humanities and social science programmes are being underfunded, undervalued, and are incredibly, incredibly insecure. Once you’ve finished your postdoc, you’re in an endless cycle... chasing a long term full time contract. All of this, and also trying to have fulfillment and meaning in the work that you’re doing. I want my research to have an immediate real world impact in some way.”

Both of them were doctoral students at Oxford at the same time. “A lot of the conversations we were having in the seminar rooms remained theoretical, abstract. Everything took so long to happen. There was a bit of frustration with what we were interested in, and how applicable it was.” Olivia says. “We knew there was a lot of interest in trying to reassess history to engage critically with the past and the way that they shaped inequalities and injustices in the present” – and so, *Uncomfortable Oxford* began.

“I was already a tour guide in the city I did as a part time job just to support myself as an international student.” Paula says. “My gosh, was I tired of talking about David Cameron! This image that people hear when they visit Oxford is one of the old white boys clubs... it’s the draw of a lot of tourism, which is really uncomfortable to think about.”

“I think there’s still a lot of idolisation of that lifestyle, that historic



view of what an ‘Oxford University student’ used to be... maybe ‘Saltburn’ hasn’t really helped that image. But that is still the image people get.”

“I think there’s still a lot of idolisation of that lifestyle, that historic view of what an ‘Oxford University student’ used to be...”

ple get.”

“It’s just so divorced from actual reality – the University is incredibly diverse. It definitely still has problems. But I don’t want every single one of those 9 million visitors to come into the city and get told it’s Boris Johnson’s university. That doesn’t need to be the narrative.”

Public outreach and sparking conversations across different communities is at the heart of the *Uncomfortable Oxford* ethos. “In my mind it’s like, what’s the point of doing history if no one knows what you’re doing?” Paula says. “This is, in lots of ways, the answer to that – *Uncomfortable* tours. You can have a researcher who is doing really important work and research, and is able to communicate that everyday to new people constantly. It’s allowed for a lot more moments of cross pollination between academics who are doing a lot of really interesting research, and people who are living those legacies in the present.”

Following the surge of public attention of imperial pasts in 2020 – the toppling of statues and renaming of buildings which followed – in Oxford, it reignited the ‘Rhodes Must Fall Movement’. Over a thousand people gathered, demanding the removal of Cecil Rhodes’ statue. Though the attention it drew to the cause did not bring about its removal, work has been done on contextualisation and matching the Rhodes fund on BME initiatives.

“With activist movements, burn-out is a huge problem. Growth, enthusiasm, comes in waves – it’s usually volunteer-led, based on the passion and drive and capacity of individuals.” Paula says.

“Funding is a huge part of that.

This is free work, demanding work, and emotionally tolling work for a lot of people. And so what we kind of tried to be is a sustainable intervention. We really believe that the only way to defy systems at all is to value labour, to pay for it and to avoid exploitation of people’s energy, time and research and work that they do.

Uncomfortable Oxford has gone from a one-off summer project to a model which runs in Oxford, Cambridge and York. Each city is different, and holds a complicated legacy to uncover. “Everywhere we go, we ask: ‘What are the dominant narratives about the city? And what are they hiding?’” says Olivia.

The pair look forward to expanding their model of discussion based talks across the UK and even internationally, as well as developing more educational resources on histories of colonialism and power.

“I don’t want every single one of those 9 million visitors to come into the city and get told it’s Boris Johnson’s university. That doesn’t need to be the narrative.”

“We’re really interested in access to education, access to narratives, and collaborating as much as we can with other organisations doing similar work. So that’s where we’re going.”

At Oxford, sometimes learning can feel confined to a book, a library, or a tutorial. *Uncomfortable Oxford*’s mission served as a reminder that there is much to be learned everywhere – you just have to look around.

Left: A tour taking place in the Ashmolean Museum. Image Credit: Uncomfortable Oxford
Top right: Olivia Durand and Paula Larsson. Image Credit: Uncomfortable Oxford

“If you want to understand the mess we’re in today, you need to know some history.”

Amelia Dovell speaks with Eugene Rogan on language, the role of the historian, and the legacy of history

Eugene Rogan, a historian of the Middle East and fellow of St. Anthony’s College is a tutor I feel slightly in awe of: charismatic and cheerful, fluent in several languages, always on the move to his next appointment, and for one of our classes, 3500 miles away in Cairo on a research trip. I spoke to him to learn how he came to be one of the most prominent historians of the Middle East.

Rogan’s childhood was by no means conventional: “I was born in California, and had I grown up there, I probably would’ve been a surfer. Instead my folks dragged us off to Europe and the Middle East. I was 10 when we got to Beirut – we lived for 5 years in Lebanon. It was the outbreak of the Civil War which forced us to move – we sat through about 8 months and realised it wasn’t ending.”

This was 1975: The Lebanese Civil War would last 15 years, claiming 150,000 lives and displacing hundreds of thousands of people before it ended. Rogan’s family left and they lived in Cairo for the next 3 years.

“The politics of the 1970s were so intense. I lived through, not just the Lebanese Civil War, but the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. When we were in Cairo, Anwar El-Sadat got on the plane to Israel, starting the whole Egyptian-Israeli Camp David process, which was amazing. These were big events, and I just don’t think any part of the world has ever been as interesting to me ever since. I think I was scarred from childhood.”

Rogan had lived in the Middle East as an expatriate, maintaining the ambition of returning to America for university. After studying Economics at Columbia University, he found himself drawn back to the Middle East, through history. “With all due respect to

our colleagues and PPE, I found economics a very dry subject... I did a master’s in Middle Eastern Studies. And that was when for the first time I actually took some history classes, and I just loved it.

“I made the fateful – and some would argue a terrible – decision to abandon the wealth and the career opportunities of a graduate in economics, to become a historian which prepared me for either driving a taxi or for being a professor. It was

“I think we suffer from the privilege of speaking the dominant world language.”

to prove the latter. And no regrets, looking back, but that was just sort of an unlikely trajectory. My first degree in history was my doctorate, which is a really weird way to go about it.”

Even at this point in his early career, Rogan had the linguistic background to open up a whole new world of source material, having learned Arabic in high school. For Rogan, his linguistic abilities not only play a huge role in historical research, but also the way he thinks.

“Language is the essential key for opening our understanding of other cultures. I just don’t think you can get there in translation. Languages gave me access to archives and sources that allowed me to really add value to our understanding of the history of the Middle East.”

Rogan pauses for a moment, to reflect upon the role of AI. “It may be the case now that we’re going to have such powerful translation tools, that it really will make redundant the need to study a foreign language to access documents and published sources in other languages.”

“But even then, though, you’ll be able to translate documents and sources, you won’t

have the same feel for a society that comes with the mental transition you have to make. I think differently when I’m thinking in French, or when I’m speaking in Arabic. The shape of your mouth changes, the inflection of your voice, the way you interact. You adapt to the culture of the language you’re using. And I think, no matter what AI does for us, it won’t give us that.”

In the UK, the historical field still remains Western-oriented: only 13% of historians study the non-western world, even with the turn to a ‘global’ history from the 1990s onwards. One reason for it may be the barriers of language. “I think we suffer from the privilege of speaking the dominant world language.” Rogan remarks. “English speakers find that they can get by just fine in most professions, without mastering another language.”

“A good translation is a great door opener. I’m not going to say that the translation of text is the barrier to entering into the mindset of another society. But there is a higher degree of engagement that comes when you approach a society through its own language.”

Back to life as an Oxford academic, I asked Eugene about the role travel plays as a historian of the non-Western world. “It’s so much the fun of the job. I pat myself on the back for having the cleverness to choose a region that involves so many amazing destinations, that turns every one of my research trips into an adventure. Each of the times I’ve gone out to do field work as a period of the deepest personal enrichment: of friendships made, and of life lessons learned. It goes well beyond what I brought out of the archives.”

He recounts a time in Amman, Jordan where he undertook the task of going through Ottoman era land registers. “They couldn’t for the life of them understand why an American from such a prestigious university – they’d all heard of Harvard – was sitting in their land registry office, reading these dusty old records”

“One guy came over and said: ‘So you’re reading the books?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ He said, ‘Okay, I’ve got lots of documents from this region, back home, why don’t you come to my house, and I’ll show them to you.’

“I go to his house, and he gives me tea, we have a nice chat. ‘How about those documents?’ I ask. He says, ‘No, no, there’s no documents. But let’s be honest. You’re reading the books to find the gold, right? The books will tell you so much. I know

the land. If you tell me what you know, I’ll tell you what I know. Now we can find the gold together.’

The misunderstanding tapped into a tradition of local legends, of lost gold from the Roman era, still believed to be buried in the land.

“He was completely convinced that I was trying to read through the Ottoman sources to get to the mystery of where they hid the gold. We kind of disappointed each other because he had no documents for me, and I had no gold for him. He was so convinced that I just was like, holding out trying to keep the gold to myself, it was very funny... it’s those sorts of encounters of your fieldwork that you just feel like gives you something that goes well beyond what you find in the archives.”

These sorts of stories remind us of how history is, in many ways, still living. And for this reason, Rogan’s work is undoubtedly informed by contemporary events in the Middle East. “What makes history relevant is the understanding it sheds on how we got to where we are today.”

“In a lot of my writing, I’ll always start with something quite contemporary. And the underlying message is if you want to understand the mess we’re in today, you need to know

“What makes history relevant is the understanding it sheds on how we got to where we are today.”

some history.”

“When you work on the Middle East, there are so many tensions and conflicts. In geological terms, you’re dealing with a zone full of fault lines. And there are just these constant natural disasters – so you want to study the fault lines and the plate tectonics that lie beneath them.”

I asked Rogan about whether there existed a divide, separating academia from the general audience. “I think there are two levels in which academic historians operate.” He said. “One level is very much for the Academy... read uniquely by fellow scholars. This is how we get our tenure, we get promoted, you get published journals that have peer review. We do it not just for our promotion, but we do it also to push forward the barriers of academic knowledge. And I think we all begin like that –

we’re demonstrating that we are active contributors, as academic practitioners.”

This changed with the publication of his 2009 book, ‘The Arabs: A History’.

“I had been in the profession for 18 years. And at that point, I wanted to try and reach general readers, to share the fruits of my research and studies in a way that was accessible for people who are interested in the region and interested in history.”

“That was a real change of voice. And to be honest, I haven’t gone back since. Everything I’ve written since I’ve written with my ‘public intellectual’ voice... It’s a different role. I think both are great. I think both have different rewards. I don’t think you have to go the route of becoming a popular historian and a public intellectual. But if one decides to do that, it’s totally legitimate, and it has its own pleasures associated with it.

Rogan’s newest book, ‘The Damascus Events’, recounts an event from 1860, yet it resounds even today, in 2024. It focuses on a Christian massacre that took place in Damascus in 1860, an event which Rogan calls a ‘genocidal moment’.

“The first half of the book traces mounting tensions, that took a fully integrated Christian community and transformed into a group of people who came to be perceived as an existential threat. Then, you have to address the issue of what happens to a deeply divided society after a traumatic and divisive event like a massacre.”

“The second half of the book traces – over about 25 years – the steps taken by the Ottomans, not just to rebuild the Christian quarters, but to restore the Christian community to their economic role. But to overcome the divisions to such an extent that by the 1880s, you could really say that the communities had buried the hatchet and turned the page.”

“I hope that this book says there’s no quick fix, but there is a pathway. In that sense, even here, a book that was written about 19th-century Damascus, has a moral that is relevant to our concerns today. Not just in the Middle East, but wherever you’ve seen ‘genocidal moments’ that led societies to that brink, of saying extermination is a reasonable solution. And then asking: ‘how do you come back from that brink?’”

“So a hopeful conclusion?” I ask. “As I tell people, the book starts really badly, but it has a happy ending.”

Image Credit: Keith Barnes



CHERBADLY

“Patten up” – the difficulty of becoming the next Chancellor

Following an email leak, it was recently disclosed that ‘members of legislatures’ will be barred from running for the position of Oxford University’s next chancellor. This means that some of the University’s most popular, trustworthy, and capable politicians will actually have to ‘stay home’ this time. Despite this revelation, former member of Merton College, the somewhat honourable Ms [redacted] still intends to run, informing Cherwell of her intention to: ‘finally get one over on that bloody lettuce’. At the time of writing, the next Chancellor is still anybody’s best guess; the bookies’ frontrunners include Bhad Bhabie, the Ghost of John Keble, and the Corpus Christi Tortoise.

In order to flush out any possible future scandals and ensure that the next chancellor is more suited to the role, the University has elected for a far more rigorous test for those aspiring to the role. According to Irene Tracey, Vice-Chancellor of the Uni and Head of the society for people with two first names, the test encompasses all the day-to-day aspects of Oxford life to ensure that Lord

Patten’s replacement truly becomes ‘at one with the student community’.

Cherwell understands that this new ‘test’ is unlike any other before, as it features many rather bizarre trials. The exhaustive list of tests includes: running down the up testalator, sitting a collection, finding where St. Hughes actually is, forcibly proving that fun goes to die in Merton, becoming an Oxfess ‘top fan’, completing the New College seven, winning University Challenge, performing a duet with that guy on Cornmarket Street, becoming the Univ porter for the night, feeding the Hildabeasts, erecting another tent for St Catz to eat in, teaching Teddy Hall students how to read, and discerning whether or not ‘SH’ and ‘HN’ are real people. The new Chancellor will also have to publicly display an encyclopaedic knowledge of every cupper’s winner of every sport ever since each respective competition began and provide an excuse for why we seemingly lose the Boat race to that lot down the road each year. Nevertheless, anybody courageous enough to undertake this assessment is most likely worthy of the position.

John Evelyn

20th April 2024

Welcome back to another Trinity Term in Oxford, where the sun is shining almost as brightly as the egos of the hacks who once again descend on the city. In a move illustrating the noble sentiment that ‘The Union is the Foundation of Western Democracy’ (trademark pending), the uncontested King Edward has left the throne, replaced by Tom Hanks’ Lost Volleyball who has become the Union’s most senior appointed official without running. The other faceless bureaucrats continue the Union’s descent into autocracy: the Clueless Consultative Commander faced no competition while the Chief Sadist clings to power for another term to impose martial law on a new generation of Seccies. In characteristic fashion, one of these Seccies forgot to sign on. And Then There were Ten.

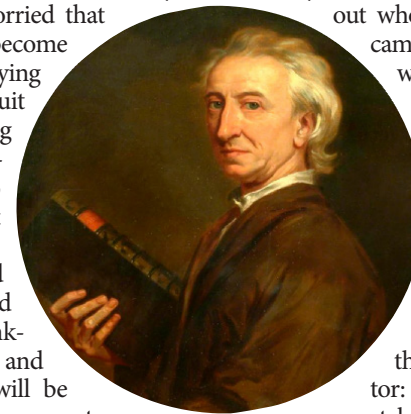
As we return, the holidays have been just as eventful as the term before. In an ABnormal Easter Egg Hunt, some of our officers were delighted to find chocolate eggs while others saw their horns, dashing the presidential ambitions of the Alarmingly Chaotic Slate.

Her 72-hour campaign was so short it put Liz Truss to shame (her political hero), so she will surely be taking action to ROck Special K’s world. Although Shrove Tuesday is long past, we also saw a prolific amount of flipping that spoiled another presidential run – in what can only be described as an Eton Mess. For three days we were all worried that he might become Secretary, praying that soggy biscuit and fox hunting wouldn’t feature quite so prominently at this term’s socials as they did at his childhood birthdays. Thankfully, Zelensky and Ginger Spice will be managing the events, making sure that any future power outages don’t scare the posh babies who believe Union Balls are the spice of life.

