

Cherwell

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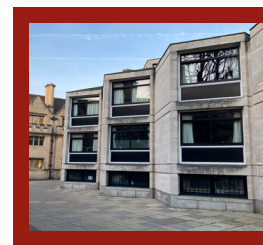
SATURDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2025

5TH WEEK, HILARY



Oxford dancers reclaim the spotlight with Varsity win

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In defence of Oxford's ugliest architecture

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Oriel College exhibition to 'contextualise' legacy of Rhodes

By NOAH ROBSON

Oriel College have announced the launch of an exhibition aiming “to contextualise the legacy of Cecil Rhodes,” the 19th century British imperialist whose statue above the College has been subject to numerous controversies in the past. The exhibition will involve a sculpture competition in partnership with a Zimbabwean community art project.

Rhodes has long been a controversial figure for his instrumental role in the British colonisation of Africa, which involved violent conquest, exploitative labour practices, and policies of racial segregation. A former Oriel student, Rhodes was also the founder of the eponymous Rhodes Scholarship scheme, which funds international postgraduate students at the University of Oxford.

Multiple protests demanding the removal of his statue have occurred since 2015, when the #RhodesMustFall movement began, with further demonstrations taking place following the murder of George Floyd in 2020. A commission set up by the College ultimately recommended removing the statue, but Oriel decided not to, citing

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Lord Hague sworn in as Oxford's 160th Chancellor



The Congregation admitted Lord William Hague as Oxford University's 160th Chancellor today, in a traditional ceremony held at the Sheldonian Theatre.

Surrounded by a procession of high-ranking University officials including Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey, Hague walked from the Clarendon Building into the Old Bodleian Quad, through the Divinity School and out toward the Sheldonian.

Attendees first sang the national anthem, and Tracey opened the Convocation for the purpose of admitting the Chancellor.

In a ceremony filled with both grandeur and humour, Hague was handed various objects of importance, including the University's statutes, keys (which he shook dramatically), and seals, before

By SELINA CHEN and DAVID HAYS

he finally pledged “do fidem” (I swear to his oath and donned an ornate gold-embroidered gown. The ceremony was accompanied by trumpet and organ fanfare, as well as songs performed by the choir of Magdalen College, Hague's alma mater.

Yet Latin and pomp-aside, both the orator and Hague peppered their English speeches with light-hearted quips. The orator questioned Hague on his Latin skills, and poked fun at his attribution of his First in final exams to “last-minute cramming”.

The orator said: “If I may use academic terminology, the great Creator himself took a sabbatical – the first, indeed, after a busy week 1 of his term. (Our cosmolo-

gists are still, I think, uncertain about how he spent 0th week.)”

Hague proved his Latin skills by expressing his gratitude in said language, before deciding it was time to “indulge [himself] in the liberty of using the vernacular”. He celebrated the presence of the previous Chancellor, Lord Chris Patten (inaugurated in 2003), noting: “The last chancellor to relinquish the role in their lifetime, the 2nd Duke of Ormonde in 1715, fled the country immediately. I am very pleased that Chris has seen no need to do so.”

He also shared anecdotes of his two other predecessors. Harold Macmillan, at age ninety while Hague was in his twenties, told the young man “don't do too much, too soon”.

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SU suppressed The Oxford Student's editorial independence

By ILA BANERJI, EUAN ELLIOTT, and BRYN MOLLET

The Student Union (SU) has suppressed the editorial independence of *The Oxford Student* (*OxStu*) newspaper, in what a private letter from three former editors-in-chief called “overbearing censorship” when it tried to publish the SU's apology to a former president.

The paper is owned by the SU, which, despite publicly presenting the paper as independent, has used its position of ownership to prevent it from publishing an article that may damage the public image of the SU. Documents show an SU board member claiming the SU views *OxStu* as its ‘media piece’ and expects its support.

Tensions between the SU and *OxStu* came to the fore last year. On 28th October, the SU issued an apology to a former president and cleared him of the unfounded allegations that had led to his suspension. Immediately, *OxStu* then attempted to report on this

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Common rooms and LGBTQ+ Society condemn Oxford events with 'gender critical' speakers

By ÉILIS MATHUR and ARINA MAKARINA

CW: Transphobia

Oxford University is facing backlash for a string of events featuring “gender-critical” speakers, including journalist Helen Joyce and Professor Michael Biggs. Oxford University LGBTQ+ Society (OULGBTQ+ Society) alongside several college common rooms have issued statements against this, condemning “the University repeatedly elevating anti-trans campaigners without meaningful opposition, in contradiction to its own equality policies”.

Department of Sociology

On 10th February, Biggs was hosted as part of the Department of Sociology's seminar series to mark LGBTQ+ History Month. An Associate Professor of Sociology and Fellow

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Much ado about funding: Financing Oxford's student drama

Pressure to secure funding weighs heavily in the minds of producers in Oxford student theatre. A huge variety of shows are performed by the production companies under the umbrella of the Oxford University Drama Society (OUDS), with the help of many different sources. The Cameron Mackintosh Drama Fund (CMDf), JCRs and MCRs, college arts societies, and OUDS all contribute financially to ensure that the shows will go on, but respondents to a survey on funding

characterised it as ‘moderately low’ and difficult to access.

From reminding students when theatre bids are due, to hosting workshops to help first time producers, both OUDS and the CMDf are working to ensure that student theatre at Oxford remains exciting and varied. Furthermore, the level of funding available allows for multiple production companies, rather than a single drama society, meaning greater autonomy and innovation in performances.

The budget of a production would

primarily impact the play chosen and the technical design. The cost of rights mean that, for contemporary theatre particularly, many plays are not feasible due to the cost of licensing them, or require significant adjustments elsewhere in the budget. This often comes from the technical and design aspect. The main visual difference between a show with a smaller budget, and one with a higher one, is in its cohesion.

However, for both the audience and the actors, non-monetary factors were

By LILLY LAW

the most important in how much they enjoyed a production. For the audience surveyed, while watching amazing feats of technical expertise was exciting, they valued the skill of the actors and the quality of the script just as much, if not more. For the actors, a feeling of comfort may be partly ensured by the knowledge that the show could afford to make it to the stage, but equally important is the cohesion and organisation of the production crew.

Read the full story on pg. 8

Sowunmi, Wantoe, Brown, Pryce elected to SU as voter turnout falls by 65%

By BRYN MOLLET

Seun Sowunmi has been elected as Undergraduate Officer, Wantoe T. Wantoe as Postgraduate Officer, Alisa Brown as Welfare, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, and Shermar Pryce as Communities and Common Room Officer in the latest SU elections. In total, 1,471 people voted out of a total student population of over 26,000 students – compared to last year's turnout of 4,206 students, this year saw a 65% drop.

This is the first set of elections since the abolition of the position of president, under the new “flat” structure. It also follows the resignation of SU President Dr Addi Haran early last month, who cited “institutional malpractice” as the reason for her departure.

Pryce won 712 votes against Leo Buckley's 278 for Communities and Common Room Officer. Pryce's manifesto said he wished to re-introduce the role of President, reform Trustee Board appointments, and “prevent future erosion” of democratic structures. In his role as Communities and Common Room Officer, he has said he will address college disparities and give powers of society registration and funding to the SU instead of the University Proctors.

Three candidates ran for Welfare, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, making

it the most contested position in the election. Brown received a majority of the votes, with 645 compared to 235 for Honcques Lous and 147 for Grace Chalhoub. Brown's manifesto included a list of “12 changes in 12 months” which included promises such as meal vouchers for low-income students, ring-fenced funding for balls and formals, free sanitary products in every University building, and lobbying Blues committees for gender equality.

Sowunmi beat Henry Morris with 735 votes to 204 to become Undergraduate Officer. She ran on a platform of holding the SU accountable and improving its transparency. She promised to improve the SU website, the room booking system, create a guide to the University mental health services, and lobby the University to diversify the Counselling Service staff.