These ABerrations have brought a familiar face back to the Union: the qualified Barista will be inciting class warfare as undergrads and postgrads take up arms. But class solidarity is

fracturing: Eton Mess and the Oucaholic might end up on opposite teams, provided the latter isn’t too busy trying to P&Pee all over the chamber and get maintenance to pay for it. The Barista will spend the term trying to roast Barbie’s Sequel, his main opposition. Or maybe he’s running against Teddy’s Panda? No one can figure out who’s really running the campaign. Time will tell whether the Sequel’s dreams of becoming the Murdoch of the Union are Kenough to clinch a victory – or if her magazine is read even less than the Oxford Blue. She will also ride the coattails of the Failed Univ Dictator: we will have to keep a watchful eye for any secret slates and kebab van endorsements, and just hope the Failed Dictator has learnt from his mistakes.

Trinity Term will be a ball, or at least a garden party if the Volleyball gets his way. John Evelyn will keep you updated on all the latest developments and wishes you all the best for the term ahead.



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Adam Saxon
Editor-in-Chief

Hello everyone, and welcome back to Oxford for what will hopefully be a sun-filled Trinity term. It's always lovely to come back to days that feel twice as long, warmer weather, and collections. One of those three is a significantly less attractive prospect than the others.

I was lucky enough to spend last weekend in Bristol, attending this year's Student Publication Association (SPA) National Conference. It was an excellent weekend and was a lovely opportunity to meet student journalists from across the UK and Ireland. We enjoyed talks from speakers such as Hugh Pym (BBC Health editor), Kiran Stacy (The Guardian) and Ava-Santina Evans (Politics JOE).

It was fascinating to hear about the experiences of these speakers and gain valuable insights

from them about their paths into journalism. It is a notoriously difficult field to gain a strong foothold in and is becoming ever more so in the digital era. Events like the SPA conference are crucial, providing an opportunity for aspiring student journalists to ask questions to those who know the industry and are well positioned to help others to enter it.

An aspect of the conference that was a real learning experience was talking to the other student journalists. It was an opportunity to hear about other publications' battles with their student unions for independence, quests for funding, and other general difficulties. It made me appreciate certain aspects of how *Cherwell* is run, but also helped me pinpoint areas where our own model could be improved, drawing inspiration from the excellent work done at other Universities up and down the country.

Also on offer, of course, at the conference were a whole host of awards, both individual and publication wide. *Cherwell* had been shortlisted for nothing short of thirteen awards, and while we only walked away with one (congratulations to Selina, who won the award for best lifestyle piece), it was a pleasure to see student journalism celebrated on such a large stage. The weekend as a whole was incredibly well organised, and I am sure we will be back next year to challenge for even more awards.



Eden Kilgour
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Week 0 Trinity – the buzzing return to a term characterised by glimpses of sunshine and trips to Port Meadow, yet naturally tainted by the dreaded C-word on everyone's lips. Collections, that is. However, as my parents said their good-byes and left me sitting in my Somerville room, I felt a pang of homesickness, as, admittedly, often occurs in Week 0.

After all, they do say “there's no place like home”. Although, personally, it feels as though this doesn't always ring true. My relationship with my home town is complex, and since coming to Oxford, has felt even more so. For some context, I live in the lovely Croydon. Of course, I'm no stranger to the fact that, ob-

jectively, Croydon is not the most attractive, nor the most exciting place to live. When ‘The 10 Worst Places to Live!’ comes up on my TikTok For You Page, I watch with bated breath, despite knowing that Croydon will inevitably be named and shamed. Throughout my childhood, however, I grew up oblivious to this stigma and fully embraced the environment around me, even if that was the Whitgift Centre.

Since coming to university, and encountering vastly different backgrounds, I am more apprehensive with my admission of being from Croydon. Having received responses that I should “stick to saying [I'm] from Surrey”, I “live on a council estate” and “the crime rate's really high there”, I began to dread the commonly-asked “where do you live?”. As a people pleaser, this is a difficult concept to grapple with: feeling attachment to a place which forms so much of my identity, yet facing such criticism.

Honestly, I'm still working out how to handle these interactions – whether to remain true to my identity or admit defeat, since I know there is some truth in their accusations. Yet, despite this, I know that Croydon will always hold a special place in my heart (as silly as that may sound), and that missing home means I am lucky enough to have a place to miss.



Oliver Sandall
Editor-in-Chief

“The power of the written word has always seemed strange to me,” I said, after seven pints on a Thursday evening.

But, truly, the written word – a *fixed* medium in many ways – is one of the few concrete things we have in life. Of course, it is open for interpretation – as is everything in life. But no one can say you misheard or forgot what *actually* happened.

Then *Oxfess* comes along. Or any type of ‘confessions’ page, actually.

It strips the written word of any sincerity. But that's what makes it great. Many people suggest that social media and the rise of the internet has led to lower quality writing and journalism. But, really, I think it has lowered the entry barrier to allow more people to share their diverse perspectives and interesting thoughts on a number of (often niche) topics.

So, to celebrate this, I thought it was only right to dedicate my first editorial as Editor-in-Chief to one of my favourite pastimes. This week (and perhaps in weeks to come – but don't get excited) I'll share my top three *Oxfesses* of the week.

#oxfess30357 Can't wait to shark

Self explanatory. Awful. Great comedic timing. No one would have wasted ink to put this on a poster in the 70s. But it does stress the problem with lowering the entry barrier this much – even offensive and seemingly krass things are posted without second thought. As long as this stays as a joke on *Oxfess*, however, I think we can laugh about it.

#oxfess30386 Collections are approaching and I'm feeling more f*cked than the soil in Saltburn.

Interesting comparison. If I'm being honest, *Cherwell* has taken over my life, so collections have taken a slight backseat this vacation. But that's okay. I'm sure my tutors are avid readers.

#oxfess30434 should i really be going to the final atik night two days before exam week? no. am i going to do it anyway? yes. PARK END 4 LIFE

ATIK closing is a sad day for all of us. But as I'm going on my year abroad come July, I couldn't really care any less. I doubt the clubs in a small city on the border of Bavaria and Saxony will be much better, though. For the seven people that read this (optimistic, I know) – I'll keep you updated.

Catch you next week.

CHERWELL'S INSTAGRAM HAS EVOLVED...

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2024: The year of elections

Sebastian Hall sheds light on a year in which half the world go to the polls.

In his classic 19th-century work *Democracy in America*, the politician-cum-philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville looked to the democratic system in America with deep envy. In this system, he perceived a largely egalitarian society in which the virtues of industry and social cooperation contributed to America's functional democracy – a state which contemporary France could only aspire to with its deeply divided society and disempowered citizens. If Tocqueville thought that democracy worked – and he was certainly sceptical – it had to be based in liberty and equality, and connect self-interest with the interest of the whole.

As more than four billion people in countries across the world prepare to vote in elections this year, Tocqueville's tenuous democratic ideal is in real jeopardy, not least in the country which he deeply admired: the United States. The presence of a Republican party dominated by politicians who brazenly flout the key tenets of democracy, such as election integrity, suggests that there is much at risk. To be sure, the ideological draw of democracy remains strong, especially as it is threatened; in America that imperative was the driving force behind Joe Biden's vic-

tory. Yet in 2024 the stage is set to see whether the kind of liberal democracy that has characterised the post-Cold War order, and in some cases even democracy itself, can survive.

The deeply divisive rhetoric of Donald Trump, selected by Republicans for the third time as presidential candidate, is an anathema to the sort of civic unity that Tocqueville prescribed. On a more tangible level, his threats to dismantle NATO and the FBI, and persecute political enemies must be taken seriously. The best picture we have of how a second Trump term would materialise is in the Project 2025 of the conservative Heritage Foundation; New York Times writer Carlos Lozada has argued it 'portrays the president as the personal embodiment of popular will and treats the law as an impediment to conservative governance'.

Calling the Republicans the 'Grand Old Party' now seems an anachronistic misnomer for an organisation whose senators and congressmen are increasingly uniform in their support for explicitly anti-democratic claims that Joe Biden's 2020 victory was stolen. This was made clear in the 2022 Midterm elections, where according to a study by FiveThirtyEight, 60% of Americans had an election denier on the ballot, including 119 Republican

nominees who fully denied the 2020 election results.

But the sort of political malaise which is empowering once-fringe extremists certainly does not suffer from American exceptionalism. As goes the old saying, when America sneezes, the world catches a cold. If the unprecedented third place finish of the far-right Chega party in Por-

“As more than four billion people head to the polls, Tocqueville's tenuous democratic ideal is in real jeopardy.”

tugal's March election, led by sports commentator turned demagogue André Ventura, is any indication of the results of June's European Parliament elections, it is a decidedly ominous one.

The recent surge in popularity of

far-right movements in Europe and the United States reflects the increasing disillusion of electorates on both sides of the Atlantic with the political status quo; and in 2024 it appears that the traditional political establishment will be forced to compromise with them to govern. This includes figures such as Herbert Kickl, leader of the Austrian far-right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), who at the party's 2024 New Year's rally was hailed as Austria's "future Volkskanzler", a phrase first applied to Adolf Hitler in 1933. Kickl's condemnation of what he calls the Systemkanzler (the system's chancellor) and Systemmedien (the system's media) in Austria is highly reminiscent of 'deep state' Trumpian rhetoric, and while it may not present such a direct threat to Austrian democracy, it certainly serves to undermine people's faith in the institutions that are so central to democracy, such as an independent judiciary and media.

The emergence of far-right politicians across Europe will also have the effect of undermining the strength and unity of the EU. Born out of the European Coal and Steel Community and the desperate need for post-war reconciliation and reconstruction, the EU's grand founding ideals are being tested by the lan-

guage of, among others, the leader of the German party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) Alice Weidel, who has called for Germany's own 'Dexit'. Even if the chances of that are slim, it still represents a startling shift in discourse from just ten years ago, when AfD were much more marginal.

Anti-establishment populist movements which are shunning compromise and moderation across the world, put the social and political underpinnings of democracy under great strain. Crucially, in Europe, far-right fortunes have been buoyed by serious economic stagnation, including in Austria where GDP contracted by 0.5% in 2023 and inflation remained above the Eurozone average. This is providing the impetus for disillusioned voters to buy into the rhetoric of radical politicians such as Kickl or the Netherlands's Geert Wilders.

At the same time, polls seem to suggest that an increasing number of European voters might be fed up with other aspects of the liberal politics that have been so dominant in post-war Europe. Widespread farmers' protests at the start of 2024 were fuelled by what Lancaster University professor Renaud Foucart has identified as major opposition to the Euro-

the European Green Deal and environmental measures farmers see as disproportionately targeting them in the move to net zero. It is this profound alienation from the state that leads such rural voters into the arms of the far right; it is no coincidence that Weidel's AfD is involving itself in German farmers' protests.

The incursion of the political far-right threatens to have tangible political ramifications. The potential effects on policy are clear. Consider the EU's Nature restoration law crucial to the European Green New Deal, a landmark set of legislation approved in 2020, which aims to support the EU's transition to net zero by 2050. Whilst the NRL was passed in the European Parliament in July 2023, Simon van Teutem, DPhil candidate

“2024 will prove the ultimate rejoinder to the argument of Francis Fukuyama's essay ‘The End of History’”

in Politics at Nuffield College and columnist at De Correspondent, noted that with “current projected faction seats, it would have faced defeat.”

Rightwing rhetoric also carries the threat of geopolitical upheaval. As Ukraine's war effort hangs in the

balance, Trump's threat to end military aid and even leave NATO will undoubtedly embolden Putin. Nor will the significance of the collapse of the joint European-American military commitment be lost on Xi in China: as NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg recently argued, signs of Western disunity “will invite challenges from those who wish us harm”. He did not mince his words in making clear “It is Ukraine today. Taiwan could be tomorrow”, speaking directly to a GOP increasingly sceptical of America's role in the transatlantic alliance.

Indeed, it seems that 2024 will prove the ultimate rejoinder to the argument of Francis Fukuyama's already roundly attacked 1989 essay ‘The End of History?’ – that of the inexorable spread of liberal democracy. While 9/11, the 2008 financial crisis, and the 2016 Brexit and Trump votes did much to erode that essay's post-Cold War triumphalism, in 2024 there seems a genuine risk of the very tenets of liberal democracy beginning to crumble, even in those countries once seen as its bulwarks.

India is a case in point. In what has been known as the world's largest democracy, the near-inevitable victory of Modi's BJP suggests that the erosion of press and judicial freedoms is set to continue, or even intensify, whilst the party creates a space for dangerous and violent Hindu nationalism, which comes at the expense of India's vast Muslim minority.

And while so much hangs in the political balance with the 2024 elections, the rise of AI promises some sort of disruption – and opportunities for states like Russia to cause chaos and spread misinformation.

The 2019 Mueller Report made clear the extent of Russian interference in the 2016 election, spreading disinformation and hacking voter registration systems; with deep fakes that are virtually indistinguishable from reality, there is a very real threat of more disinformation in 2024. The potential ramifications of this were made apparent in last year's Slovakian election, in which a fake recording of opposition candidate Michal Šimečka plotting to buy votes went viral on social media. Once touted as a force for political good, social media threatens to further alienate voters from the establishment, promoting misinformation and extremism at the expense of the truth.

In his *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, Tocqueville stated what would become an infamous sociological thesis for the causes of 1789: that Frenchmen, increasingly divided and inward-looking, had lost any reason to compromise or cooperate, and that when the Revolution came French society was ripe for collapse. To suggest that such a situation is comparable to 2024 is, of course, wrong. But current polling for the 2024 elections suggests that people across the western world are increasingly willing to turn away from ‘status-quo’ candidates such as France's Emmanuel Macron, towards once-fringe figures like Marine le Pen. That this shift has coincided with the rise of social media, which offers individualised political feeds and an unprecedented means of disseminating disinformation, is perhaps unsurprising.

Of course, we should not be overly downbeat. If there is optimism to be found in assessing democracy's fate,

according to head of the Global State of Democracy Initiative by Sweden's International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance Kevin Casas-Zamora, it is perhaps in the vibrant displays of civic action across the world. In the widespread Israeli protests at highly controversial judi-

“Once touted as a force for political good, social media threatens to further alienate voters from the establishment”

cial reforms, or the Syrian protests against the country's jihadist rulers to mark 13 years since the Arab Spring, there is hopeful evidence that the concept of democracy is still treasured by people across the world, despite attempts to undermine it.

Moreover, even when they have found electoral success, far-right parties have sometimes proved no more than paper tigers: in the case of Georgia Meloni, fears that she would shun Ukraine and act on anti-immigrant vitriol have not materialised, while in the Netherlands Wilders has not found sufficient parliamentary support to become prime minister. And there remains a plausible chance that, come November, American voters will be mobilised by a desire to reject Trump's intensified MAGA agenda, and the party that overturned Roe v. Wade and the protected right of

abortion, according to Democrat strategist Simon Rosenberg.

Yet 2024 nonetheless represents a year in which the global rise of illiberalism could make sweeping gains. If, as Fukuyama hubristically asserted in 1989, liberal democracy is the best political state of being (or that with the fewest weaknesses), the prospect of its universal adoption seems more out of reach than ever as the 2024 election season gets underway. Across the western world, genuine issues of economic inequalities and stagnation are being weaponised by far-right politicians in conjunction with a message of social rebellion, whether against the establishment and its institutions, or foreigners, or both.

While this election year is notable for its global quality, it is November, with the American presidential election, that political scientists will await with bated breath. If Trump is re-elected, and if his statements are anything to go by, it seems that he will rule, not in the style of Abraham Lincoln's Grand Old Party, nor even in that of his first term, in which he was hindered by overly conscientious Washington staffers, including his own treacherous vice president Mike Pence, who refused to overturn Biden's 2020 victory. Instead, his intentions for a second term seem to hark back to the anti-constitutional actions of the despot whom Tocqueville most despised, Napoleon III. Whether 2024 proves to be the watershed that 1851 was, when Louis-Napoleon seized dictatorial powers in a coup d'état in France, remains to be seen.

Artwork by Aishia Simmons

Philosophy and technology: Science's moral afflictions

Cem Kozanoglu discusses the importance of studying philosophy alongside the sciences.

On March 28th in a dingy Manhattan courtroom, unrepentant crypto-mogul Sam Bankman-Fried was sentenced to 25 years in prison. This landmark sentence came after an appeal by his lawyers against Bankman-Fried's conviction in November 2023 on seven counts of wire fraud and conspiracy to launder money.

MIT-educated Bankman-Fried was co-founder and CEO of crypto exchange FTX, which was the 3rd biggest such exchange at its peak. His work in the company earned him a spot on the now infamous Forbes ‘30 under 30’. The exchange went bankrupt in 2022 over concerns around missing funds and suspicious transactions. Amidst a large tranche of fraud charges, the most absurdly hilarious was that the size of their ‘insurance fund’, which supposed-

ly backed up the exchange, was set everyday by a random number generator.

SBF professed to have a greater project than just getting rich; he was also a part of the ‘earning to give’ movement associated with the ethical doctrine of Effective Altruism. The essential logic of the movement is that donating to charity is good, and so earning as much money as possible to donate it all is the best way to do the most good for the world. For SBF himself, this apparently meant living it up in his Bahamas penthouse and donating millions to the Democrats. While his FTX Future Fund, with a team that included Effective Altruism figurehead William MacAskill, did donate around \$130 million before FTX went under, a portion of the donations were clawed back to pay those defrauded by FTX.

Earning to give is not an evil move-

ment; you can become rich and do good without committing fraud. Rather, the problem is the movement's premise: do not question the fundamental structure of society and why it produces all this inequality, just earn your way to the top by whatever means available to you! It's an attractive ideology for many in Silicon Valley, whose day jobs range from making killer drones to spying on our personal lives. The justification and greater purpose provided by earning to give keeps the exploitations of the tech giants well oiled – something they wouldn't have the room to do if all of their employees had a well-developed moral conscience. It seems SBF himself never bought his own moral righteousness though; he later said that his “ethics stuff” was a “dumb game we woke Westerners play where we say all the right shibboleths and so everyone

likes us.”

The parable of SBF is a practical lesson in the dangers of a narrow technological education – blinkered and unrepentant, SBF the crypto-bro may hide behind the respectable veneer of technological advancement, but, as Manhattan Attorney Damian Williams noted, “this kind of corruption is as old as time.” The story powerfully demonstrates the philosophy problem that exists within contemporary STEM education. In an era when technological progress shows no signs of stopping, we need scientists and technocrats whose capabilities are not limited to their worksheets, but who possess the capacity and intuition to think critically about the moral and societal implications of their developments – a perspective which only a broader education that includes philosophy can provide. We might also need it for the sake of our

history books; I would hate to see Sam Altman quoting a marvel movie instead of the Bhagavad Gita if he creates the first sentient AI.

Besides the illegality of the SBF case, the crypto industry is a clear example of how narrowly educated developers can be enlisted to morally worthless projects. Developers who have only been taught how to answer the “how” questions of technology, rather than the “why” questions of social purpose often yield to deceptively simple answers.

Crypto's answer to the ‘why’ is that it offers a digital paradise of libertarian market transactions away from the grubby hands of the state. Yet I can assure you that as a Computer Science student, I have never been persuaded of a good use case for it except money laundering and drug running. Even more, it's bewildering how many of my comrades in tech still are dazzled by crypto's libertar-

ian gospel despite the fact crypto has become nothing more than an appendage to the all powerful financial system they despise – a truth barely masked by crypto’s cool gadgets and smart algorithms. The lack of exposure to humanities means that those who work in developing new technologies often don’t have the larger social and moral perspective necessary to question the more dubious parts of their fields or the wider political and economic system that prioritises them.

Lack of a wider education in humanities, including philosophy, has other problems, particularly political ones. A common sentiment among many computer scientists (no doubt true in other technical fields as well) is not just to identify as apolitical, but rather ‘anti-political.’ John Maynard Keynes described “practical men” as those who “believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, but are usually the slaves of some defunct economist.” In the exact same manner, techies who claim to be independent thinkers with their ‘anti-politics’ are merely hiding an ideological commitment to a tech blogger or some venture capitalist that cashed out a decade ago. The ideology of these practical men typically includes a contempt for both sides of the political establishment, not because of their inability to address crises or secure a standard of living but, instead, for their ‘unscientific irrationality.’ According to them, political problems would dissolve away if politicians listened to the experts and thought ‘algorithmically.’

The most prominent incarnation of this political tendency is Andrew Yang, who ran and lost in the 2020 Democratic primaries before leaving to form his “Forward Party.” The name itself indicates how he conceives of his politics as neither ‘left’ nor ‘right’, but merely forward and therefore ‘correct’. The base of his campaign was comprised of young tech workers disillusioned by the mainstream, yet he also attracted high-profiled endorsements. Yang was backed by Elon Musk, who claims to be a centrist despite seeing politics as “a battle to the death with the anti-civilizational woke mind virus.” The similarity of their politics lies in their shared ‘techno-optimism’ – the idea that political and social divisions will be dissolved by advanced technology if only we can facilitate it. Yang’s signature policy of Universal Basic Income (UBI) is founded on such an assumption: automation will be a net benefit to society as long as we can distribute it accordingly. The problem with UBI is not feasibility – many economists and politicians from across the spectrum have backed it – but, rather, its politically neutral veneer. Any significant political undertaking creates winners and losers, yet Yang seems to forget this when he argues that it’s just the way forward. The “Practical Men” that support Yang or those like him are a direct symptom of STEM education tunnel-visioned on technical expertise and therefore technical fixes, without any acknowledgement of the broader social concerns they raise.

Our education system should be

focused on preparing responsible citizens that think critically as much as they’re focused on preparing students for the future job market. Without it, we’ll be left in a world ruled by SBFs and Elon Musks whose engineers go along with their techno-optimist whims because they weren’t equipped with the philosophical intuitions necessary to overcome their pro-technology prejudices.

The prominent narrow view of science education as merely technical is peculiar historically – science itself was called natural philosophy up until the 19th century. Newton would be confused if you told him that he was a scientist and not a philosopher. He was trying to investigate the true nature of the universe – how else could one describe a philosopher? The intellectual division of labour that splits STEM and Humanities is merely a part of the trend towards greater economic specialisation. The isolation of the disciplines from one another does not only lead to a moral vacuum and social aimlessness among those developing frontier technologies; the dearth of philosophical awareness of one’s field also makes scientists less innovative.

Current education in the sciences is almost entirely technical; to-be physicists learn the formulas and theorems that govern the quantum

“Fundamental science is struggling because we no longer educate scientists to be ‘true seekers of truth.’”

world, but are rarely encouraged to think about what these theories actually mean. Only a broad education that includes the historical context and philosophical understanding of their field can train the scientists we need to answer the big questions that remain in fundamental science.

The chief objection against a broader education that includes philosophy rests on a maxim prevalent among many researchers today best stated by Lawrence Krauss: “science progresses and philosophy doesn’t”. It follows that we shouldn’t waste precious time with questions like ‘what do atoms mean?’ when an education in ‘what atoms are’ already takes up enough time. A broader education might have been possible when all knowledge of chemistry was contained in a handful of alchemy textbooks, but not now when its subfields fill up entire libraries; we simply don’t have the time to waste when it takes up to a decade to reach the frontiers of a discipline. The attitude is essentially an imperative: “Stop thinking about the deep nothings of metaphysics - there are experiments to conduct!”

Although Krauss and the crowd



of ‘anti-philosophy’ science pundits criticise philosophy for being stagnant, in reality fundamental science has moved remarkably slowly in the last couple of decades. Despite exponential increases in staff, funding, and technology, there’s been a noticeable lack of development in fundamental theory. Nobel prizes of the last decades have not gone to scientists coming up with revolutionary new theories or models, but to those verifying the theories of the early 20th century experimentally or extending their applications. Don’t just take it from me – a meta-study of research published in Nature found that “progress is slowing in several major fields”, despite “conditions that should be ripe for major advances” created by the growth in research output. Most damningly, the authors attributed this trend “in part to scientists’ and inventors’ reliance on a narrower set of existing knowledge”; essentially scientists today aren’t experimenting as radically or dreaming as big as they used to. This is not because the previous generations got it all right; there remain significant gaps in fundamental theories of Physics or Biology: we still can’t reconcile quantum physics with general relativity, or explain how life began on Earth. While there is no doubt that the competitiveness of modern academia and funding contribute to reduced innovation, this doesn’t give us the full picture. Instead, the better explanation of the slowdown in science is that we no longer equip ambitious scientists with a broad and philosophically-minded education necessary to create the innovative and radical new theories we need.

The objections to a broad education rely on the false distinction that ‘science’ can be separated from ‘philosophy’ and particularly that science can be advanced by researchers without philosophical awareness. Einstein himself was particularly critical of the distinction between science and philosophy gaining hold in his time and never failed to under-

score the importance of philosophy: “a knowledge of the historic and philosophical background gives that kind of independence from prejudices of his generation from which most scientists are suffering.” He also admitted in a letter that he was unsure whether he would have been able to come up with his theory of relativity had it not been for Hume’s *Treatise on Human Nature*. Another Nobel prize winner in Physics, Heisenberg said that his mind had been formed studying “philosophy, Plato, that type of thing.”

Fundamental science is struggling because we no longer educate scientists to be ‘true seekers of truth’. Instead, the modern system of narrow and focused technical study trains specialists to be experts in their particular sub-fields, but without the

“...we need people to be educated more like Einstein or Heisenberg and less like Krauss.”

ability or ambition to connect disparate sub-fields and construct unified theories. We’ve been left with a cohort of scientists that have “seen thousands of trees, but never seen a forest” as Einstein would describe them. If we want a world where science progresses as it used to, we need people to be educated more like Einstein or Heisenberg and less like Krauss.

So what would such an education look like in practice? This nasty problem called ‘reality’ commonly afflicts utopian dreamers like myself – it’s easier to criticise than to construct an alternative. But perhaps criticism can be our starting point. For example, the discontinued “Eth-

ics and Responsible Innovation” course previously mandatory for all first year CompSci students, was in theory the exact kind of course we should endorse, but it became a joke among my peers on account of its unengaging content and incoherent subject matter. The speed at which the course whipped through complex ethical systems neither gave us time to reflect on the deep topics at hand, nor relate them adequately to our responsibilities as future scientists and tech innovators. In fact, the course was flawed in its very premise: an education in the humanities, in particular ethics, should not be an aside to the important technical stuff, but rather studied for its own sake. And when these topics are discussed in the context of the field itself, they should be integrated into the technical curriculum, so the ethical implications of science are as clear as the science itself.

This is just a suggestion, and it is possible that it would not have hindered Sam Bankman-Fried from falling as far as his sentence shows. After all, reading Hindu philosophy failed to stop Oppenheimer from developing the nuclear bomb. You might even argue it helped him maintain a critical distance from the moral implications of his work. The point is that we must find a way of bringing scientists and tech developments within the moral-philosophical fold – of tuning them to the moral needs of the ‘demos’ – so that a future SBF might not be elevated to such lofty heights from which to fall, and the stagnation in fundamental theory can be overcome. Be it through changes to education or otherwise, for the sake of these things, STEM students, scientists and modernisers must learn to complement their technical prowess with philosophical intuitions. At the very least, this will make them more interesting to talk to.

Sam Bankman Fried Image Credits:
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Stage

Review: *An Enemy of the People*

Kiaya Phillips

Ibsen has re-entered the drama scene with the current production of his classic play *An Enemy of the People* at the Duke of York Theatre this spring. With big name Matt Smith in the lead role of Dr Thomas Stockmann, I anticipated big things for this production. As a lover of Ibsen (my favourite play ever being *Hedda Gabler*), I booked to see this months ago, the moment tickets had been released, and safe to say I was not disappointed.

Ibsen is known for his political style of theatre and his ability to intertwine narrative, character and social commentary seamlessly. This play was the best I've seen on the London drama scene for a while and certainly reawakened the politically active side of myself that has begun to dwindle

in the depressing state of our current political climate. I felt both enraged and empowered upon exiting the theatre, just as I expect Ibsen intended.

The script was always guaranteed to be impeccable, as in my eyes Ibsen can never disappoint in his writing skills. However, it was also expertly adapted for a modern interpretation. From smaller embedded references to social media and the pandemic, to blatant smears against current politics (notably in hilarious references to Rishi Sunak), modernism was expertly crafted and integrated into the play without losing the integrity of the original text. Moreover, the breaks in the fourth wall during a period of audience interaction, was a risky but expertly and comically executed move from Zachary Hart as

Billing. Having not read the original play myself, I would now be intrigued to do so, and note any further changes that have been made.

The set was ingenious in its design, with the minimal furniture and the chalkboard walls which the characters used throughout to indicate additional props or changes of time and place.

This made the transitions slick as there was less to do and also built anticipation as we watched them begin to sketch. Just before the end of the first half, we see the stage integrated into a blatant political statement as the characters took white buckets of paint haphazardly to the walls; literally whitewashing the set, thus externalising the implicit political whitewashing happening within the play. As the play progresses and complicates into blatant political frustration, we

see the set morphs alongside the narrative. After the white washing of the walls we see a much more minimal set than what we opened with; just a few sparse chairs

and an open fridge as opposed to the full living room/kitchen set up we had at the beginning.

Matt Smith has his star moment as Thomas with the monologue just after the opening of the second

half. He is exhausted by the political climate he finds himself in, but dynamic and powerful in his argument against it. Following the monologue we get a period of further audience involvement when Priyanga Burford (as Aslaksen) asks audience members to raise their hands and speak on why they agree or disagree with what the doctor has just said. This continued to enhance the political narrative of the piece and

fit seamlessly into the narrative, which is always hard when choosing to break the fourth wall.

After this moment, Matt Smith, and the stage by extension, is covered with paint as the other characters throw balloons full of yellow and black at him. We see them revolt against morality - ultimately what the doctor stands for at this moment. They choose to "save themselves" at the expense of their morals and values. In the scene proceeding this, to close off the play, we see the doctor and his wife Katherine Stockmann (Jessica Brown Findlay) offered a final chance at corruption as Katherine's father Morten Kiil (Nigel Lindsay) offers them shares of the baths. We see a smidgen of hope as they reject it and stick to their guns, but also defeat in the fact that by doing so they have ruined the lives they have made for themselves, forced to leave the town and their lives there forever. A tragic but thought provoking end to the piece.

Music

The rise of genre fluidity: Is this the death of genre as we know it?

Keziah McCann

My favourite genre of music: a question I've found becoming increasingly difficult to answer over the years, and it's only now that I'm discovering why. Whilst we may not be listening to more, or less music than before, today's era of genre-blurring, experimental DJ remixes and mood-based Spotify playlists underscores a significant shift in the nature of what we listen to.

It appears that we may be moving towards 'genreless' music, a sound that transcends categorisation. This distinct change in the concept of 'genre' is evident when considering many artists. From Silk Sonic to Wet Leg to Declan McKenna's experimental *What Happened to the Beach*, the labels we could once easily ascribe to 70s rock or 90s hip hop are no longer so easy to attribute, and fewer artists can be defined by one particular genre.

Instead, we are seeing increasing experimentation with sound and style. Take one example, Lil Nas X: one of the reasons he became so huge overnight is since his 2019 chart-topping single, 'Old Town Road', uniquely blurs genre lines. It is hip-hop, pop, rap, country and country trap, all simultaneously, and in fact, the song was removed from the *Billboard* country charts

as it had been 'mis-genred'. The decision, seen by many as racially motivated, also demonstrates why the artist's mix of genres, specifically his choice to incorporate country, was so significant and intriguing: it highlights the declining authority of outdated genre expectations and boundaries. In this case, Lil Nas X's queer cowboy iconography contradicts traditional assumptions surrounding both country music's sound and image.

This defiant blurring of music categories concerns not only established artists but has seen a spike thanks to technological musical experimentation. TikTok is the perfect platform for this: my For You Page is filled with sped-up songs, mashups, unexpected collaborations and DJ remixes blending a multitude of diverse genres. Although some more experimental fusions can fall flat, talented DJs such as Never Dull and his self-described "absurd remixes" fusing almost any popular song with house and a touch of his Latin American heritage, have gained him almost 200k Instagram followers, thousands of Soundcloud streams, and a single in the *Billboard* US Dance Charts. Having remixed songs ranging from Ice Spice to Diana Ross to Tyler The Creator and ROSALÍA, it is evident the 'vibe' is at the forefront, rather than an adherence to any easily definable genre label.