Wantoe ran uncontested for the position of Postgraduate Officer, gaining 735 votes, whilst there were 199 votes to re-open nominations. His manifesto focused on improving financial and mental health support for postgraduates, particularly international students.

Image Credits: Seun Sowunmi, Wantoe Wantoe, Michael-Akolade Ayodeji, and Shermar Pryce.



Exhibition celebrates sculptor of Sheldonian's 'Emperor's Heads'

By BEN O'BRIEN

The sculptor who carved the “Emperor's Heads” currently standing outside Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre, Michael Black, will be celebrated in a new exhibition at the Oxfordshire Museum this spring.

The exhibition, entitled “Michael Black: Chisel, Wood, Stone”, will include a full-size plaster ox – which was once carried over Oxford's Aristotle Bridge as part of the annual May Day celebrations – and an artichoke-shaped fountain which will sit in the museum's garden. Black's family have contributed three short archival films.

Most famously, he was appointed in 1970 to create replacements for the 17 Emperor's Heads that surrounded the perimeter of the Sheldonian Theatre, which had become weathered over the century during which they had been on display. His versions were first revealed in 1972 and have remained in place ever since.

When the Sheldonian was first constructed, William Byrd built the 13 original Heads commissioned between 1664 and 1669. Byrd's heads had to be replaced in 1868 due to

erosion. Black located seven of the originals, five of which were still in Oxford, and based his versions on them rather than the later substitutes.

Black was the son of a vicar and was born in 1928. He grew up in Dorset and began training as a carver during his undergraduate degree at St Catherine's College in the 1950s. He died in 2019.

His life's work also includes early commissions restoring gargoyles across Oxford; stonework at churches and colleges around the city and busts of the former British Prime Ministers Alec Douglas-Home and Harold Macmillan.

The Oxfordshire County Council representative Neil Fawcett said: “Michael Black was a talented sculptor who received notable public commissions, exhibited artwork at prestigious galleries, and restored the stonework of churches, colleges and other buildings across Oxford.”

“This exhibition is a rare opportunity to discover this important artist's legacy. Through loans and archival material from Black's family we are treated to an intimate insight into the artist's life.”

Oriel exhibition on Rhodes legacy

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“regulatory and financial challenges” at the time.

As part of the exhibition, a sculpture competition has been launched by the Oxford Zimbabwe Arts Partnership (OZAP), a grassroots organisation set up in response to the protests as a means of “constructive healing”. Richard Pantlin, the founder of OZAP, said the exhibition represented “an important step forward in creating a partnership that provides educational and cultural benefit”.

The competition, open to artists at the Chitungwiza Arts Centre (CAC) in Zimbabwe, will see a judging panel, chaired by Oriel Provost Lord Mendoza, decide a winner in early March. Other members of the panel include Zimbabwean artist Be Manzini and Norbert Shamuyarira, a sculptor from Chitungwiza.

Lord Mendoza described the exhibition as a way to “not only explore the nuances of the legacy of colonialism but ... also bring the art of the people of Zimbabwe to Oriel College, to the University of Oxford, and the UK”.

Chairman of the CAC Tendai Gwarazaava said the winning sculpture “should symbolise the strength and courage of our ancestors, who despite facing unimaginable hardships, continued to fight for their freedom and dignity”.

The exhibition and sculpture is set to open in September 2025 and will also be displayed at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, before visiting other institutions throughout 2026.

Image Credits: Andrew Shiva / CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons (front page), Subin Saji (right).



City Council rejects motion to publish air quality report, meeting disrupted by protests

By CHARLIE BAILEY

A motion for the publication of data about air quality in the proposed areas for the expansion of Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) was rejected by the Oxford City Council on Monday 27th January.

David Henwood, a councillor from the Oxford Independent Alliance, motioned for the City Council to publish a supplement to the 2023 Air Quality Annual Status report to decide whether the planned £5.2 million expansion of the ZEZ remains “objectively justified”. He argued that the report would provide greater public knowledge of nitrogen dioxide levels. The Council's climate policy previously faced scrutiny after it suspended a traffic filter trial, blaming the Botley Road closure.

Oxford has been a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide since 2010. It is the responsibility of local authorities to declare themselves an AQMA if they believe air quality standards will not be met by relevant deadlines.

Oxford's Zero Emission Zone was introduced in February 2022 by the County Council, covering central roads such as Cornmarket Street and Ship Street. Motorists driving petrol and diesel vehicles can incur charges varying from £2 to £10 if they enter the zone between 7am and 7pm. Its planned 2026 expansion would cover

a much larger area including parts of Jericho and streets near Worcester, Magdalen, and Merton colleges.

Members of the Independent Oxford Alliance, Oxford Independence Group, and Real Independents voted to support the motion. During the last local election, members of these independent groups campaigned to remove the ZEZ.

The motion was voted against by every Labour, Liberal Democrat, and Green councillor. Chris Snowden, Leader of the Liberal Democrat group on Oxford City Council expressed concern at the motion's attempt to question the ZEZ's expansion, describing it as an “attempted gotcha” which failed to acknowledge that cars emit harmful chemicals other than nitrogen dioxide, and that even if only a small level of nitrogen dioxide was found in the extended area, it would still be hazardous.

Protesters holding banners that read “Climate Policy Starts at Home”, “Think Global Act Local” and “There Is No Planet B” entered the public gallery as Henwood's motion was introduced. Josie Procter, who organised the protest, expressed concern with Henwood's motion saying: “a recent uptick in commentary from elected councillors... seems to ignore the very real current climate emergency, despite both city and county councils making climate emergency declarations as long ago as 2019.”

Since the full council meeting on 27th January, Oxford City Council have made public a Source Apportionment Study demonstrating which pollution sources in Oxford contribute most to air pollution levels. It aims to use data on both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter levels – emitted by petrol and diesel cars – to identify the necessary reduction in pollutant emissions to achieve the Council's target.

The data from across Oxford shows that road transport remains the largest contributor to air pollution, accounting for 32% of total NOx – a combination of nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide – emissions. The percentage of road transport emissions contributed by buses has decreased by 28% since the last Source Apportionment Report, due to the introduction of 159 electric buses in January 2025 under the ZEBRA scheme.

Annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels across Oxford decreased by 18% between 2021 and 2023, meaning they have stayed within the legal limit. According to a City Council press release, Oxford is currently in compliance with the UK's legal limit for nitrogen dioxide.

Cherwell have contacted Councillor David Henwood and Councillor Chris Jarvis for comment.

Image Credit: Tony Hisgett / CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.



Oxford extends paternity leave to 12 weeks

BY SHAHAR EYAL

The University of Oxford has announced an extended paternity and partner leave policy for its staff which took effect from 31st January 2025. It will allow eligible new fathers, and partners of new mothers, to take up to 12 weeks of fully paid leave, inclusive of the statutory two-week period. Employees who have recently had or adopted children and are still within the first year after birth or placement will be able to access the scheme proportionately.

The University has described the extension as a “progressive approach to supporting new parents”. The policy aims to provide greater flexibility for employees and aligns with broader efforts to enhance family-friendly workplace policies in higher education.

Under UK employment law, statutory paternity leave currently entitles eligible employees to two weeks of paid leave, with the option for shared parental leave. The government’s policy indicates that employees can choose to take either one or two consecutive weeks’ leave, and be paid either £184.03 a week or 90% of their average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. Oxford’s new policy extends this entitlement significantly and provides additional support to working parents within the University.

The introduction of the policy reflects a growing trend among universities, including LSE and UCL, to expand parental leave provisions. LSE now offers a four week paternity leave period, while UCL updated its paternity leave policy in April 2024 to offer employees up to 20 days. A similar policy was introduced by the University of Cambridge on 1st October 2024. Cambridge’s update was part of a broader set of reforms aimed at improving family leave provisions.

The move puts Oxford University amongst UK employers offering the highest length of parental leave. Oxford and Cambridge offer the longest paid paternity leave schemes compared to other Russell Group universities, which tend to offer the statutory two weeks’ leave only.