The concept of 'vibe' over genre is also a phenomenon that has completely taken over the way we create and consume playlists. If you, like 602 million others, use Spotify, you will certainly have come across these mood-based compilations: personal daily mixes, 'main character energy', 'wanderlust', 'happy hits', 'summer bbq', and many more are recommended to me as I open the app. I recently discovered 'POLLEN', a Spotify-made playlist described as "Genre-less. Quality first always". The hit concept aspires to be "at the leading edge of the popular and the underground" and responds to the increasingly varied listening habits of listeners, aimed also at helping lesser-known artists grow and get discovered more easily. As Kevin Weatherly, Spotify's head of North American programming, explained in an interview with *The New Yorker*, Spotify is not an arbiter of taste, but instead "we're here to try to connect our audience with different types of music, regardless of genre."

In a world primarily preoccupied with the future, it seems we are all moving on from the confined and out-of-date, especially since, according to a study from the Black Lives in Music initiative, four in ten musicians claim to have been pigeon-holed into a genre untrue to them.

Genre should not be forgotten,

Cherwell Introduces...Menu3

Joseph Lomax

Joining me this week, are Somerville's Menu3, who told me all about their musical inspirations, their upcoming Trinity, how they have grown from passion project to ball-playing big-hitter, and the story behind their name!

How did you guys meet and form the band?

Nicole: Jude and I were doing problem sheets in his room, talking about mechanisms, and just fed up. I just wanted to do something fun and thought we should have a Somerville band.

Can you describe your sound in 3 words?

Jude: Fun, definitely chuck in groove, and NOW, lively. We're quite interactive.

Nicole: My word would be connected, we gel as a band - I feel that we're making the crowd have fun.

Who is your biggest musical inspiration?

Marcus: Bruno Mars and Silk Sonic songs...they've got to be one of our main ones.

Jude: I listen to a lot of Muse, but that's not exactly our sound!

Nicole: I listen to Adele a lot... she's an inspiration for me.

Marcus: From a keys perspective, it's the likes

of Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder.

Dan: Funk and soul of 70s and 80s... Earth Wind and Fire, Chaka Khan...

that's where I derive the groove.

How do you differentiate yourself from other bands playing at the same kind of events as you?

Dan: I think our approach is putting the crowd at the centre of the setlist.

Jude: We choose songs that are by artists people love but aren't being overplayed (entirely) - I've only heard one other group in Oxford do Toxic, so it feels unique to us.

What is your favourite memory together as a band?

Dan: One of our first gigs, in the college bar: we organized it and weren't paid, but everyone knew us. I don't know if you've seen it, but the Somerville bar isn't very impressive, so to see it rammed was crazy. I've never seen it like that, and I don't think I will again.

Jude: Initially Nicole did a lot of the heavy lifting booking us gigs: the first five were thanks to her, and we now have people requesting us. I thought we were going to be chained to small venues forever, I never imagined we would be playing balls.

[Read the full article at Cherwell.org](https://www.cherwell.org)
Image Credit: Menu3

Follow Menu3!

Instagram: @menu3band

nor is it becoming entirely irrelevant. Categorisation of music is a natural instinct, and it is evidently necessary in informing taste, as well as helping artists to effectively promote music to a target audi-

ence. However, we do not, nor do we feel the need to, rely on it in the same way we once did, and artists and music lovers alike are coming to define and categorise music in new and creative ways.



Film

Memory and narrative in Miguel Gomes' *Tabu*

Lara Machado

“You may run as far as you can, for as long as you like, but you will not escape your heart.”

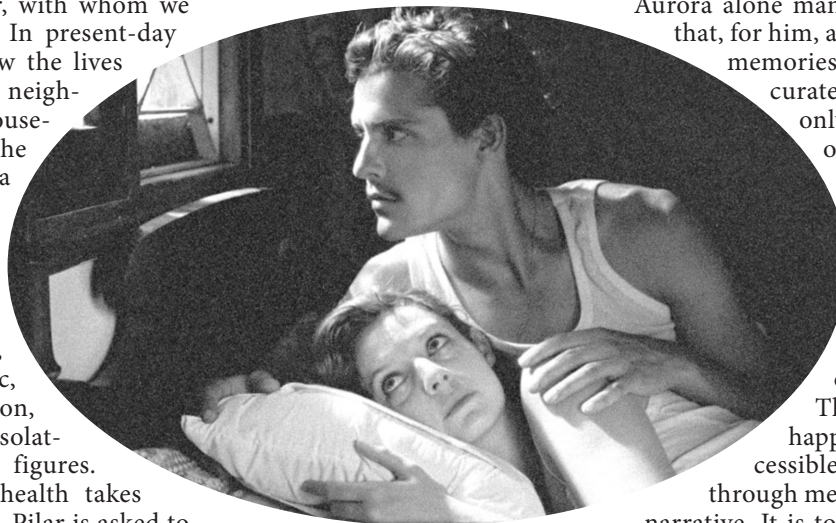
On 25th April 1974, the Estado Novo regime was brought down by a military coup. This signalled not only Portugal's release from authoritarianism, but the end of a 13-year war with its African colonies. Now approaching the 50th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution, I return to Miguel Gomes' 2012 feature *Tabu*. Few films have so brilliantly captured the gap between reality and memory – personal and collective – raising important questions about the modern repercussions of colonial history we continue to have trouble discussing. At the heart of the film lies a profound exploration of our attempts at grappling with the otherness of the past, that will haunt its viewers long after it has ended.

Tabu is divided into three parts: the Prologue, Part One - Paradise

Lost, and Part Two - Paradise. The film opens with the dream-like tale of an explorer who, haunted by the ghost of a dead wife he cannot forget, lets himself be eaten by a crocodile. It then turns out that this is a film within a film being watched by Pilar, with whom we begin Part One. In present-day Lisbon, we follow the lives of Pilar and her neighbours: the housemaid Santa and the elderly Aurora who, abandoned by her daughter, is increasingly in the grips of dementia. This is 'Paradise Lost', a melancholic, washed-out Lisbon, peopled with isolated, discontented figures. When Aurora's health takes a sudden decline, Pilar is asked to locate Gian Luca Ventura, who in the film's second section narrates Aurora's youth spent on a farm on Mount Tabu and their tale of forbidden love.

Part Two - Paradise is composed

entirely of Gian Luca's memories of Africa and Aurora. This second section is devoid of dialogue. It is narrated in its entirety through a voice-over. Although this is certainly an homage to silent film – Murnau's *Tabu* in particular – it



is worth considering the significance of the silence of the voices of the past and the superimposition of a present one. Although these are Gian Luca's memories, he starts by describ-

ing Aurora's life before she existed for him. The images we see have to be projections. This continues throughout the film. Although we only get access to Gian Luca's interiority, this section isn't narrated from his point of view. We see Aurora alone many times, scenes that, for him, are impossible as memories – even as inaccurate ones – and can only be Gian Luca's own narrative formulations of the past. He seems to assume the role of a third-person narrator of his own life. The past as it happened is inaccessible and to reach it through memory is to build narrative. It is to look at oneself as a character.

We may only have our stories of the past, but *Tabu* makes it clear that our past is not the stories we make of it. In an interview with MUBI, Gomes stated that he had

never deeply considered the symbol of the crocodile until he began to be repeatedly asked about it during the film's press junket. He stated: “Only then did I realize that maybe the crocodile had something to do with time. He's like a witness; we must have a witness. People that fall in love and separate. Empires that rise and fall, colonial empires.” How people choose to remember the past does not alter how it happened, or the imprints it leaves behind. Despite all its comments on the unreliability of memory and the foreignness of the past, *Tabu* remains devoted to the idea that the marks we leave on others – for better or for worse – are concealable but ultimately unerasable. Aurora's last burnt letter reminds us of this, as the film draws to a close: “If the memory of men is limited, the world's is eternal and that no one can escape.” Aurora's letter ends and we are met with the film's final shot, the crocodile: an ancient witness, a superhuman judge.

Image Credit: FCAT/ CC BY-SA 2.0 DEED via Flickr

WHAT'S ON?

Art: Brugel To Rubens
@Ashmolean Museum

23 Mar – 23 Jun

Discover the Ashmolean's newest exhibition, featuring some of the best drawings of the great Flemish artists of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Music: Wadstock
@Wadham College

27th April

Wadstock is back! Next weekend join Wadham for their one-day music festival featuring the best live music, comedy, poetry and art talent of Oxford.

Film: Back to Black
@Curzon, Odeon & Phoenix Picturehouse

Watch Sam Taylor-Johnson's newest biopic *Back to Black*, based on the life of extraordinary British singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse.

The Godfather: Part II at fifty

Hassan Akram

The *Godfather: Part II* is a film about gangsters. It is also a film about corruption, power, betrayal, succession, revenge, religion, marriage, generational change, filial duty, sibling rivalry, the immigrant experience and laissez-faire capitalism. Only the works of Shakespeare combine such a variety of interpretations with unanimous critical acclaim, and the first two *Godfathers* are to cinema what Shakespeare is to literature.

Like Shakespeare, both films are endlessly quotable. “I'll make him an offer he can't refuse” - “It's not personal... It's strictly business” - “Keep your friends close and your enemies closer” - these lines and others are all regularly cited even by those who have never heard of the Corleone family. At times, the Shakespearean influence is almost self-conscious. Compare the “It wasn't a miscarriage” scene here to Act 4, Scene 1 of *Othello*, and one can see how exactly the same incident (domestic abuse) is used as a focal point for the hero's moral, domestic and professional decline.

In a rare case of the film being better than the book, Mario Puzo's orig-

inal novel *The Godfather* is very poor stuff. The best that can be said of it is that the pages keep turning. A better novelistic parallel to the protagonist Michael Corleone comes from an unlikely place: the hero in George Gissing's *Demos* (1886). Richard Mutimer, like Michael, is an idealistic young man corrupted by his inheritance; he grows cold and abusive towards his family; he becomes obsessed with power; and he ends up as the very thing which he used to despise – in Michael's case a gangster, in Mutimer's a capitalist. Even as a great novelist as Gissing, however, could not touch Francis Ford Coppola's skill for storytelling. It was above all Coppola's genius which took a pulp novel and elevated it to the level of high art.

Contemporary critics were slow to appreciate *Godfather II*'s weight. “The plot defies any rational synopsis,” was a common criticism, and the point is a fair one. There is no comprehensible plot. Broadly it is a dual story of the rise of the Corleone mafia family in the 1920s, interspersed with its decline in the 1950s. Initially this dual structure was scolded for making each half of *Part II* merely a bookend to *Part I*, which had been set in the 1940s. Moreover, the entire

sequel seemed confusing and unnecessary. Yet within a year of its release, all criticism was forgotten; it was hailed as better than its predecessor and became the first sequel ever to win Best Picture at the Oscars. *Godfather II* cannot be appreciated in one sitting; it needs to be rewatched. The truest test of a work of art is endurance, and on every rewatch both *Godfathers* reveal themselves in fresh colours and nuances; the depth of the tragedy and the mechanisms of the plot become more and more impressive; and to each of us at every stage of our lives they speak something equally valid but always different.

Al Pacino is in the role of his career as Michael Corleone, and the genius of his performance is written into every frame. In the final flashback scene, when suddenly the cold, power-obsessed gangster is shown as the grinning young man of decades earlier, Pacino communicates the change silently in a single shot. His subtle body language and facial expressions say everything. Robert De Niro is restrained yet imposing as the young Vito Corleone; Robert Duval somehow ever likeable as the family's *consiglieri*; Diane Keaton a forlorn and trapped voice of reason; John Cazale hapless but increasingly tragic as he is driven by desperation

to the betrayal of his brother.

Throughout, the atmosphere is held up by soft, painting-like cinematography and period detail which, whether set around turn-of-the-century Sicily or revolutionary Cuba, never overbears; it is utterly engrossing for its near three-and-a-half hours. The film's final third – in which heavier music and gloomy lighting mirror the moral corruption of Michael's soul – is by far its greatest. A lesser storyteller would have killed Michael off (which is what happened in the abomination that is *The Godfather: Part III*), but here Coppola is wise enough to end with him very much alive, sitting alone brooding over his sins. That, surely, is more subtly tragic than the assassination which is the usual stock of the gangster genre.

As a whole *The Godfather: Part II* is so absorbing that – when it ends, and Nino Rota's wailing, haunting score signals the credits – one is left with the grief, thrill, and astonishment that can only be stirred by an artwork of rare and great power. The vivid images and the gloomy dilemmas of every character play on the mind for weeks afterwards. It remains the absolute high point of all cinema. In fifty years since 1974 no other film has matched its universality or power. It is doubtful whether, even by 2074, anyone will have produced anything of the same calibre. The point. McIntosh's clear vision of the short story's capabilities and his skilful manipulation of them ultimately makes the vivid and multivarious ways a short story can turn out appear obvious.

Image Credit: Machete kills / CC BY-SA 4.0 DEED via Wikimedia Commons



Fashion

From rags to riches: Unravelling the stitched-up class divide in fashion

Connie Hilton and
Aniya Boranbay

Fashion trends come and go as quickly as the seasons change, but is the UK class system still entrenched by these shifts in style? New movements in vintage fashion have caused a surge in charity shopping: hand-me-downs are all the rage, yet certain ideas about class are handed down with them. Buzzwords are used across social media to describe rising aesthetics, which makes it a more accessible environment to judge these different styles. It seems as though there is still an element of class culture to fashion, despite more fluid styles that don't necessarily require a designer label. Rising trends cause rising prices. Suddenly, the world of budget shopping has become a cesspool of consumerism.

It should not come as a surprise to anyone interested in fashion that second-hand clothing has experienced a surge in popularity over the past few years. With the recent acceleration of trend cycles, vintage styles are constantly making their way

back into the mainstream. As such, charity shops have gone from being the place to shop for clothing necessities on a budget, to being visited by people from different classes on the hunt for new additions to their wardrobe. However, despite ownership of second-hand goods being less stigmatised, and often celebrated in the modern fashion landscape, there is still a class divide in how people shop for vintage fashion.

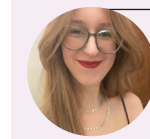
Charity shopping in the UK became widespread during the Second World War. One of the most popular charity shops, Oxfam, opened in 1947 in Oxford. These shops would take in donations and sell goods at heavily discounted rates compared to original retail price. The proceeds would then go to a variety of different charitable causes. Naturally, the low prices attracted people in need of affordable clothing. With the growth of online fashion spaces, charity shopping has become less about budget clothing, and more about finding unique, trendy pieces. Part of the popularity of second-hand shopping can also be attributed to the growing desire to be environmentally conscious amongst

younger generations.

Not all second-hand shopping is created equal. With the demand for vintage clothing growing, dedicated curated vintage stores and online resellers have provided a way for those willing to pay a premium to buy second-hand items through an easier and more tailored shopping experience. In this subtle way, those with more money are able to shop for more desirable clothing pieces and curate their wardrobe to fit an aesthetic more easily. This is one of the ways in which the relationship between class and fashion still persists, although it is not as glaringly obvious as it used to be; previously class was signified by the brand you could afford to wear.

In particular, the '20 year cycle' conveys the continuous resurgence of trends from past decades. In recent years, fashion has experienced a rise in the 'Y2K aesthetic', which has allowed for different social classes to align as young people scoured second-hand retailers for low-rise jeans, graphic tees and glitter. However, as demand for these items increased, so did the prices. Once again, what was a widespread excitement towards the revival of an aesthetic became a hierarchy that lower classes could not access. The buzzwords used to describe these trends have demonstrated that this divide still persists, even when it is more of a look than a label that is sought after.

Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have heavily influenced the rapid rise and fall of fashion movements through the use of these buzzwords. It can be argued that while demand for these items

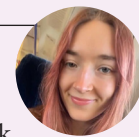


EDITORS' PICKS...

Book of the week: Normal People, by Sally Rooney

Olivia Sloan

Ever since I first picked up Normal People in 2022 it has been ever-present in my mind. Marianne and Connell's relationship was beautifully tragic; their growth, both together and apart, made this a compelling and emotive read. Rooney's unique style of writing only adds to the sense of connection between the two, making this book one of my firm favourites.



Film of the week: Immaculate

Isobel Jessop

Calling all fans of Sydney Sweeney! Don't walk, run to the cinema to see the new nunsploitation horror film which she produced herself. Though the scattered jumpscare are nothing groundbreaking, the atmospheric convent setting and Sweeney's superb performance make the movie worth a watch. Immaculate also stands out in its poignant relevance to the ongoing restriction of women's reproductive rights in the USA.



Music of the week: Zwei - Extended Dub, by Electric Mind

Zaynab Ravat

I cannot think of a better song to begin Trinity with than the italo disco classic, "Zwei". Electric Mind perfectly encapsulates and foresees the funky nights out and chill Port Meadow swims of sunny Oxford with a pure instrumental breeze. Here's to a great term!

has maintained the class divide, society's own perception of them has upheld ideas about social class that cannot be ignored. Phrases like 'cigarette mum', typically referencing working class stereotypes, have been used against the Y2K fashion and beauty trends online. These have perpetuated the class divide as while some people are praised for modelling these aesthetics, others are unable to escape presumptions about their background based on what they

wear.

The increased demand for vintage fashion, combined with persisting attitudes towards class culture, has maintained the existence of the class divide within fashion. The reinforcement of stereotypes along with the high prices that follow these trends indicate that while the rapid cycle of fashion perseveres, so does inequality within the fashion sphere.

Image Credit: Chris McAuley/ CC BY 2.0 via Geograph



Art

Self-Portrait of a Stranger: A review of Frank Auerbach's charcoal portraits

Taya Neilson

The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition, *The Charcoal Heads*, shows the early career of Frank Auerbach and the creation of his portraits in the 1950s and 1960s. As a young Jewish artist alone in post-war London, the charcoal portraits reveal a lot about the artist's own personal experiences and the valuable relationships he established with the sitters of his portraits. As such, when observing the visitors of the exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery, it became clear that they, too, were attempting to uncover the metaphorical layers of discovery and experience present in his portraits.

It was almost as if a conveyor belt had been installed within the gallery as each drawing was observed by a different visitor one after the other. The visitors matched the pace of their neighbours, taking their time to examine the charcoal heads on display. Whether meeting the sitter of the drawing at eye level or bending forward to see the portraits in more detail, visitors were face to face with

the solemn individuals drawn by Auerbach. As such, whilst the sitters of the portraits appeared close to death in their sunken cheeks and solemn eyes, they remained omnipresent within the art gallery, holding their presence as visitors circled the room.

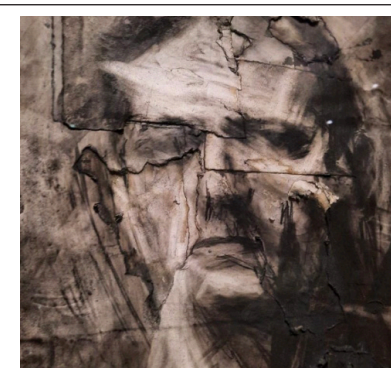
However, one drawing, in particular, broke this cycle as a crowd of visitors surrounded Auerbach's 1958 self-portrait at the age of 27. It was common for Auerbach to rework his drawings, yet the self-portrait on display appeared to have undergone excessive alterations. Its textured and layered appearance resulted from it being patched up three times, which led to the image of the young man becoming warped and disfigured. The scars created from his own human experiences were translated through the white folds which radiated in contrast with the dark charcoal shadows of the piece. It was in this

moment that I understood Robert Hughes' statement in the 1990s that "an overriding sense of being alone in the world" was at the centre of Auerbach's work.[1] The artist was just as much a stranger to himself than his sitters and it was only through numerous sessions and changes that he could come to terms with his own experiences through the artwork he created.

Auerbach's self-portrait of a stranger reveals that, rather than Auerbach imposing order through his artistic processes, the creation of his portraits was an attempt to make sense of his own position during a period of chaos and displacement. Auerbach continually revisited his artwork, where his finished portraits are highly textured and reflect on the deepest experiences he faced. Therefore, whilst his work was highly considered, Auerbach continually reviewed his work as part of a process of self-discovery.

This is illustrated by the unexpected strikes of pink and blue that appear throughout his portraits, suggesting a sense of emotional and artistic spontaneity.

The power of Auerbach's artistic process is further evident in three drawings of Gerda Boehm. Gerda and her husband had fled Nazi Germany in 1939 and settled in London. Earlier that year, Auerbach was also sent to England under the Kindertransport scheme whilst his parents died in the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1942. Hence, initially, the Boehm family were the only relatives that Auerbach had in England. Gerda, now a widow, first sat for Auerbach in 1961 and would attend sessions weekly until the 1980s.[2] Auerbach's initial drawing of Gerda is displayed at the Courtauld. Despite the numerous sessions Gerda had with Auerbach, there are no signs of rips or tears as seen in his self-portrait. The portrait embodies a sense of familiarity and maternity that the artist likely felt towards his sitter. The drawing, therefore, reveals a sense of harmony between them, which was a consequence of their shared experi-



ences of hardship.

Whilst there is an overwhelming sense of darkness to Auerbach's portraits, the artistic and real-life challenges faced by the artist are symbolically overcome by the final creation of his drawings. At a time of post-war reconstruction and reflection, Auerbach appears to reimagine the identity of his sitters, providing them, and himself, with a new and vital presence. Just like the streaks of blue and pink that remain vivid against the dark smudges of charcoal in his drawings, the individual figures emerge as alive, despite the struggles they faced.

Image Credits: Taya Neilson



Books

Review: *The Achilles Trap: Saddam Hussein, the United States, and the Middle East 1979-2003* by Steve Coll

Hassan Akram

Tyrants should only be brought down by their own people; they become martyrs when brought down by foreigners. This axiom used to be applied to Napoleon, and there is no better example of it in our own century than the case of Saddam Hussein. Saddam was a maniac and a tyrant, but tyranny is always preferable to anarchy, and anarchy was what followed his deposition by the US-led invasion in 2003. The death of hundreds of thousands and decades of political chaos were the only products of the Iraq War.

Steve Coll's new book is the best which has been written so far on the decades of leadership, geopolitics, strategy, and espionage which led to the invasion. Significantly, it draws on newly declassified resources, including almost 1,000 hours of tape recordings of Saddam's conversations with comrades and generals. The result is a detailed, at times uncomfortably intimate, portrait of him. He was a murderous dictator, a military aggressor obsessed with conspiracies and paranoid for decades about

American intentions. He also enjoyed the novels of Hemingway and Naguib Mahfouz, and at the time of the US invasion was applying himself to the study of Arabic grammar. Coll's uniquely multifaceted picture of him will go down in history as the most memorable one. For that portrait alone, this book would be well worth reading.



While of course Saddam is the "main character", Coll has an equally cool and sharp eye for other world leaders – particularly US presidents. Bill Clinton is found complaining that he has no telephone access to that "sonofabitch" Saddam; George W. Bush "might just have been bored" when he rolled his eyes upon learning that some Iraqi weapons had been destroyed.

Saddam's career-long paranoia about American intentions was probably justified – not only by our retrospective knowledge twenty years later, but by the skulduggery that was underway well before 2003. During the Iran-Iraq War, for instance, the Reagan Administration gave Saddam detailed maps to help him fend off the Iranians while

coup which first brought Saddam's Ba'athist party to power.

The central misunderstanding which Coll recounts – the one which, finally, ensured the 2003 invasion and the resultant butchering of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis – regards weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Iraq had no active weapons, but "after 1991, Saddam assumed that the C.I.A. knew that he had no WMD, and so he interpreted American and British accusations about his supposed nukes and germ bombs as merely propaganda lines". By the time each side realised its miscalculation, it was too late.

Much of the overall scope and detail of this book defy summary, and to understand every facet of US-Iraqi relations, it must be read in full. Every chapter, with thriller-like headings such as "Project 17" or "The Edge of the Abyss", makes for gripping reading. By means of its cold, crisp prose and its grasp of high-level espionage, *The Achilles Trap* is as readable and complex as a John le Carré novel while managing at the same time to be a serious piece of historical research.

Image Credits: Mahmud Reza Amiri / CC BY 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Second Generation

This week, **Fay Lorien** discusses *discovering her ancestral culture*



I started learning about my family history because I cannot stand awkward silences. Let me set the scene:

I am sitting in a sushi restaurant with my mother, a few glasses of red wine in. I feel our conversation fizzle out and I decide to jump to a topic that will hopefully keep us going for a while. "I basically don't know anything about our family."

It worked better than expected and would send me down a rabbit hole of self-discovery. I spent the next two hours mostly in awe of how much I didn't know.

My mother grew up in Russia during the last years of the Soviet Union and emigrated to Germany when she was 18. When I asked her how she experienced growing up in a communist country I didn't expect her answer. "It was great," she said and went on to explain how even queuing for rations was a pleasant experience because she could meet her friends and gossip for a while. She spoke fondly of visiting her grandfather on his farm in Kazakhstan and proudly showed me a scar on her hand that came from accidentally breaking the window of a chicken coop.

The stories I went on to learn about my great grandparents blew my mind. They were born in Kazakhstan in a German settlement. During the Second World War, they were both sent to forced labour camps in Siberia and had to give away their firstborn daughter to live with another family.

Learning about my family history as an adult is a riveting feeling. Why did it take me so long to ask these questions?

While working on this article, my grandmother sent me a series of dated documents chronicling our history through the 20th century. As a history buff, I was elated, but the feeling is bittersweet. All the information was there, I just had to ask.

The only thread I have to my Russian heritage is my grandparents. My grandfather delights in my clumsy attempts to speak the language.

But I cannot possibly think of Russia without considering its current political landscape. In a time of turmoil and suffering how does one relate to their culture? My easiest answer for the past few years has always been: "I don't really feel Russian," which looking back felt much more like a cop-out. Instead, I have decided to consciously engage with uncomfortable feelings concerning the current atrocities committed by the Russian government.

Prior to February 2022 I had no idea that I even had family living in Ukraine.

The thought of reconnecting with my culture at a time like this is uncomfortable. But will there ever be a 'right time'?

This is just the beginning.

The Source

Post Diagnosis

Sacha Fairweather

You could tell no one,
And it would come anyway.

You could run from here,
And it would still live,
Like a river below a house.

You could sleep all night,
Inhaling starlight,
And yet it would still be too late.

So I lay in your bed,
Staring at your bones,
Dark now, and burning.

Waiting for wings,
to burst through your shoulders.



But I am mistaken,
You take your poison
As your leaves fall off your trees,
And the winds rip at our house.

You grow thin and clear,
Like the river.

We carve at your body and call it luck,
But a day's changes mean all to you.

You see all the trees,
this unyielding one,
And you hear the blast of wind
That would have
killed it,
If something at the heart of things
had willed it.



Vesuvius Erupted on a Wednesday

Ted Fussell

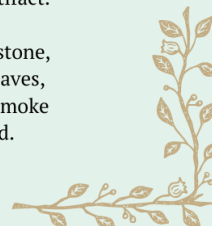
The Romans, always suckers for a schedule,
baked a different bread each day of the week,
a true pain quotidian.

And in an ash-caked oven, archaeologists unearthed
eighty-one loaves of Wednesday's bread,
hearty and large for sharing,
torn with rough hands after a day's work.

A baker's fossil, trapped in carbon,
still cooking as the sky fell.

History isn't written by the bakers,
but in Pompeii, life is preserved
like a coin pressed in wax,
and Wednesday's bread is still sat on the counter,
slightly stale - an everyday artifact.

No vast and trunkless legs of stone,
Just houses, bakers, ovens, loaves,
All stood beneath a dome of smoke
That slowly rose like bread.



Cherwell's checklist

Our life editors rank the worst places in Oxford to run into an ex...

1 You're queuing for the self-checkout at Tesco. You thought you saw them out of the corner of your eye as you came up the escalator, but now your worst fear is confirmed as you're forced to stand two behind them in the excruciatingly long self-checkout queue. What could make it worse? Your basket of cheese strings, garlic bread and chocolate.

2 You're sat next to them at a restaurant. You're finally getting round to trying that Cowley restaurant which you were recommended months ago. As your waiter seats you in a small alcove at the back of the room, you look up to find that your former situationship is sat at the next table over, directly in your line of sight. Oh, and did we mention that you're both on a date?

3 You've been set up on a blind date. What could be worse than an accidental double date? Why, a blind date with that person who ghosted you last term. That's the last time you'll let your friends set you up. At least they're your type?

4 You've been assigned as tute partners. We all know that college-cest is a no-go, but the dangers of course-cest can't be overstated. You're now forced to debate the importance of morality with your first-year hookup and an eighty-year-old professor. Good luck with the rest of this term's tutorials. You'll need it.

5 You're neighbours. We know your friends have told you this already and you've chosen to ignore them, but this is your final warning not to go out with anyone in your flat, house, corridor or staircase. Not only will you be forced to make awkward small talk every day for the rest of the year, but you'll soon be investing in some good-quality earplugs.

6 You've nearly hit them with your bike. You're racing up the High Street, already 10 minutes late for your lecture, when someone steps out into the road ahead. You make panicked eye contact with your Hilary situationship as you swerve out of the way, a screech of rubber on tarmac. Maybe next time they'll remember to look both ways.

Outside OX1: Oxford's other neighbourhoods

Reuben Meadows shares all there is to know about Cowley, Jericho and more

It is often said that Oxford consists of just three streets: High Street, Cornmarket Street, and Broad Street. The first is the city's beating highway, host to the Exam Schools and cafés like JCT (arguably of equal importance). Down Cornmarket, look out for the guy belting any number of musical hits. This street contains the right amount of random town shops (see Greggs, Pret, McDonald's) to make it seem like any other city centre, until an Oxford puffer saying "yah, my summer in Rome was just like the Aeneid" slaps you in the face. Broad Street – well, that's the place Emma Watson almost ran me over in her car.

But beyond these iconic streets, what other spaces does Oxford have to offer its students? We often talk about this city as being tiny – at least the zillionth Londoner you've befriended does – but when we begin to look beyond the walls of its sandy-stoned colleges, there is so much more to it than the Rad Cam and Christ Church Meadows.

Take Cowley. This sprawling neighbourhood east of the Cherwell is perhaps best understood through the following distinction.

Shallow Cowley – the stomping ground of fiercely proud Hilda's students – requires knowledge of three main roads. St Clement's is what most people know as 'that street

taken to watch the fireworks in South Parks every year, which produces enough congestion to rival queues into a Taylor Swift concert. If I can tempt you to move beyond an annual visit, it contains Oxford's best Greek food (The Greek Takeaway). The second is Cowley Road. It contains Oxford's best café (Peloton's banana bread is to die for) and leads to the city's best pubs (redacted to avoid overcrowding). Our Tesco's may not have a tescalator, but the opportunity to bump into fellow Cowley-dwellers fills my heart with joy. Apparently, Jacob Elordi has tutes on Iffley Road – ask Emerald Fennell. There's the Sport Centre too, if you know anything about deadlifts and protein powder. Cowley is a lifestyle, so expect its OX4 residents to strangely defend it til their last breath.

Next is Deep Cowley. Officially known as Temple Cowley, the most financially savvy students flock here for Lidl, with many a bargain to be found. On the long journey out here, you may even

stumble across Oxford's illusive third Spoons! The Oxfam superstore is around the corner for all you Depop-trawling, Y2K-chasing fashionistas (although I applaud your sustainable choice, intentional or otherwise).