Christ Church receives surprise Lewis Carroll collection from US philanthropist

BY NOAH ROBSON

A private collection containing thousands of letters, photographs, books, and illustrations by the author Lewis Carroll has been donated to Christ Church by an American businessman and philanthropist. Jon A. Lindseth gifted the college the unique collection, which also includes a number of early editions of his *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* books, some of which have personal inscriptions to family and friends.

Carroll spent most of his life at Christ Church, mainly as an academic specialising in mathematics. This is also where he met Alice Liddell, the daughter of the Dean at the time, who became the inspiration for the *Alice in Wonderland* novels.

Lindseth has been an avid collector of Carroll, curating a number of exhibitions on his life works, as well as writing

for journals dedicated to him. Gabriel Sewell, the College Librarian at Christ Church, told *Cherwell* that Lindseth “got in touch by email last July offering Christ Church his Lewis Carroll collection.

“It is very rare to receive such a large collection as a donation. We think it is the largest donation Christ Church Library has received since the eighteenth century. Lindseth’s collection is thought to have been the largest collection in private hands so it would be very difficult to build such a large and varied collection from scratch.”

One first edition copy in the collection of *Alice’s Adventures Underground* has a note to Alice’s mother, reading: “To Her, whose children’s smiles fed the narrator’s fancy and were his rich reward: from the Author. Xmas 1886.” There are also multiple letters from Carroll, with “many written at Christ

Church in his distinctive purple ink,” according to Sewell.

In addition to numerous original writings, the donation came with over 100 photographs, with Carroll being an avid photographer as well as a writer, even going as far as to build a glass studio on the roof above his rooms at Christ Church. Images range from shots of Alice Liddell herself, to famed friends of Carroll’s, such as poet Alfred Lord Tennyson and painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

The collection is on show at an exhibition in Christ Church’s upper library until 17th April, with this marking the first time it has ever been displayed in the UK. Sewell told *Cherwell* that Christ Church is “planning future exhibitions ... and will consider lending material to exhibitions elsewhere, both in the UK and internationally”.

Image Credit: Noah Robson



Application to turn ATIK into live music venue

BY EKAM HOTHI

Plans are being put forward to turn the building which hosted the recently closed ATIK nightclub into a live music venue, restaurant, offices, and construct a roof terrace. The club was closed on 30th June 2024 by landlords, following the shutting down of 17 other nightclubs owned by Rekom UK across the country, the company which owns the ATIK and Pryzm brands.

ATIK laid claim to being one of the most popular nightclubs in Oxford, famous for hosting the Wednesday night ‘Park End’ event. Kiss Bar, located next to ATIK in the same building, Cantay House, permanently closed down just months after in December of the same year. It had existed on the site for 23 years.

The application for this work is being made by Elwood Fund Management, a real estate fund management company, who have been preparing the plans since summer of last year. Elwood held a public consultation with local residents and councillors in September, saying the proposals were “a rare and exciting opportunity to bring life back into an underused but important building in an under-performing part of Oxford City Centre.” The plans were officially submitted to Oxford City Council on

the 28th January.

Planners are also considering the possibility of building a restaurant on the ground floor, office space on the upper floors, and a roof terrace at the rear of the building. A new staircase would be installed, and part of the back of the building would be demolished.

The nightclub closed because of a disagreement with the landlord of Cantay House, who originally planned to redevelop it solely into offices. Rekom had previously 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.”

Several issues were addressed in the community consultation, which aimed to allay the concerns of local residents concerning the plans. These included the sound insulation of the venue, space for independent merchants, and the protection of the nearby Yellow Submarine Cafe.

The potential future of ATIK is just one of the many hopes for regeneration of the west side of Oxford city centre. Other proposed plans include Nuffield College’s development of buildings on Hythe Bridge Street, Park End Street, and Worcester Street.

Image Credit: Subin Saji



NEWS SHORTS

Ice rink closed due to ammonia alarm

The fire service were called to Oxford ice rink on the morning of 17th February after an ammonia alarm was triggered by a faulty washer. Bookings were cancelled until its re-opening at 4:30pm. The fire service carried out checks and confirmed there were no issues with air quality.

Jeremy Clarkson forced to wait hours at a lorry park

After leaving filming for *Clarkson’s Farm* in Oxfordshire, Clarkson waited “bloody hours” at the Sevington Inland Border Facility in Ashford for his paperwork to be signed. In his column for *The Sunday Times*, Clarkson mentioned that the park was “full of trucks from every conceivable European country” and that he got on so well with a driver from Belarus that he “gave me a hat”.

Exeter College to hold Women in STEM event

Exeter has announced an upcoming event in Trinity Term which will feature panel discussions, talks, poster sessions, a networking reception, an outreach initiative, and an Ask a Scientist corner.

CROSS CAMPUS

Harvestable mushroom found Bristol accommodation mould

Amongst a multitude of mould-related horror stories, one student from the University of Bristol reported sightings of a “harvestable mushroom” that began growing on the ceiling of his room. This was one of many tales of woe collected by *Epigram*, one of Bristol’s student publications. Others featured leaking ceilings and decaying walls, and all faced minimal co-operation from landlords.

Cambridge Hockey Club curry carnage

Following a social event involving “unacceptable behaviour,” the Cambridge University Hockey Club was ordered to have a “long chat” with the owner of Curry King. As a result, the club was required to pay £300 in damages. Criminal charges were avoided on the condition that the team agreed to uphold the “basic standards” expected of them. They were told: “Last night’s behaviour was simply unacceptable”.

Annual ‘polar plunge’ at Yale

Last Saturday, over 70 ‘Yalies’ participated in the 15th annual Polar Plunge, a heralded tradition of Yale University. The students had to face record temperatures of one degree celsius, but were subsequently rewarded with coffee and Dunkin’ Donuts (more appropriately termed “Plungin’ Donuts” in this instance). One student even donned a polar bear outfit for the occasion.



Oxford ranks fifth for UK councils with longest social housing waiting times

By MAIR ANDREWS

People wait on average 5.2 years for social housing in Oxford, according to homelessness charity Crisis Skylight Oxford. Oxford City Council ranks fifth in the UK councils with the longest wait times, more than two years above the national average, with over 3,400 people on the waiting list.

In the UK, the average wait time for council housing is 2.9 years, with Greater London coming top with a 6.6-year average waiting time. The city council's allocation scheme for council housing is based on how much people need a new home, rather than how long they have been on the register. Crisis Skylight Oxford say that they have around 20 new people registering for support each week.

Oxford Council Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, Linda Smith, told *Cherwell*: "in recent years the cost of living, record private rent rises and the delay in delivering a 'no fault' eviction ban first promised in 2019 have fuelled a sharp rise in homelessness across the country.

"Oxford is no exception. Together with a longstanding affordability crisis, this means most people wait years for general needs council housing and there is no guarantee of a council home however long you spend on the list.

"We are doing what we can to ease Oxford's housing crisis. Since the relaxation of government borrowing

restrictions in 2018, we have built hundreds of new council homes. Our budget for 2025/26 includes funding for a further 1,600 council homes in the next eight years

"We know this won't be enough to meet needs but as the only council in Oxfordshire building new council homes, we know every single one can make a life-changing difference."

Kate Crocker, Director at Crisis Skylight Oxford, said: "No one should have to live without a secure roof over their heads. But this is the reality for so many in Oxford, exacerbated by the rising cost of living and lack of social housing in the area."

She stated that many families spend prolonged periods in unsuitable, temporary accommodation, and that children are being "robbed of their childhoods" by celebrating birthdays in inadequate living conditions. She called on government ministers to commit to increased funding for social housing.

Official statistics nationwide show that the number of people contacting their local council for support after being threatened with homelessness in the year 2023-24, reached 358,370 households, up 10% on the year before. On top of this, a record high of 123,100 people were living in temporary housing in 2024.

The data on waiting times was gathered in a Freedom of Information request sent to 387 UK councils by the Alan Boswell Group, unoccupied house insurance experts.