New Hinksey. Venturing on past the city's forgettable third Tesco, over Folly Bridge and a barrage of Hertford

accommodation you arrive in Hinksey. Most come here for the park that hosts Hinksey's lake. A green and blue oasis, its grassy banks fill with the easy laughter of students during Trinity's hottest days. While there are rumours that nefarious substances circulate (amongst students and through the waters), a Hinksey swim

"... bursting the bubble of OX1 centrism is the best cure for a city that soon becomes so unbelievably dull."

is an iconic Oxford activity that is worth ticking off your bucket list. Go on. Take the plunge!

Headington. It comes in three varieties: Hill, New, and Quarry (I bet you didn't know that, why would you?). Really only seen by most university students through the window of the Oxtube or the ambulance to A&E, it's an integral part of the city, yet rarely discussed. I've got nothing against Brookes – just the steep hill you have to climb to get there. No. Just no.

Head past the station and you enter Botley. While most arrive at this side of town only to zoom away via train, that would be, well, understandable. A nice suburb, its use has so far been limited to a chaotic trip to Curry's PC World to replace a laptop that was actually broken (although my

tutor thinks this happens to me a lot). There's a Waitrose, too. Someone once told me its mature cheddar is the cheapest in the city.

Summertown. Could this be Oxford's Hampstead? You may aspire to live here, but you'll never find a job that pays well enough in the city to do so. Still desperate for its leafy, red-brick charm? Then consider yourself signed up for 20 years of consultant hell in the big city, where answering important questions with simply more meaningless questions will furnish you with enough money to move in. For now, it makes for a wonderful stroll.

Lastly, there's Jericho – the jewel of the city! Come for a picnic in Port Meadow, a sunny break in Wellington Square, or a bite to eat in one of its many fantastic restaurants. And I really do mean a bite. I can't afford much more. Stretching Jericho's geographical limits, it includes the delights of Little Clarendon Street. And if you ever need to submit a Right to Work form – the University Offices. Although God knows any wage you'd get paid wouldn't be enough to live there.

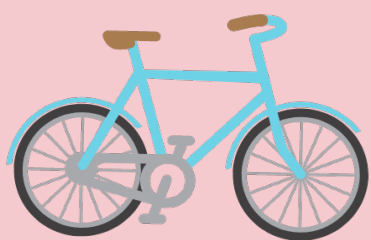
And that completes my Oxford round-up. Inevitably caught up in tired recommendations, cynicism and just the right amount of appreciation for this dynamic city, I can only hope this has spurred some interest in going beyond the confines of the High Street. Some friends take convincing just to go to the Rad Cam, but bursting the bubble of OX1 centrism is the best cure for a city that soon becomes so unbelievably dull.

Image Credit: Roger Davies/ CC BY-SA 2.0 via Geograph



Dear Cherwell, am I a danger to the public?

Dear aunty, all my friends criticise me for cycling too dangerously. Am I really a freak on the streets?



Dearest distressed two-wheeler, I'm sorry to hear your 'friends' are giving you a tough time – those closest to us can be our greatest critics. But cycling at break-neck speed to lectures? Well, that's completely understandable. Just consider the fact you're spending £27,750 on your degree. That's

£150 per lecture for your average humanities student (and not just the ones you show up for). Who would want to waste that money by being late? Maybe consider new friends who are as frugally minded.

Alternatively, perhaps they have a fair point. Cycling can be dangerous. Especially for Oxford students: smart but not intelligent. They're just looking out for you, don't take their concern for criticism. Too often we conceive of genuine care as an attack, when if we take a minute to think why such things are being said, they usually make sense. Take cycling through a red light at a pedestrian crossing, for example. The chance of hitting someone is high. Perhaps your friends want to spend more time with you than would be available with the sentence you'd get for second degree manslaughter. It doesn't take radical thinking to realise that leaving the house 5 minutes

earlier means you don't have to turn the High Street into a German Autobahn.

Now for some serious advice. Avoid chasing e-bikers. The reckless Deliveroo's will get beeped at faster than a chicken korma takes to cool down. And let's face it, if you're worried about criticism, being honked at is going to cause irreparable emotional damage. Go slow. After all, cycling more slowly will help you avoid road hazards. A nasty pothole, a broken bottle. And if a shard of glass pops your bike puncture cherry... That sucks. It often hurts the first time. Carry protection. It's just a puncture repair kit.

Now I know what you're thinking. Roundabouts can be challenging. To stop you darting across Broad Street's pseudo traffic circle at risk of collision, remember a simple rule. GIVE WAY TO THE RIGHT. But if you're on Cowley roundabout, well,

it's everyone for themselves – just don't get hit. If you're still craving chaos, ride a Pennyfarthing – you're bound to get into trouble. Either by losing control in a nasty road accident or being bullied for your Victorian cosplay. So maybe the switch wouldn't do you any good.

Cycling in Oxford is almost a blood sport, with some more traditional students keen ever since New Labour outlawed fox hunting in 2002. But try wearing a helmet, protect that noggin of yours – it got you in here (unless you had a face-to-face interview, in which case maybe it was your dashing good looks). Use bike lights. Keep your hands on the handlebars. Naturally, this advice will fall on deaf ears. Mainly because you're blasting Taylor in your AirPods as you cycle (I knew you were trouble). But cave to the criticism. Your friends want to see you survive Trinity.

Got a problem? Need some advice?

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

Tackling the Trinity terrors

Ted Holbrook

Trinity Term marks the final term of the year, the term where the sun is (sometimes) shining, you can finally enjoy the joys of Port Meadow, and the long-awaited four-month summer is on the horizon. Whilst Trinity is often crowned the best term of the year, it is also the term when most students feel bound to the shackles of the Bod.

I am grateful to be able to say that, as a second-year geographer, I will not be experiencing the 'Trinity terrors' this year, but I am highly aware that Trinity presents a constant dilemma: soaking up the rays or battling the stresses of revision. This inevitable tension is particularly drawn out for those with exams in 8th or 9th week, with many forced to make the tough decision of whether to attend the the typical end-of-year entz. The image of sitting in Exam Schools the following week remains in the back of their heads as they sip their third Pimm's of the evening, wondering whether or not reading that one paper could have been the difference between an academic flop and a groundbreaking essay.

Fight your fears away? Unfortunately, I don't think the Trinity terrors are something anyone can choose to ignore. It's a matter of finding a way to maintain the balance between focus and fun. Whether they choose to admit it or not, everyone experiences the

anxieties of the exam season in some shape or form.

So what can you do to maintain a balance between fear and fun? While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, for every milestone in your revision, you have to attempt to recognise your progress. Whether this is delving into that extra sweet treat that you definitely budgeted for after a library session, enjoying an hour in the sun, or making the most of your sport commitments, the way I approached Trinity last year was rewarding the little wins. You'll appreciate this a little bit more if, in the future, you are able to sit in your scholar's gown (although that tailored piece of fabric does not define you) whilst knowing in your head that you did it without

“Whether they choose to admit it or not, everyone experiences the anxieties of the exam season in some shape or form.”

going MIA to everyone in your life.

This balance is also nicely complemented by – without wanting to sound like your school headteacher – a more rigid working schedule. Find friends who maintain a similar working pattern to you and work together. Committing

some hours to the SSL together is worth it if it means you can then enjoy an evening of sun (and perhaps sangria).

Celebrate these personal wins, but recognise the wins of others too. In the height of exam anxiety, it is very easy to maintain tunnel vision and forget that other people are in a similar boat. Find the friends that motivate you, but that also allow you to maintain a personality that is more than 'I have exams in two weeks.' I know this can be easier said than done. Oxford (and university as a whole) can be a pretty lonely place at times, so if that means you spend more time alone, celebrate your little or large wins with the people who matter to you, even from afar.

Most importantly, the Trinity terrors are only temporary. Before you know it, you will be able to have (more) freedom as the sum-

mer approaches and life will appear a lot less academically stressful.

Whilst this 'finding the balance' lecture might appear to be core to the typical working attitude of an Oxford undergraduate, it doesn't come as easy as you might think. Preserving your mental health is the most important exam preparation you can do, so, where possible, make time for what, who or where you love during Trinity. Your time at Oxford is incredibly finite, so treasure everything it can give you. From the experience of myself and others, it is possible to satisfy that craving for academic validation and stellar results without physically locking yourself into one of those dingy, claustrophobic study pods in the SSL for hours on end.

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Soul stew: a column

Georgia Short discusses life with an eating disorder and her experiences with self-care

CW: Eating Disorders

You are on stage at a beauty pageant and Harvey Keitel has just asked you what your aspiration in life is. That's a great question. You weren't expecting that question. You decide that your aspiration in life is to be happy. You go home and put on your raw-hem denim shorts and smash up your trophy wall.

I'm a little ashamed to admit it, but when I decided to go home and recover from my eating disorder, this is pretty much how I imagined it would be. I didn't buy the shorts, but I did buy an eco-friendly viscose fibre skirt with gigantic pockets from Lucy & Yak. I wanted to be functional, following the precedent of various other people on Instagram who had also decided to be functional and live life and paint pottery and engage in joyful movement (I love painting pottery and it was a nice skirt, to be clear). They seemed to have dedicated themselves to being happy.

Life with an eating disorder was, for me, unequivocally bland,

flat and sad, so life without one would just be the opposite of those things. Maybe getting there was going to be a slog, but happiness itself, the achievement of it, would be as definitive as switching on the lights, as stepping into a new skirt. Or taking holy orders, honestly. It was very solemn and sensible.

Ultimately, happiness didn't look that much fun.

This probably sounds like it's turning self-care into self-flagellation (in classic eating disorder style). It did, however, prompt me to reconsider my definition of happiness altogether: especially happiness after what was, realistically, a traumatic event. A great deal of recovery is merely about being sensible, again and again, against the wishes of your scatty nightmare brain that just wants to rank tins of supermarket own-brand baked beans against each other for the remainder of its existence.

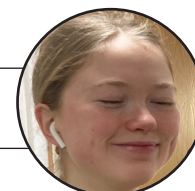
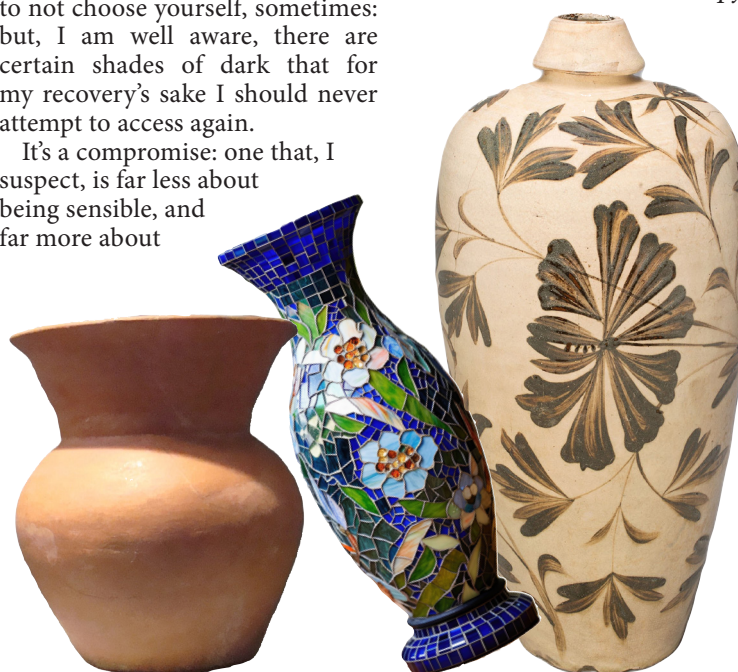
My stamina for being sensible is not infinite. There are circumstances in which the

disordered option can seem almost beguilingly naughty and subversive: a taste (ha!) of blissful irresponsibility. A full – and yes, a happy – life comprises both light and dark, including the freedom to not choose yourself, sometimes: but, I am well aware, there are certain shades of dark that for my recovery's sake I should never attempt to access again.

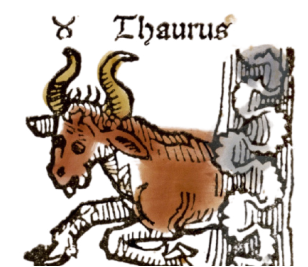
It's a compromise: one that, I suspect, is far less about being sensible, and far more about

being happy.

Image credits (left to right): 1. Yavidaxiu / CC BY 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. 2. Ralph / CC BY 4.0 via Pixexid. 3. Public Domain via Pxhere



This is YOUR season. Unleash the inner beast, go barefoot in the quad and reconnect with nature.



Big things are coming your way, but good things come in small packages. Do with this information what you will.



Boil the kettle and sip some tea; this Trinity is not the time for your yapping. Peace for both you and everybody else.



Roses are red, violets are blue, a little birdy has told me that they like you too.



Top floor of Bridge is calling your name – be there or be square.



Grab some loose acquaintances and a few crackers, get on a punt and see where the river takes you. This term is for shenanigans, the library can wait.

♎ Libra



No point telling them how you feel, just write that Oxfess. Trust.

♏ Scorpius



The library is calling your name. THIS is your y/n moment.

♐ Sagittarius



You are being ghosted and look like a clown. This is your polite reminder that Halloween is in October.

♑ Capricornus



Treat yourself to a sweet treat, because you're our favourite sweet treat. Yum scrum.

♒ Aquarius



Make sure you are picking up what they are putting down. You are not Sisyphus, don't let it roll down the hill.

♓ Pisces



DO IT. I dare you. (Cherwell is not liable for any subsequent chaos you may cause.)

A day in the life of an Oxford influencer

Christina Kurian

It's 2 am. I rub my eyes and stare at the glowing screen of my laptop. Just one more video, the little voice in my brain pipes up. Just one can't hurt. I pick up my phone and continue scrolling through Instagram, the movement of my fingers almost autonomous from my head and its incessant thoughts about the essay I have due tomorrow morning. Something catches my attention – the sights on this video seem familiar. Maybe I'll watch it to the end.

The familiar dome of the Rad Cam towers in the distance as words appear: 'A day in the life of an Oxford student'. The next fifteen seconds are a whirlwind of aesthetically pleasing snapshots – studying in a beautiful library, indulging in a latte at Pret, dressing up for formal dinner. I sigh and return to my essay.

As the name might suggest, we watch influencers to be 'influenced'. We want to know about their lives, what products they're using, any hacks they swear by – all in the hopes that our lives might become as fascinating as theirs. Influencers are usually so far removed from my existence that I'm perfectly happy to think about them receiving hauls of luxury skincare I can't afford, or

making complicated salads that I'm not even going to attempt. What I hadn't thought about was an influencer walking down Broad Street. On the one hand, the close lived experience makes one feel seen. Suddenly the influencers aren't so far away, and everything they have isn't so unattainable. After all, they could be sitting five metres away from you in the Taylorian. Yet, though they might be close physically, sometimes watching these videos makes me feel worlds away from the lives they live.

In one sense, it's almost sad. Often these videos present a rose-tinted, glitzed-up picture of Oxford that I believed in before I actually arrived here and was handed my first reading list. In some ways, it's like a wake-

“Often these videos present a rose-tinted, glitzed-up picture of Oxford...”

up call: come on! You really do live in this city of stunning Gothic architecture, of dreaming spires. There are cafes to lounge in, cobblestone streets to be trod, formals to beg for tickets for on Oxtickets, etc.

However, I can't help but feel a profound sense of disconnect. The thought echoes through my head – but this isn't my life. It isn't real life. Where is the half-alive, half-dead reality I live, almost drowning in a reading list one week and then spending the next in a blur of Solomon's and the college bar? Where are the videos of people crying in the library at two in the morning because they used the vac to doom-scroll and forgot all about collections? Or rants about the stress of having to shove everything into one vac storage shared across the whole floor, the cupboard stuffed so tight the door barely closes? Sometimes studying isn't aesthetic the way that social media makes it out to be. Sometimes it's gritty and draining, and you feel like reading one more article just isn't physically possible.

But the (for want of a better word) messiness of Oxford life isn't really represented in these videos.