Image credit: Kenneth Wong.

Oxford study: Support for online content moderation over freedom of speech

By IONA MANDAL

A global study recently conducted by the University of Oxford and the Technical University of Munich (TUM) has shown that most people are in favour of imposing restrictions on negative social media content, such as threats of violence and discriminatory content.

Extensive research and surveys around the topic of regulation of social media and freedom of expression, have shown that 79% of respondents surveyed believe that online incitements to violence should be removed. A majority of US respondents also supported this but to a lesser extent, at 63%.

Only 17% of respondents believed that users should be allowed to post discriminatory content which specifically attacks groups of people. When asked to choose between an unregulated social media platform which prioritises freedom of speech, and one which is entirely devoid of hate speech

or misinformation, most were in favour of the latter.

On the question of where accountability should lie for creating safer spaces online, 39% of respondents in Brazil, Germany, and the UK believed that this responsibility should lie mainly with the platform operators. There were larger differences in survey responses in regard to support for government accountability for online spaces. For example, 37% of German and French respondents supported state-initiated approaches, but only 14% did in Slovakia.

In terms of sensitivity around abuse on social media, 59% of those surveyed believed that hate speech, disrespect, and discrimination online were unavoidable. However, a large majority also believed that these platforms can be utilised as spaces of healthy discussion, with only 20% of respondents stating that rudeness is a necessary part of conveying opinions online.

Read the rest online at [Cherwell.org](https://www.cherwell.org)

Researchers achieve breakthrough in quantum teleportation

By MAIR ANDREWS

Researchers at the University of Oxford have built a scalable quantum supercomputer capable of quantum teleportation – a huge milestone in quantum computing. They claim that it will allow the creation of "next-generation technology" to be distributed at an industry level.

The researchers hope that this technique of quantum teleportation could facilitate a future 'quantum internet' which would create an ultra-secure network for communications and computation. It has the possibility of massively improving artificial intelligence capabilities, optimising logistical and financial models, and improving drug discovery techniques.

The breakthrough comes from addressing the 'scalability problem' in quantum physics, which is the difficulty of constructing large, reliable quantum computers without excessive errors. A qubit is a unit of information, similar to a binary '0' or '1' in a regular computer, but it can be both simultaneously, known as 'superposition'. As more qubits are added, maintaining their stability and preventing interference becomes increasingly difficult, limiting practical applications.

The newly developed method links small quantum devices together which enables computations to be distributed across the network so there is no limit to the amount of processors that can be in the network and they take up less space.

Dougal Main, study lead from the Department of Physics, said that "previous demonstrations of quantum teleportation have focused on transferring quantum states between physically separated systems." This study, he continued, uses quantum teleportation to create interactions between these distant systems. "By carefully tailoring these interactions, we can perform logical quantum gates – the fundamental operations of quantum computing – between qubits housed in separate quantum computers."

The formation is based on molecules which only contain a small number of trapped-ion qubits each. These are linked through optical fibres and light (photons) rather than electrical signals to transmit data between them. The photonic links enable qubits in separate modules to be enabled and quantum logic to be performed across the models. This is, briefly, quantum teleportation.

"Our experiment demonstrates that network-distributed quantum information processing is feasible with current

technology," said Professor David Lucas, lead scientist at the UK Quantum Computing and Simulation Hub and principal investigator of the project's research team.

"Scaling up quantum computers remains a formidable technical challenge that will likely require new physics insights as well as intensive engineering effort over the coming years."

The researchers used Grover's search algorithm to demonstrate the effectiveness of this method. The technique searches for a certain item in a large and unstructured database much faster than a regular computer can. This is achieved using quantum phenomena of superposition and entanglement to explore many possibilities in parallel. Its successful demonstration shows how a distributed approach can extend quantum capabilities beyond the limits of a singular device, facilitating the development of scalable, high-performance quantum computers. The new quantum computers will be powerful enough to run calculations in hours that today's supercomputers would take many years to solve.

The findings were published in the journal *Nature*, in a study entitled 'Distributed quantum computing across an optical network link'.

Several common rooms, LGBTQ+ Soc condemn Oxford events with 'gender-critical' speakers

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at St Cross College, Biggs discussed his article arguing that the 2021 Census of England and Wales overestimated the number of trans people due to "the census question confus[ing] a substantial number of respondents".

In 2018, Biggs was found by *The Oxford Student* to be posting anti-trans propaganda online under the persona 'Henry Wimbush'. Currently, he is an advisor for SEGM who aim "to promote safe, compassionate, ethical, and evidence-informed healthcare for children, adolescents, and young adults with gender dysphoria." SEGM has been labelled as an "anti-trans" society by different organisations and individuals and in 2023, the Southern Poverty Law Centre added it to its list of anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups.

College JCRs have issued notices condemning the Department of Sociology's decision to host Biggs and calling for the event to be cancelled. Merton College JCR released a statement saying: "We believe that Professor Michael Biggs has proven himself an inappropriate speaker for an LGBTQ+ History Month event, for such an event would allow him to spread misinformation to a wider audience."

St Catherine's College also passed a statement condemning the decision "to host an active transphobe" and called on

the Department of Sociology "to not provide a platform to life-threatening rhetoric that infringes upon not only the University's own official policy, but also The Gender Recognition Act and The Equality Act".

Jasper Hopkins, an LGBTQ+ representative of the College, further expressed concern over Biggs' opinions, posted online under the persona 'Henry Wimbush', that "letting trans people transition and access medical care is actually an act of control 'disguised as diversity'." Hopkins told *Cherwell*: "Whilst I recognise and respect his advocating for academic debate, this hesitation around 'diversity' is concerning coming from the Department of Sociology's Disability Lead."

In response, OULGBTQ+ Society described the University's decision to host Biggs as "wildly inappropriate". The society is hosting a panel to mark LGBTQ+ History Month, encouraging students to boycott Biggs' talk in favour of attending the panel. This event aims to "counterbalance the negative impact of [Biggs] talk" by providing a "positive opportunity for trans and non-binary academics to share their research with a wider audience".

Balliol College Philosophy Society

Balliol College's Philosophy Society's event with Helen Joyce provoked a similar reaction among the student population.

The talk, entitled 'Everything you always wanted to know about Sex (and Gender)* but were afraid to ask' [sic], took place on Thursday 13th February, involve discussion of questions surrounding transgender activism raised in Joyce's book *Trans: When Ideology meets Reality*, which was shortlisted for the 2023 John Maddox Prize.

Before the talk, activists handed out leaflets containing Helen Joyce's previous quotes and called each one false. Roughly five minutes into the talk, over ten transgender rights activists staged a walkout. One of the activists left a banner saying "sex-based concerns" are the thin end of the fascist wedge". Joyce called the protestors "kids" and said that "they are quite transphobic; they didn't try hard enough [to disrupt the talk]".

During the talk, Joyce elaborated on her views and referred to transgender activism as a "rights destroying belief" and trans activists as "rights destroying people". She claimed that "transition is objectively bad", as it allows "men" to intrude in women's spaces and compete in women's sports. Joyce voiced her concerns that early transitions encourage "children [to be] sterilised".

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

Image Credit: Daniel Stick.





Lord William Hague sworn in as 160th Chancellor at Sheldonian ceremony

Continued from Page 1

Hague had thought the advice useless, until at age 36 he was elected leader of the Conservative Party and realised “how very shrewd that advice had been”. Roy Jenkins, on the other hand, told Hague to ignore publishers’ word limits when writing a book – and so Hague did.

Remarking on the progress Oxford has seen since his matriculation, Hague commended the diversity in gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. According to him, as a result, Oxford has seen significant breakthroughs and turned more outward-looking. “We are positively delighted with the idea of a railway to Cambridge. You can’t get more open-minded than that,” Hague said to peels of laughter from the crowd.