Is it something about this university which inspires the need for perfection? It's certainly a world-class institution, overflowing with intelligence and creativity at the highest level. So many inspiring people have studied here – from Malala to Hugh Grant – and we walk in their footsteps every day. Yet, for all of Oxford's splendour

and (dare I say, archaic) traditions, we can't ignore the reality that it is home to normal students with normal student problems. And those problems are made all the worse by Oxford's special features: its eight

“Sometimes studying isn't aesthetic the way that social media makes it out to be.”

week terms, move-everything-out vac policy, and overall academic intensity are just some of the elements that make studying here both academically stimulating and challenging.

We can all take different approaches to these influencer videos. We could seethe in jealousy whilst settling in for another long library session. We could feel warmly about being represented on social media. Personally, I think they're inspiring – I want to have my life so put-together. I wish I had the pre-planning abilities and energy to stay so calm and composed throughout the term. But at the same time, I can't help wishing for a few essay crisis videos.



Cherpser 1



Cherpser 2



Cherwell sent two lucky readers on a blind date. Find out how it went – from both perspectives...

I'm not a coffee fan at all, so there was inevitable trepidation about meeting at the Missing Bean, but the loose leaf earl grey jar sitting behind the baristas eased those nerves immediately. My date entered the cafe slightly late, which worked well, because my biggest fear was that she would be sat waiting and I wouldn't recognise the 'long sleeve light blue top' Cherwell's Cupid described. My disdain for coffee was luckily not seen as an affront to her personally, and the teapot used was not as garish or imposing as those used at Society Cafe, a grave mistake on a previous date.

Conversation flowed well and, other than feeling like we were talking on travelators moving in opposite directions whenever I had to shift over a postcode to let someone into or out of another table, it was really engaging and the time seemed to go quickly.

I had ticked 'enjoys deep chats' as something I would appreciate on a date and our conversations of whether you'd 'kill someone about to unintentionally squash you to save yourself', neatly followed by a discussion on the early 'Oxbridge pleasantries' seemed to meet this requirement. I hadn't ticked any boxes on the list of who I wouldn't date – a decision questioned by many of my friends: "what if they're a rower?!" – but it was a wise decision in the end, as what my date lacked in degree selection acumen was certainly made up for with a smiley and bubbly personality.

The leaves in the dregs of my earl grey didn't tell of another date, and whether it's the recent alignment of the Sun, Earth, and Moon, or the misalignment of our exam timetables, I did see it as a much more platonic connection.

We met at the Missing Bean and given that punctuality is very much not my strong suit, I was a bit late. That, and also the fact that two of my friends insisted on going to the Missing Bean beforehand because they 'spontaneously' felt like a coffee and wanted to catch a glimpse of my date first meant I intentionally delayed my arrival.

I was grateful that my date forgave my tardiness. We quickly got to chatting and covered everything from how best to break into college balls (purely theoretical, of course) and quite ridiculous philosophy thought experiments (my humanities degree is clearly more practical than his STEM one).

The only awkward moment was when another two of my friends from college, who didn't know I was on a blind date, walked into the Missing

Bean, too.

They froze and made eye contact with me, but instead of getting a takeaway coffee, sat down for twenty minutes. We collectively panicked and pretended not to know each other. So, apologies for accidentally bringing four of my friends on this date with me! I had a really nice time, but think it was more of a friendly vibe.



Looking for love?

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

Ramadan: Fast or feast?

Khadija Khalid

Take a deep breath in, and hold. Hold it for as long as you are able to (without passing out), and then, once your lungs are pleading for air, only then, should you exhale. And that - that relief you feel once you are able to breathe again - that's exactly how I feel once the month of Ramadan arrives.

Ramadan cannot be defined simply as a month of abstaining from food from sunrise until sunset - in fact, this is a major misconception. Yes, fasting is a key component of Ramadan, but it is the combination of fasting, prayer, remembrance of God, charity, and being mindful of one's actions, that allow Muslims to purify their hearts and nourish their relationship with Islam.

During Ramadan, there's something more in the air, something special, rather uplifting and promising. There is no time where the community comes together more than it does in Ramadan, and this is largely facil-

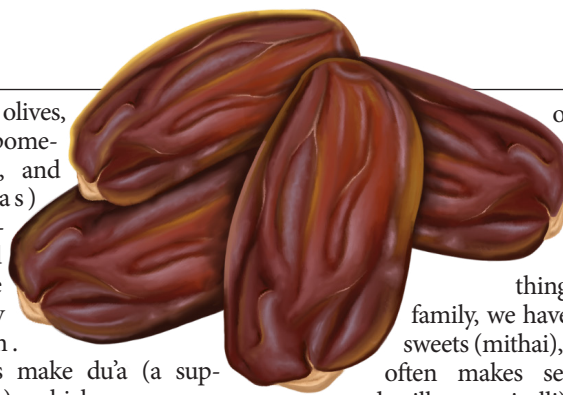
itated by the encouragement of generosity and kindness. I live in a very Muslim-populated community; every year, during Ramadan, if I step out onto my street, I can immediately tell that it is nearly time to open the fast - simply because of the smell of biryani or frying samosas. Maintaining good relationships with your neighbours is encouraged in general in Islam, but Ramadan captures the essence of a sense of community, which is why it is especially common to share food with others during this month. My mum will send her favourite child (me) out to deliver foil-wrapped trays of food to the neighbours. There is absolutely nothing more terrifying than the thought of dropping a plate of rice on the pavement, and having to walk shamefully back home and see the look on her face as I admit the cost of my clumsiness.

Whether at home, in a Masjid, or anywhere else one may be, it is from the sunnah (traditions and practices) of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, to open one's fast with dates and water; dates are one of the fruits (alongside

grapes, olives, figs, pomegranates, and bananas) mentioned in the holy Qur'an.

Muslims make du'a (a supplication), which serves as a reminder that Ramadan should not be a time for feasting and overeating, rather a time for contemplation and gratitude for the blessings we have in our lives - especially the smaller blessings that we often overlook, like access to clean water.

The end of Ramadan is marked by Eid Ul Fitr - otherwise known as the Sweet Eid, or the festival of breaking the fast. A day of celebration and thankfulness, Eid is another favourite time of year for practically everyone celebrating. In my family, we head to the Eid prayer in the local park, and spend the rest of the day greeting family and friends, exchanging gifts and food. Each culture enjoys their



own 'traditional' food on Eid, but it is generally common to eat something sweet. In my

family, we have South Asian sweets (mithai), and my mum often makes seviyan (sweet and milky vermicelli). The Moroccan biscuits that my sister-in-law's mother hand-makes and sends for us each Eid are a personal favourite.

Whilst food plays a major role in Ramadan and Eid, I think it is what accompanies the food that makes everything a little sweeter; from the recipes I've learnt from my mum whilst helping her prepare Iftaar, to how food brings the community together - creating new memories and sharing significant cultural food. But ultimately, it is vital to remember that to enjoy the food is a blessing in itself - Ramadan allows for a reflection of how food is something not to be taken for granted, and Eid allows us to celebrate and appreciate this blessing.

Balancing Act

George Exley brings you another lesson in healthy eating...

Our grocery choices

are often shaped by affordability, sacrificing quality and nutritional balance in the pursuit of lower bills. The typical UK diet features vast quantities of highly processed foods that are refined to remove fibre and nutrients from grains and other sources.

Supplements have become increasingly popular, ranging from greens powders to capsules. While they can be a useful tool to account for specific deficiencies, much of the recommended daily intake (RDI) of vitamins and minerals can be achieved naturally in your diet. It is also noteworthy that select breakfast cereals, plant milks, and spreads are already fortified with vitamin D along with riboflavin, niacin, B6, folic acid, pantothenic acid, iron, and calcium.

While your instinctive reaction may be to reach for a banana when you want a health kick, smart swaps can be made to achieve a more balanced intake of vitamins and minerals. Various scoring systems known collectively as 'nutrient profiles' have been introduced over the years to illustrate this point, in their most basic form providing the beginnings of front-of-pack labelling that was introduced to the UK in 2007. Other more complex systems, such as the Aggregate Nutrient Density Index (ANDI), employ a scale from 1-1000 based on a breakdown of its contents per calorie, with some

'superfoods' such as kale, watercress, and turnips holding a perfect 1000 rating, while others such as grapes score only 31. These scores should generally be taken with a pinch of salt. Just because your favourite foods do not appear high up on these lists does not mean they should be cut from your diet; they may have other benefits such as high fibre. We can, however, see patterns begin to emerge, with leafy greens and berries consistently topping the charts.

Vitamins and minerals have a cumulative effect and interact with one another in ways that can be used to predict markers of disease. For instance, the dietary sodium/potassium ratio has been shown in certain studies to be a better indicator of cardiovascular disease risk than studying levels of either mineral alone. Ultimately, the goal of nutrient profiles is to inform consumers about the composition of their diet, and identify nutrient-rich, affordable foods that benefit our wider public health.



Vegan Ragu

Sick of having pesto pasta everyday? Try this vegan take on a versatile classic...

Pour 800ml boiling water over 30g dried porcini mushrooms, and set them aside for 10 mins. Finely chop an onion, two carrots and two celery sticks. Pour 1½ tbsp olive oil into a large pan and gently cook the onion, carrots and celery with a pinch of salt for 10 mins until soft. Remove the porcini and roughly chop. Set aside.

Add four cloves of garlic and some sprigs of thyme. Cook for 1 min, then stir in 1 tbsp tomato purée and cook for 1 min. Pour in 100ml red wine. Cook until reduced, then add 250g dried green lentils, mushroom stock and two 400g cans of plum tomatoes. Bring to the boil, then reduce and simmer.

Meanwhile, heat a large frying pan. Add the 1½ tbsp oil, then tip in 500g portobello mushrooms. Fry until the water has evaporated and the mushrooms are golden. Pour in 1 tsp soy sauce and stir, then add the mushrooms to the lentil pan. Stir in 1 tsp yeast extract. Cook over a medium heat for 30-45 mins, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are cooked. Remove the thyme and season



Recipe credit: BBC Good Food

A guide to Gloucester Green

Amanda Li

No city is complete without a fresh food market. Oxford's is the area next to Gloucester Green bus station, hosting the Gloucester Green Market Wednesdays through Saturdays. Students flock to it during the day for a fun outing, food and a browse through the vintage clothing stalls or jewellery booths. Gloucester Green's food stalls offer cuisines from all over the world. You'll be sure to see something new every week, all selling a good meal for less than £10. I have personally spent too much of my time (and arguably, my money as well) at the food stalls when I'm sick of cooking and don't want to eat in hall. So, for the uninitiated, here is my beginner's guide to Gloucester Green. I'll take you through some of my favorite stalls, based on cuisine, plus my produce guide.

The classic GG meal is the £6 dumplings from the Gyoza Oxford stand. They have both a vegetarian and chicken option, as well as baos, chicken skewers, tofu and fried chicken. They have everything you could crave, plus some specials that make every day different. As a Hong Konger, I was excited to see a few stands selling traditional street food like egg waffles, as well as fried rice and chow mein. I always get salted fish, chicken and egg fried rice, and am happy to have a place to get rice noodles from. Growing up with Korean food, the selection of Korean corn dogs and street snacks, as well as kimbap and bibimbap, was comforting.

If you're a big fan of Thai food, there's a few pad thai stalls and others selling Thai curry. I personally recommend the green curry, and tofu pad thai is my go to order. For Nepali food, Momo King's stand was where I

had my first momo. Besides its amazing Too Good To Go bag with veggie and meat momo, they also make some great rice dishes.

There is also many a place for Middle Eastern food, with places to get shawarma and wraps galore. The Syrian place is especially delicious, and the deals at many of the stalls rival those of Najar's. One of the two Persian stands always has the ingredients out so you can watch the person making your food; I love the saffron Persian chicken wrap. I also am a big fan of the other Persian stand's spicy vegetable stew. Though it may seem like they're all selling the same wrap, each marinates the insides differently and uses different ingredients, which make each wrap taste totally different.

Though there's less European representation in the market than Asian, what they do have is amazing. Every Wednesday, when I go to GG for my produce, I pass by a stall with French tarts and quiches and am constantly tempted to take a slice home. Though there's no French food stall, there is one with Italian street food and pasta - and the arancini is good! The smell of barbecuing meat that emanates from the Greek gyro stall is almost as mouth-watering as the wraps themselves. One of my Hungarian friends loves the Hungarian stall, and I adore the goulash.

GG has a few baked goods stands. One sells freshly baked bread and pastries, and there's one dedicated solely to brownies - they're absolutely

delicious. There's also a cookie stand, and their chocolate chip cookie goes well with a coffee from the little blue coffee truck. They have lots of unique flavors; there was pumpkin spice and apple cider in the autumn, and more seasonal ones for spring. The boba stall on Thursdays has some great flavors and a decent price to boot.

Wednesday is market day, and you can find so many deals on fresh produce here. There are two stalls by the White Rabbit, with heaps of produce in baskets and boxes. Bring your own tote bag, because there's minimal packaging. A basket of six avocados is typically £2, two boxes of raspberries are £2.50, and I once bought a bowl of 13 bananas for £1. They also have vegetables like broccolini, carrots, and pak choi for similar, if not cheaper, prices than the supermarkets. If you wanted to try some new recipes and foods but didn't want to commit to a large portion, GG is your place! The two stalls also have herbs; I once bought a bag of six garlic heads for £1. The fishmonger sells fresh fish on ice, often fileted, and it's around the same price as the often sold-out fish at Tesco and Sainsbury's.

Outside of the food, there's so much to see at Gloucester Green. It makes for a great day out or date, and gives you a chance to try cuisines you may not have tried yet. Go on Wednesday or Thursday for fewer people, but there's more variety on Saturdays. Happy market day!



There's no 'I' in team... or is there?

Zoe Williams

The high-octane, champagne-fuelled world of Formula 1 draws in tens of millions of viewers every year, and rightly so. The combination of ultra-high-speed racing and split-second decision making ensures it is one of the most exciting sports available today. But when I first became invested in the sport, what intrigued me most was the team structure – how could F1 possibly function as a team sport when there is only ever one winner?

Each driver's biggest competitor will always be their teammate. The playing field between them is levelled as they are driving the same car and not only are they competing to keep their seat in future seasons, but if one driver can establish their dominance over their teammate, then they will take priority for strategy and team orders where applicable. This fight is intensified even further in middle-of-the-pack teams because the drivers are more easily replaceable, and both scoring points and proving oneself is much harder. There is also less guarantee for finding a seat elsewhere if a driver does lose their position in a team. Quite often in these teams there is also competition with the young talent in the form of reserve

drivers – most notably in Singapore 2023 where Liam Lawson provided Alpha Tauri's (now RB) highest finish of the season on his Formula 1 debut.

Whilst teams often encourage healthy competition between their drivers, rivalries can quickly become detrimental for the team, as was the case for Alpine in 2023. Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly have never been the best of friends, but Alpine had hoped that they would overcome



this for the sake of an all-French line-up. However, crashes between the two drivers resulted in double DNF's for the team in both Australia and Hungary. Failing to score points in this way is unforgivable as every position lost in the Constructors' Championship represents a loss of \$9 million in prize money at the end of

the season.

In stark contrast to this, perhaps the greatest example of teamwork in recent F1 history was in Abu Dhabi in 2021. Sergio Perez's refusal to allow Hamilton the easy overtake resulted in Perez starting ahead of Verstappen and led to him winning the Grand Prix. To directly ignore team orders in this manner is extremely uncommon. Not only would the switch benefit Perez without any negative consequences for Verstappen, but the extra points would also be crucial to the team in securing their position in the Constructors' Championship. Whilst we can never be sure if Verstappen's reasons really were related to Monaco and revenge, his actions nonetheless raised a worrying question for the team: not only because there was evident tension between their drivers, but also because they had little guarantee that team orders would be respected by either driver going forward.