At the same time, Oxford is an institution that honours tradition, with a rich history entwined with today’s ceremony. Hague noted that the first document requiring the appointment of a Chancellor is older than *Magna Carta*. He said: “The reason we speak Latin today even though we all understand English, and hand over keys

even though we no longer know which doors they open, along with a magnificent seal even though we could perfectly well send an email, is that we recognise we are the beneficiaries of the labours of centuries, and we are acknowledging that our labours must be equal to passing on to future generations this priceless inheritance.”

Hague identified four areas of what progress means for Oxford. First, it is in the UK’s national interest that Oxford is at the very forefront of scientific and technological breakthroughs. Second, the acceleration of change means an ever-growing need for humanities such as ethics to guide our path.

Third, freedom of speech is of paramount importance: “We cannot prepare for the turbulent decades to come by shielding ourselves from inconvenient arguments, wrapping ourselves in comfort blankets of cancellation, or suppressing minority views because they conflict with the beguiling certainty of a majority. I strongly welcome the decision by ministers to revive most of the provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act.”

Finally he warned against the “darker side” of the digital age and urged stu-

dents to “not stare into smartphones”. Despite the challenges posed in these four areas, Hague said he maintains confidence in the University’s strength due to its pluralistic structure with 43 colleges and halls: “We will make mistakes, but we will never all make the same mistake at the same time.”

The new Chancellor concluded in his address: “I will do well to follow the example of my most recent predecessors in upholding the idea of a great, liberal university built on ancient traditions but at the cutting edge of modernity, opening brilliant minds with the power of debate, inquiry and reason. I will celebrate and articulate your achievements, urge you on when you have doubts and help protect you when your freedoms are under threat.

“I look forward, more than anything I have ever done, to representing and championing one of the greatest institutions in the world, the University of Oxford.”

After the ceremony, the Chancellor’s procession walked down Parks Road until Keble College, tipping their hats along the way.

Image Credit: R&I Communications for Oxford University

INVESTIGATIONS

Oxford Student Union suppressed OxStu’s editorial independence

Continued from Page 1

apology but received pushback from the SU.

Emails between SU Trustee Board members viewed by *Cherwell*, reveal that the SU had tried to suppress certain information in the *OxStu*’s publication of the SU public apology. In response to the initial draft article, an SU board member wrote in a 30th October email asking *OxStu* to remove a line.

The email said: “You are not to publish the article in its current form. Failure to comply with this request will constitute a breach of the [Memorandum of Understanding] and will leave the Board with no choice but to suspend access to [*OxStu*] website and remove the planned print edition scheduled for release tomorrow.” Other board members expressed their support for this in emails sent later that day.

“I definitely felt an existential anxiety about the paper’s future at the time, especially since its relationship with the SU had broken down over issues of editorial independence.”

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a non-legally binding document, outlines the relationship between the SU and *OxStu*. It states that “the *OxStu* and SU are committed to ensuring freedom of speech and freedom of the press are upheld in all circumstances”, and that the *OxStu* should not be treated as the SU’s “newsletter”. The *OxStu* website claims that their constitution “grants [them] full editorial independ-

ence from the SU.”

However, sections in the MoU from Trinity Term 2024 appear to contradict this claim to independence. The agreement imposes limits on what the newspaper is able to publish when content may bring the SU into disrepute, stating: “personal and employment issues related to elected representatives shall not be printed, at the discretion of the Oxford SU” (section 3.i) and that “individual members of staff employed by Oxford SU are working under the instruction of the Oxford SU Trustee Board and CEO and should not normally be named, including role titles” (3.j).

The SU cited its legal responsibility for the *OxStu* as rationale for blocking publication of the article; however, the SU’s media lawyer later “conclud[ed] that they are not publishing libel” according to a 30th October email from the then-SU president.

The SU told *Cherwell*: “This was not a matter of libel law. This line was removed in accordance with matters of confidentiality and employment law. As you will appreciate, no employer should approve the publication of confidential, private information relating to either its employees or former employees to any newspaper.”

In the UK, there is an exception to the common law duty to protect confidential information when there is public interest in its disclosure. An independent paper is normally able to report on confidential information when doing so is in the public interest. Editorial independence means that a publisher or financier cannot stop the publication of articles even if they are of reputational damage to them (provided that they are not libellous). The BBC, for example, is funded by the government and regularly publishes stories that reflect negatively on the government.

Following the pushback, three former editors-in-chief wrote a letter on 29th October expressing their concern over what they described as “the overbearing censorship” of the SU in their handling of the situation. The authors of this letter did not send it to *Cherwell*; it was instead obtained alongside the other emails.

The letter expressed concern that SU staff could be able to veto articles that depicted the SU in a negative light. In particular, it said that “despite the Ox-



Stu having a media lawyer to consult in cases like these, the editors-in-chief have been instead put under pressure to show [the CEO] articles before publication.” The authors of this letter have since resigned or discontinued their work with the *OxStu*.

In response to the letter, the SU developed the Media Oversight Committee “with the objective of evaluating and establishing a more sustainable, transparent framework for the working relationship between *OxStu* and the SU going forward...It took the feedback onboard, engaged with the student journalists’ concerns and held collaborative conversations regarding a review into the paper.”

One trustee wrote in an 30th October email: “In certain exceptional circumstances, *Oxford Student* is the only formal media piece of SU and needs to support SU accordingly.”

In the aftermath of the apology story, internal SU documents show the organisation’s concern over *OxStu*’s “reputa-

tional or financial risk” to the SU, as well as the “legal risk”, which was the reason conveyed to the editors. In various emails and meetings concerning the future of the *OxStu*, the SU discussed the possibility of withdrawing funding for the newspaper. In the minutes for a 31st October meeting, one board member “suggested that the *OxStu* might operate better outside SU governance, allowing them editorial independence.”

The above quotes reflect the views of the staff or board member who suggested it, not necessarily of the SU as a whole.

A former *OxStu* journalist told *Cherwell*: “I definitely felt an existential anxiety about the paper’s future at the time, especially since its relationship with the SU had broken down over issues of editorial independence. It also seemed possible that the SU was trying to force *OxStu* into complete independence – i.e. not receiving SU funding – if it didn’t get its way on certain important issues.”

The SU added in response: “Whilst we are not at liberty to disclose confidential discussions amongst the SU Board with third parties, it is widely known at the University that the SU Board is working to find solutions to protect the future of *OxStu* and its editorial independence, in response to feedback from employees and students of both the SU and *OxStu*.”

When contacted for comment, the current *OxStu* Editors-in-Chief noted that there have been several occasions – both before and since this event – in which *OxStu* has been able to publish articles that are “highly critical” of the SU, stating: “We have roundly critiqued, or reported on failings of, their structure, infighting, policies and scandals.”

Image credit: David Hays

Disclosure: Cherwell is owned by Oxford Student Publications Limited (OSPL), a student-run company. OSPL was set up to ensure the editorial independence of its publications from the University and the SU.

OPINION

Abolishing fees would be a middle class cash grab

OSCAR REYNOLDS

After the announcement of a modest increase in tuition fees last November, calls for their abolition were once again heard. But scrapping tuition fees would imperil the quality of British universities, do little to make university more affordable, and be socially unjust.

Economically, the British (excluding Scotland, given its different approach to tuition fees) student loan system is the best of both worlds. As the *Financial Times* journalist Martin Wolf has pointed out, European countries that primarily fund universities via taxation (such as France or Germany) tend to spend a smaller share of GDP on higher education than countries that rely on tuition fees (such as Canada, the US, or the UK). Given how British public services are faring (even as tax take is at a 70+ year high), a switch to state funded higher-education may result in universities receiving inadequate funding.

On the other hand, a system in which individuals borrow from the market saddles those who financially gain the least from university with the highest

debt, as they cannot pay it off. Without collateral, banks demand stringent conditions, for instance, American restrictions on discharging student loans in bankruptcy. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) estimates that (under the current, post 2023 system) students will repay on average 1.85% of their lifetime earnings, not an unreasonable amount. Only those who earn enough to pay do so. The recent increase in fees would only affect the estimated 65% of students who will earn enough to not have their debt written off. The British loan system is therefore a good compromise, avoiding the pitfalls of public funding but protecting students from the vicissitudes of market lending.

But more importantly, moving away from tuition fees would not be socially just either. Graduates earn more than non-graduates, so abolishing tuition fees would benefit a better-off group at the expense of everyone else. The IFS estimates that, at age 25, one in seven people do not have good GCSEs (grade C (or equivalent) or above). This group would receive virtually nothing from reducing tuition fees but would face the additional taxes and/or cuts to public services that would fund them. This points to a limitation in using university for social mobility: much is set by age 16, before higher education can make any difference. The IFS notes that "only 8% of young people who were not meeting expectations in reading, writing and maths at the end of primary school went on to achieve pass grades in GCSE English and maths". We would better tackle inequality by increasing funding to primary and secondary education, before irreversible disadvantages set in. Using tax revenue to reduce tuition fees instead of this would be a middle class cash grab.

The options for raising revenue to pay for

state-subsidised higher education look poor. It may be difficult to raise more taxes than in previous years, as the British tax system is notoriously complex compared to peers. Some have hoped that a wealth tax might solve the problem, but studies and commentary on a British annual wealth tax have been less than lukewarm and wealth taxes elsewhere have had a poor run. Britain was one of the hardest-hit countries in bond market convulsions at the start of this year, with the 10-year bond yield reaching its highest since 2008; the 2024 Autumn Budget forecast a debt servicing bill of £126 billion in 2025-26, more than the defence budget. Increasing public borrowing to fund tuition is not a realistic option (and borrowing to fund day-to-day spending is anyway unsustainable). Regardless of whether we believe the UK can realistically raise the funds, are there better ways to spend the additional budget than on abolishing a just and effective system? The rise in British child poverty, among other problems, might suggest so.

None of this implies that we should endorse an anti-intellectual populism which sees university education as profligate and unnecessary. We all benefit when everyone, no matter their background, has access to education and is able to put their talent to the best use possible. The modern world would not function if it was full of either graduates or non-graduates. More importantly, education and the pursuit of knowledge are things which we ought to promote and treasure: they make us human. But we must also be clear-eyed about who benefits financially from university education. Abolishing fees would bring little of the beauty of knowledge to those without good GCSEs. It would harm students, the taxpayer, and the goal of equality.

Letters to the Editor:

Readers of *Cherwell* respond to articles from recent weeks

My music doesn't break tradition. It is traditional.

MADAM – I read Selina Chen's article about Corpus Christi being hesitant with her performing at the Lunar New Year formal. It is absolutely devastating that the guzhang, thousands of years older than Oxford's founding, was deemed unacceptable at a formal intended to blend the new year traditions of Asian countries and those of Oxford.

Selina brought up a good point about what is deemed acceptable for hall as a whole versus on the high table. At Brasenose, high table is not served the same food as the rest of hall, which extends to "themed" cultural formals. Our Lunar New Year formal served an Asian-inspired menu to hall but not to high table. Our [JCR] diversity rep chose to leave high table in order to be served the themed menu, which others at the table were not able to do. I was on high table for a diversity formal where the high table was not even made aware of the theme, making for a very awkward dinner. Formals meant to teach us about and to celebrate the diversity of Oxford should not exempt those on high table who want to learn, nor allow them to cherry pick the level of inclusivity they see.

Amanda Li

PPE, Brasenose

'Expolwed!': The Oxford Union's lazy use of AI

MADAM – Lloyd Doré-Green's article regarding the Union's revealingly lazy employment of generative AI (almost as lazy as having a debate about cancel culture in the year of our lord 2025) raises a salient issue. Much of the machine learning technology now being cynically marketed as 'AI' at the behest of Silicon Valley suits is exceedingly useful for specific technical applications, as I'm sure many STEM students could explain far better than myself. Artificial Intelligence for text and image generation, however, is little more than a crutch that impedes our own human thought.

In Frank Herbert's *Dune*, humanity undertook a holy war against 'thinking machines' – called the Butlerian Jihad – on the basis that they undercut human intellectual capabilities, declaring "Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind". While a violent crusade is excessive, I think it is essential that we act on such a principle before we end up completely giving ourselves over to the computers and letting them do the thinking for us.

Michael Hughes

MSt Late Antique and Byzantine Studies, St Peter's

Our intellectual self-indulgence is killing social utility

MADAM – Rizina raises a compelling point in her writing. Oxford, despite its intellectual prestige, has a culture where academic pursuit is detached from social responsibility. Her argument is not an attack on intellectual curiosity but a challenge. Why do so many students, armed with immense privilege and resources, choose to stay in their silos? More importantly, what can be done about it?

This conversation deserves to go beyond individual responsibility. If universities claim to serve society, how are they structuring education to embed that? Oxford encourages intellectual rigour, but does it encourage real-world engagement? What if humanities students had greater institutional pathways to apply their expertise?

Then there's another question, why don't students care? Is it apathy or a system that trains them to think their contributions must be purely academic or monetary? If we accept Rizina's argument, the next step is asking how to bridge this gap.

We need to be thinking about solutions. What's next?

Anna Álvarez

DPhil Education, Wolfson

Got an opinion on this print's Opinion?
Submit a Letter to the Editor via:
comment@cherwell.org



Artwork by Selina Chen

Oxford has the right approach to animal testing

ARUN LEWIS

This newspaper recently conducted an investigation into animal experimentation performed at Oxford for medical and research purposes. Animal experimentation has long been a divisive issue, and the suffering it causes subjects is always regrettable. But important medical research relies on animal experimentation, and the importance of post-pandemic medical research has never been higher.

The University no longer uses animals in teaching, but their use continues in research. The vast majority of these – over 190,000 – are rats. Over nine years, the number of animals subjected to experiments has fallen by 30,000. In 2023, barely 1% of experiments resulted in fatal outcomes, with most of this burden again falling on mice. Anti-testing protesters and activists have never been shy about expressing themselves. As the investigation details, bombings in 2008 cost the University £14,000 and saw an extremist jailed for a decade, whilst the construction of the Biomedical Sciences building had to be paused for five months in 2004 after threats were made against it. The late Sir Colin Blakemore, who sewed kitten's eyelids shut and later killed them to understand lazy eye, the most common then-incurable cause of childhood

blindness, had HIV-infected needles sent to his house. It's clear that research using animals both endures at Oxford and continues to be deeply controversial.

Undoubtedly, some of these experiments are unpleasant, and the maiming, suffering, or death of animals for no good cause should not be celebrated. It's right that medical students no longer use live animals when recorded demonstrations are available. It's laudable that both the number of experiments conducted on live animals is falling, and that the number of fatal experiments are so small, and primarily conducted on rats rather than larger mammals such as apes. Elon Musk's treatment of monkeys in his Neuralink experiments, for example, reaches an unnecessary, insensitive level of cruelty that Oxford doesn't match. Avoiding such brutality should be the primary goal of researchers when handling such subjects in experiments, acknowledging that they are experimenting on living, feeling creatures regardless of their intelligence. The use and destruction of animals in pursuit of cosmetics research, a purely commercial application, should be and is rightfully condemned as a disgrace.