There are also plenty of cases where team orders can be at the significant expense of one driver. In Australia earlier this year, a bad crash in Free Practice resulted in Alex Albon damaging the chassis of his car. In order to save money, Williams don't have a spare chassis on hand, meaning they would only have one car competing for the rest of the weekend. Given that Albon is the more experienced

driver and therefore considered to be more likely to score points, it was decided that he would drive his teammate Sargent's car for the remainder of the weekend. The move was widely supported by pundits as it was seen to be 'for the good of the team', but when Albon failed to pick up any points, it left many fans resenting the Williams leadership for prioritising Albon so significantly, especially when he was responsible for the lack of a second car anyway. Many teams do have designated first and second drivers based on performance and experience, but this can lead to despondent drivers if they feel they aren't being recognised. Arguably most famously, after a severe crash caused a double DNF in Azerbaijan in 2018, relationships between the then Red Bull drivers reached breaking point as Ricciardo refused to be a second driver to Verstappen. This resulted in him leaving the Red Bull team, arguably to the detriment of his career.

With at least twelve drivers out of contract at the end of this season, it is likely that several driver line-ups will change, resulting in new rookies, new rivalries and new challenges for drivers and strategists alike. It is evident that team dynamics will continue to play a crucial role in the politics of F1, and I, for one, am looking forward to sitting back and watching it all unfold.

Image Credit: Jen Ross/CC BY 2.0 DEED via Wikimedia Commons

Can Everton avoid relegation?

Max Barnes

Last week's Premier League fixtures added to the drama at the bottom of the table, providing more twists and turns for fans to endure. Luton Town managed to pick up their first win since January, beating an in-form Bournemouth side 2-1 thanks to a late Carlton Morris goal. Fellow strugglers Everton went into a home game vs Burnley having not won any of their previous 13 games in the league (6D 7L). The pressure was on, and it certainly showed. The Toffees ended up winning the game 1-0 through a bizarre goal from Dominic Calvert Lewin. This lifted Everton to 15th in the table, ahead of Brentford and Nottingham Forest. The former managed to pick up a valuable point away at Villa Park in a 3-3 thriller, whilst the latter lost 3-1 against Tottenham.

However, the biggest surprise would occur on Monday afternoon, when the Premier League announced that Everton were to be deducted a further two points for breaching profit and sustainability rules a second time. The Blues have now been docked a staggering eight points, leaving them just two points above relegation. This is the first season where teams are being punished for breaking rules set back in 2013. The rules state that a team could only register a maximum loss of £105 million over three seasons, though the Premier League have waived losses incurred during the pandemic.

Everton, however, had been hand-

ed a ten point deduction for precisely such losses, later reduced to six on appeal by the Premier League for the seasons 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. Monday's two-point deduction was due to losses of £16.6 million in the 22/23 season.

Both occasions have sparked outrage, not only from Everton fans, but from fans around the country, who claim that the Premier League are not being fair in their actions, and that they lack integrity when it comes to dealing with other clubs over financial matters. The Premier League has been quick to hand out punishments to 'small' clubs like Everton and Nottingham Forest when it comes to breaking PSR rules, but seem to stretch out and delay punishment towards clubs like Manchester City, which have a possible 115 FFP charges looming over their head. Moreover, the Premier League have tried to dock Everton a ludicrous 17 points in total for their financial misdemeanours this season. This has fallen to eight points due to the club's co-operation with the league, overlapping the financial impact of the Ukraine war.

The final point concerns Alisher Burkhanovich Usmanov, who was labelled a 'pro-Kremlin oligarch' and sanctioned in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Everton have received up to £415 million in investment from Usmanov's companies since 2016, when Farhad Moshiri, Everton's main shareholder, took control of the club. This has had a negative financial impact for Everton, who are now finding it hard to finance the

club's new stadium, Bramley Moore Dock, which the Toffees are set to move into in the 2025/26 season.

The eight point deduction represents the most severe points deduction the Premier League have handed out in its 32-year history. Everton have become the first side to receive two separate point deductions in topflight history. To put this into perspective, a club would be deducted nine points if they went into administration, something that Everton could find themselves were they to be relegated this season. This has understandably angered many fans, who believe that the level of punishment far exceeds the severity of the rules broken by both Everton and Nottingham Forest.

The Blues now sit two points above the relegation zone, with vital games coming up versus fellow relegation battlers Luton, Sheffield United, Brentford, and Nottingham Forest. It would be some achievement if Sean Dyche's Blues can survive the drop, but the implications of the PSR rules may not end here. Financial experts believe that Everton will have to sell their top players in order to balance the books and avoid further punishment from the Premier League. So, it's increasingly apparent that the punishment that the Premier League lays out is ineffective: their own guidelines perpetuate the financial situation clubs find themselves in. The Premier League have recently explored scrapping points deductions next season, which is highly convenient for the likes of Manchester City.



Image Credit: Zoe Williams

Results Round-up

This week, we bring you results from sports around Oxford from last term

Netball (League) – Women's

Hertford 8 - 3 St John's
Keble 11 - 10 Oriol
New 25 - 8 St John's

Pembroke 11 - 5 St Hugh's
Keble 18 - 4 St John's
Keble 17 - 10 St Hugh's

Netball (League) – Mixed

St Anne's 6 - 6 Jesus
Oriol 15 - 8 Jesus
Worcester 10 - 3 Magdalen

Merton 3 - 10 Lincoln
St John's 12 - 8 St Peter's
Trinity 2 - 8 St Hilda's

Football (Cuppers) – Men's

Balliol 4 - 1 St Hilda's
Keble 4 - 1 Worcester
St Hugh's 2 - 3 Christ Church

St Anne's 3 - 4 SEH
Balliol 2 - 6 Keble
Christ Church 1 - 2 SEH

FINAL: Keble 2 - 1 SEH

Badminton (League) – Men's

Mansfield/Merton 6 - 0 Oriol
Pembroke 2 - 4 Keble
M/M 1 - 5 Pembroke

Trinity 1 - 5 St Anne's/Wolfson
M/M 3 - 3 Trinity
M/M 2 - 4 A/W

Who next for the headship?

How to be the next Chancellor

Despite the common misunderstanding that the Chancellor must have graduated from the University anyone may stand in the forthcoming election. Prospective candidates must then gather 50 nominations from members of Convocation. The arcane body is for the first time made up of all graduates, rather than just those who have received an MA after 7 years. The nominations must be delivered to the University at the latest 17 days before the election. They must be accompanied by a letter of acceptance from the individual standing. An election is expected in March. It must be held during term time and takes two days. One of the days must be a Saturday.

Palin "too busy to run"

continued from page one
Oxford University Student Union said that OUSU would favour candidates who declared their opposition to student fees. He called for "all candidates for Chancellor to be...". Students looking for a less traditional appointment gave their support to a variety of candidates. Louis Theroux, Michael Palin and Jeffrey Archer were all suggested. However, the latter's imprisonment makes it unlikely that he will be able to run. Michael Palin's recent dam-

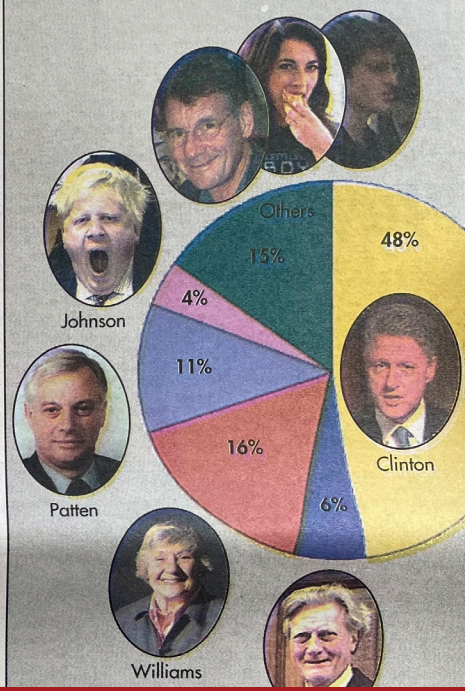
Reform mooted

Torsten Henricson-Bell

Pressure is mounting for a review of the conditions of the post of Chancellor as the election of the next university figurehead approaches. Criticism has focused on the "for life" nature of the job. There have also been calls for changes to the method of election which at present only allows graduates who can be in Oxford in person to select the Chancellor. Dr Diana Walford, Principal of Mansfield College, said she "saw merit in a fixed term." She went on to outline a system of 7 year terms with the possibility of renewal. Fraser Campbell, the current Union President, supported the Principal's suggestions. He pointed to a need "to encourage younger candidates" who may be put off by the commitment for life required at present. Support for such a change has not been universal. Adam Turnbull, JCR president of Balliol, the college of the last two chancellors, condemned moves to a fixed term system. He said it risked "making it a give away post". Possible alternatives can be seen in operation around the country. At St Andrews in Scotland a Rector is elected to a fixed term by the university's undergraduates. Dave Roberts, a St Andrews' student, praised the system, "It allows students to decide who represents them to the world". The PPE society's President, Hinesh Rajani "recognised the benefits of allowing undergraduates to vote" but pointed to a reduction in "the profile of the figures" likely to be chosen under a student ballot. Dr Walford argued that a term of

The Cherwell Poll

Who should be the next Chancellor?



Much has been made in recent weeks about the upcoming nominations and election of Oxford's next chancellor, and the controversy around the new rules for who can be nominated.

This week, therefore, I bring you a poll *Cherwell* ran in 2003 at the time of the last chancellorship, in which almost half of readers polled believed the chancellorship should pass to Bill Clinton. The eventual winner, Lord Patten, languished in third place, also behind Shirley Williams, former Labour, SDP, and Liberal Democrat MP. Neither Clinton or Williams ended up running.

Eagle eyed readers might also spot another familiar face who was part of the *Cherwell* poll in 2003.

Boris Johnson, who has also been mentioned in the run up to 2024's chancellorship elections, wrote an impassioned Telegraph column about why (were he not an MP) he would be the perfect man for the role. Do look it up, it is a rather entertaining read, and a reminder of how he charmed his way to the top job of Prime Minister in 2019.

His 'manifesto' is quintessential

Johnson: "My friends, brother and sister Oxonians, graduates, spawn and effluvium of the great university, I do not putatively seek this job for the sake of gold braid and lace trimmings and silver tankards of port." One cannot help but wonder what an updated manifesto for 2024 would look like.

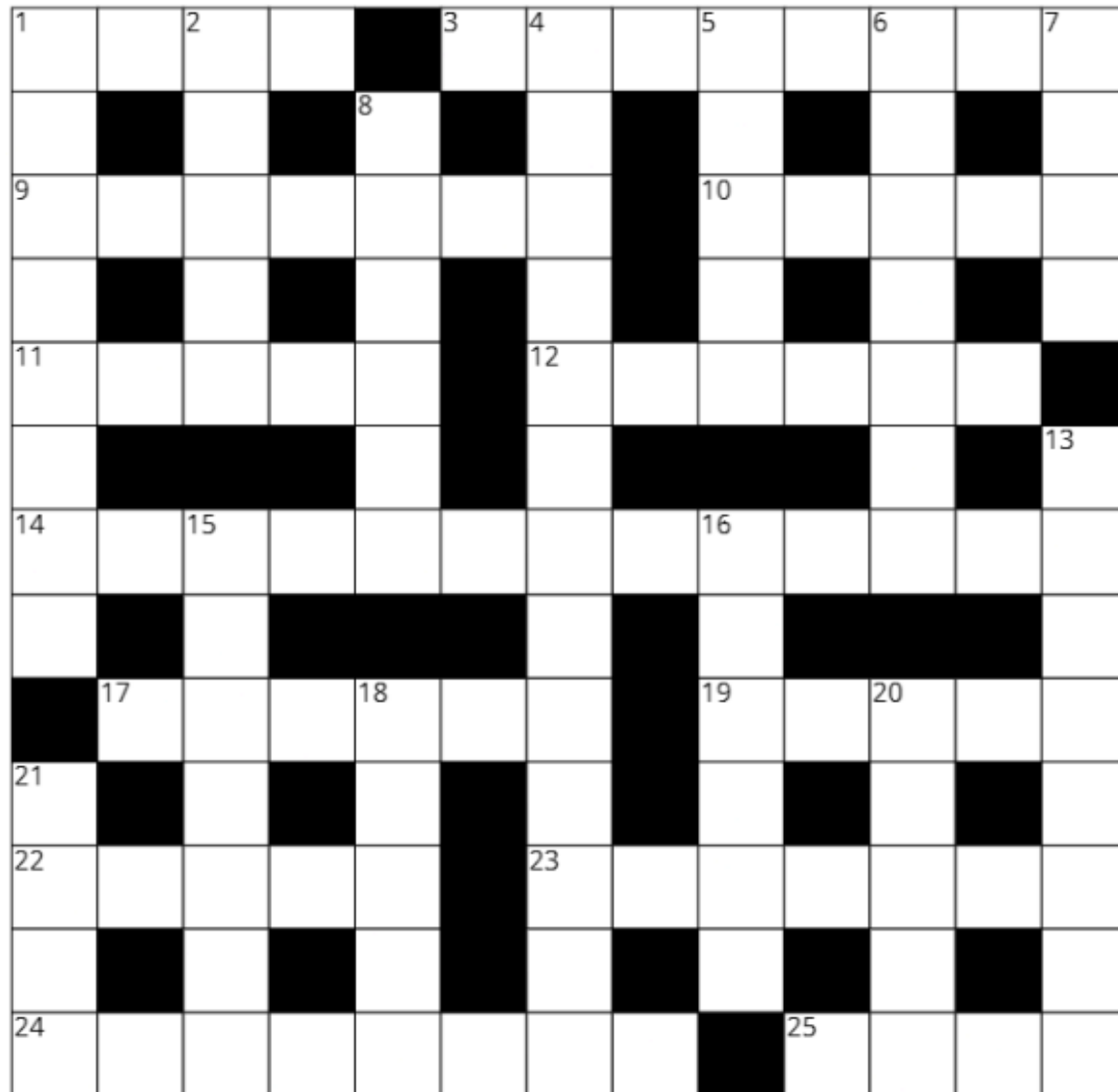
Also interesting is a part that is unfortunately cropped from the photo displayed here. The Oxford University Student Union president at the time, Will Straw (son of Jack Straw, who was a cabinet minister under Blair at the time), told *Cherwell* that "The Student Union will favour candidates that declare their opposition to top-up fees".

Possibly a depressing reminder of an era when it only cost £1,050 a year to attend University, it will be interesting to see what conditions and 'declarations' are made in relation to candidates' nominations this time around.

Little is known about who the University's Chancellor will be in Michaelmas. This time, however, the most recent ex-president of the United States will be as far away from the list as possible, thankfully.

Brought to you from the **Cherwell** archives by Adam Saxon

Cryptic Crossword by Miranda Devine



- DOWN**
- Caught 40 winks in a Russian short-length bed (8)
 - Diminish BA in Architecture, Technology, and Engineering (5)
 - Portion has Cestius knocked out - how to bring back to life? (13)
 - Strikebreakers are blisters! (5)
 - In a single attempt I go around North or North East chiefs (2,3,2)
 - First man is a mad drunk (4)
 - Lake monster discovered by last of marines, by Scotland that is (6)
 - Entente with Malaysia overturned for a building (8)
 - Concern about badger leads to slaughter (7)
 - Weird tastes in Union members

Sudoku by Anonymous

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

- (6)
18. Passage suggested by AI seems like extremism at first (5)
20. Headlice taking out foremost hacks, elocutors, librarian, and chamber at Union - bye-bye! (5)
21. Sacks of silver had by Brasenose and Saltburn (4)
- Didcot (5)
12. Study extreme maths, for example? Here's a method! (6)
14. Terrible tension after Tech-Ed goes wrong and can't be changed (6,2,5)
17. Fleet has gun with a defence army to begin with (6)
19. Lower in crab as entertainment (5)
22. Accumulate from a communion (5)
23. Cutting top off pine and crooked ilex leads to state of banishment (2,5)
24. Start of play derived from element in St Cat's Expressionist Extravaganza (5,3)
25. Have a go in a flat-bottomed boat (4)
- ACROSS**
- At a distance from a backtracking armed service (4)
 - Garden herb I'd arrange initially for a woman (8)
 - Concerning a backwards communist, studying first in the Bod, perhaps (7)
 - Behold! In a laugh is a greeting (5)
 - Poppy, for example, looks around