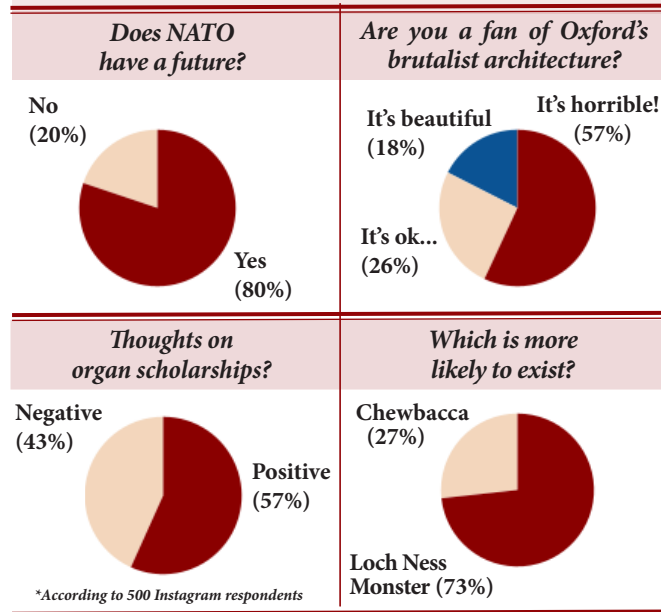
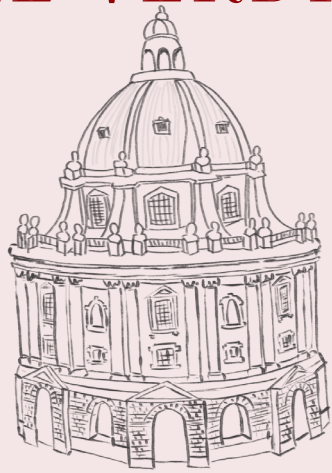
Yet an all too easy appeal to simply banning all animal testing would do incomparable harm to quite literally millions of people. The vital role animal testing has played in understanding cognitive development,

illnesses, infections, and physiology cannot be waved away as unjustified. Could any well-intentioned protester, who genuinely cares for the wellbeing of animals, look at a patient suffering from a currently incurable condition, or one which causes chronic pain, and conclude that they deserve to suffer for the benefit of non-human animals who would otherwise be tested upon? In an ideal world with no pain, animal experimentation would of course be unnecessary. But in a world riven with illness, diseases, and all manner of conditions which can cause great harm and suffering to a great number of people, we as students, and as a country, have to decide what we are more willing to let trouble our conscience: the suffering of animals in pursuit of a cure, or the avoidable suffering of a colossal number of people, who for instance inherit a debilitating condition, in an area of the world with higher levels of disease or worse healthcare facilities, or simply one facing poverty.

I have to confess a personal stake in this question. Not only did my grandfather carry out research on naked mice, testing the efficacy of leprosy cures, but there is a far closer reason I feel animal testing is deeply unfortunate, but necessary. My namesake, my grandfather's brother, died of TB in the early 1940s in rural Bengal...

Read the rest online at cherwell.org

THE VERDICT



Labour's new bill must do more for student renters

The government fails to recognise that, even when landlords are on their best behaviour, the situation is untenable

STANLEY SMITH

One of the joys of being a second year at St Edmund Hall is making your first foray into the private rental sector. This year, as the bulk of the cohort 'lives out' in private accommodation, stories about the shoddiness of student houses have become a staple of college small talk. Tales of rats, mould, and leaking roofs are mixed in with the usual recruitment for Thursday nights in Bridge, complaints about deadlines, and competitive comparisons of how little sleep everyone got. Taking the cake was the story from one group who moved into their home for the year to find a mural of naked presidents Trump and Putin painted on their living room wall. The response of their landlord when they asked what on earth it was doing there? "Oh yeah, I was going to cover that up, but I couldn't be bothered."

But behind these comedic anecdotes is the much less funny reality: the state of the Oxford rental market is atrocious. The most pressing issue is the sheer cost – the University estimates that students will be expected to pay between £745 and £945 in rent each month. This rapidly depletes maintenance loans, making the expectation that students avoid employment during term entirely unrealistic for those without financial support from their parents. The massive demand and short supply also means private tenants have no bargaining power and are forced to accept the dodgiest of accommodations. Nor are these issues confined to the 2,500 Oxford University students who live out. As those at Wadham found out when it was announced last year that their rent would be going up by 10% over the summer vacation, enormous endowments do not insulate students from eye-watering costs.

However, after fifteen years of business as usual, 2025 could be a year of change for Britain's broken rental system. On the 15th of January, the House of Commons passed the new government's Renters' Rights Bill, expected to take effect this summer. It contains some substantial reforms supposed to provide safeguards for tenants. The key change is the abolition of Section 21 evictions, preventing landlords from reclaiming their property without justification. Instead, if they wish to repossess it for personal use or sale, they must provide tenants with four months' notice. Perhaps more importantly, landlords have been restricted to raising rent once a year, and tenants are given greater powers to challenge above 'market rate' rises in tribunals, without the fear of rent being backdated if the courts do not rule in their favour.

So what does this do for students renting in Oxford? The answer, unfortunately, is not much. True to Starmer's style as a diligent details man, it outlaws some of the worst practices and obvious legal shortcomings of the rental sector. The ban of Section 21 evictions is very welcome, on the mere principle that renters should not have to live with the constant fear of losing their shelter with little notice. But for students with reasonably secure yearlong contracts, however, this is

not the principal issue. What Labour fails to recognise is that, even when landlords are on their best behaviour, the situation is untenable. There's little use to courts that make sure rental increases are in line with market rates if those rates are themselves astronomical.

To put it simply, things won't improve until there is more housing in Oxford. So, what are Labour's plans for homebuilding, and will it be able to solve the issue? The government certainly seems to have big aspirations, promising 1.5 million new homes by the next parliament. Their ideas focus on reforming planning permission to increase approvals, which are at a record low, by permitting development on 'grey' sections of lower-quality land within the green belt.

There's only one small issue – virtually everyone is in agreement that Labour's commitment is a fantasy. Reforming planning permission may in theory allow for more projects to be approved, but the applications are simply not forthcoming. The handful of companies that dominate the market in the UK are keener to sit on the vast amounts of land that they have bought up than to take on the costly construction. This is because, as Barratt Developments explained whilst announcing it would reduce the number of homes it would build this year, a "combination of cost of living pressures, much higher mortgage rates, and limited consumer confidence" had knocked out demand. Another jewel in the crown of Liz Truss' impeccable legacy.

Nor do things look set to improve once inflation calms down. The homes being built are not necessarily designed for first-time buyers, whose numbers are dwindling as young couples remain trapped in costly rental agreements that hinder their ability to save. Whilst the government has committed to building more social housing, which used to make up the bulk of affordable accommodation in the UK, there are serious concerns about whether councils have the skills to do so after forty years of 'Right to Buy' preventing them from engaging in significant construction.

This points to Labour's biggest problem: its worrying lack of intellectual capital. In their time in opposition, Starmer and Co spent too long pointing out obvious Tory transgressions and not nearly long enough thinking about what they would do differently. The grand reveal of what fantastic policies lay behind the impenetrable promise of 'change' has been thoroughly fumbled, as the government contents itself with reheating many of the same policies which have been in place for well more than a decade.

There are radical options out there which could improve the rental market for students – from measures to break up the oligarchic home building industry to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's proposal for councils to purchase rental units from landlords to rent out at below market rates. Assessing all the pros and cons of all of these is beyond me. But you know who should be thoroughly examining these options? Our government. Until Labour starts thinking big, it looks like it will be more soaring prices, mould, and artistic depictions of naked authoritarians for Oxford's student renters.

In defence of Oxford's ugliest architecture

Brutalist buildings such as those at St John's College might be maligned by many, but we owe a great deal to their construction

OSCAR WHITTLE

The city's dreaming spires are being crowded out by architectural eyesores. This was the central claim of an article I read in *The Spectator* last May prefaced 'The Sad Decline of Oxford'. In it, the author quotes Bill Bryson who argues that: "[Oxford] is a beautiful city that has been treated with gross indifference and lamentable incompetence." As a student at St John's, it is hard not to appreciate Bryson's point. Indeed, I am reminded of it every day on my walk to the library as I am forced to confront the horrors of the Sir Thomas White Quad, which was affectionately described to me as looking like the "remnants of Chernobyl" in my freshers week (I'm pleased to report a distinct lack of nuclear waste, only the occasional spot of black mould). I sympathise greatly with the poor students forced to live opposite the "Beehive", a post-war eyesore that clashes greatly with the rest of the 19th century Quad it was lumped into the corner of. The style of these modernist monstrosities is described by the College as "confidently looking forward". Many, like Bryson, bemoan this attitude, seeing all the charm of the "city of dreaming spires" being stifled by soulless, functionalist architecture.

Perhaps there is some truth to this. I am not writing here to argue that Oxford is not littered with "ugly" buildings. I have little interest in defending the Glink or the Social Science Library, for example (I am sure there are too many other examples to attempt to list many more here). Nor do I think that we should "learn to love" Oxford's ugly buildings (what an uninteresting cliché of an article that would make!). What I do want to suggest, however, is that there is another, perhaps more fruitful, way of understanding these buildings that puts a special significance on what they represent, particularly for those students who might not have been able to attend this University for much of its history.

Brutalism is often one of those funny things best encapsulated by the phrase "I don't know what it is, but I know it when I see it". We all pass by buildings that we wished didn't blot our peaceful morning walks (or in the case of those students who do real

"Much of the abhorrent architecture we all have to put up with walking by or – God forbid – living in is the product of the University accommodating an increasingly large and diverse pool of students"

degrees) our hurried rush to labs. The ideology of brutalism, however, is harder to define. Roughly, it seems to be the belief in making buildings more open and accommodating for those who will live in or use them, and in the placing of functionality over traditional grandiosity. In effect, it is a democratic style of architecture that seeks not to be grand or beautiful in any traditional sense, but to be tolerant. And indeed, in seeking to do so, it makes no apologies. Perhaps we think it should. Nevertheless, the significance of what these buildings and their inclusive ideology represent to the University's history should not be snubbed.

In the latter half of the 20th century, attitudes towards university education changed. At the same time as architects were seeking to make buildings more inclusive and open, there were many in university administrations that sought to do the same. The result of these two philosophies combining is what we see today. Much of the abhorrent architecture we all have to put up with



walking by or – God forbid – living in, whether we like it or not, the product of the University accommodating an increasingly large, diverse, and comprehensive pool of students. As colleges expand, they can afford to take on more students, and thus increase their accessibility. Accessibility and openness might as well be the mortar holding together these brutalist structures, they are so deeply ingrained in the architecture's philosophy.

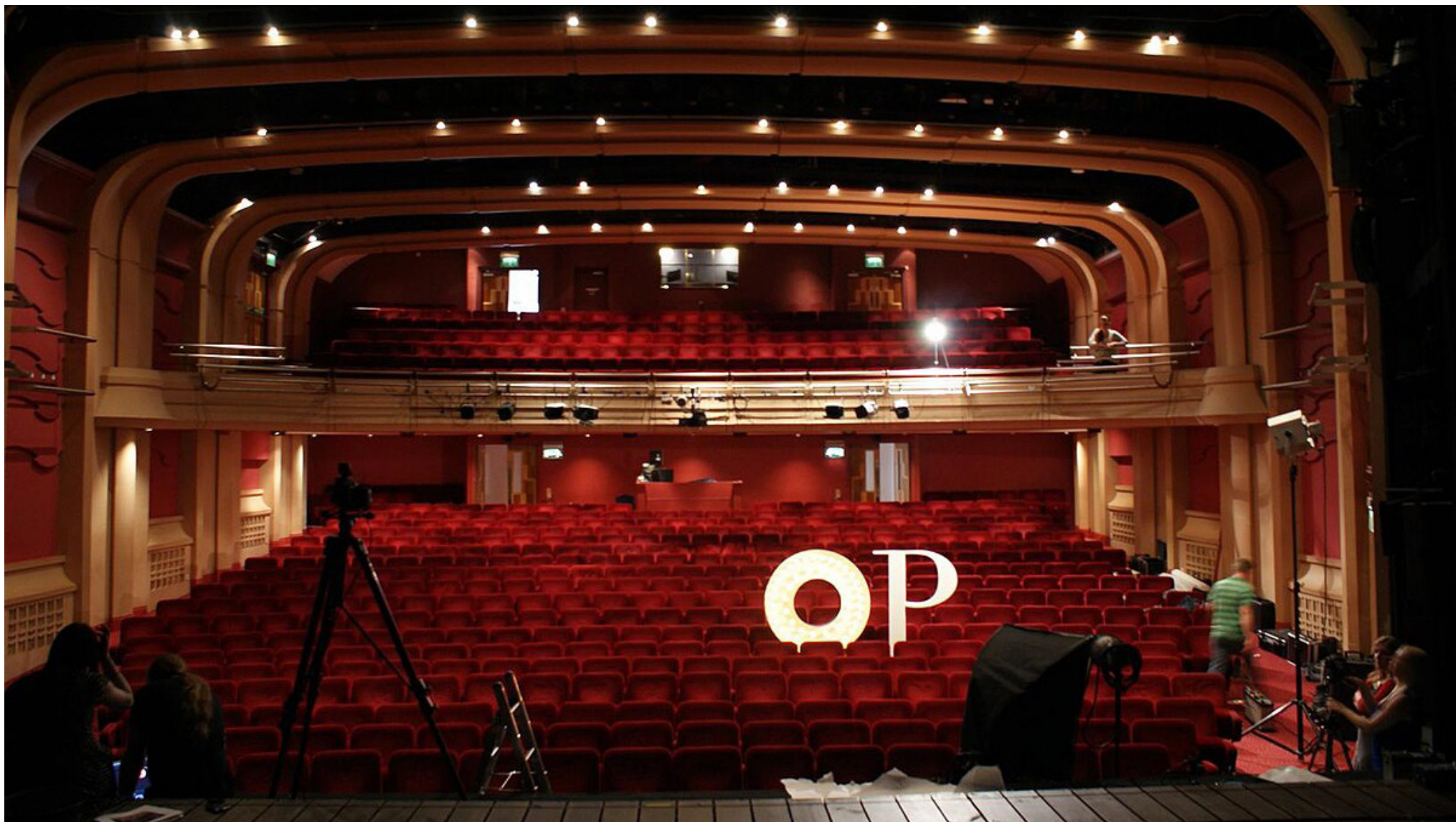
Of course, there is nothing anyone can do to stop me from continuing to despise any unfortunate encounter I may have with brutalism during

my degree. And I will continue to revel in any trips I take to staircases in older parts of my college. However, to hate Oxford's 'ugly' buildings is to hate the natural consequences of the pursuit of the lofty and worthy goals of increased accessibility and openness. So, next time you pass by that one part of your college you really rather wish did not exist or try to hide some particular building while touring a friend around, maybe it is worth pausing and considering what it all really represents.

Image Credit: Laurence Cooke

FEATURES

Much ado about funding: Financing Oxford's student productions



By LILLY LAW

Oxford student theatre has a number of options for funding. Some find the process of accessing it convoluted and time-consuming, but work is being done to change this. While the level of funding impacts a production's appearance, actors' experience is more closely tied to the production company's cohesion and organisation.

Last term, I performed in my first show at Oxford University, and I couldn't stop talking about it. Everyone I knew was subjected to my monologues about rehearsals and costumes and casting, and most of my friends met this with remarkable patience. One friend of mine was also in a play, and we ended up trading notes on our experiences.

Both shows were Oxford student theatre, but mine was Shakespeare and hers was contemporary. The differences didn't end there. I had no idea of the budget for mine – all I knew was we had enough for frequent snack runs during rehearsals, and for very nice drinks at the cast party. My friend knew all too well the state of her show's finances. Instead of discussing our acting choices, I heard about the fundraising, production, and marketing woes befalling her show. And I wondered which one of our experiences was more common.

At first glance, it seemed like hers. According to a *Cherwell* survey on the Oxford University Drama Society (OUDS) Facebook, over half of the respondents stated that the budgets of the shows in which they had participated were moderately low. They cited a "long confusing process" to secure funding, loans that were "daylight robbery", and "fighting over limited

funding".

There are several archetypal budgets. The Oxford University Drama Officer, Noah Wild, encourages producers not to exceed a breakeven percentage of 60% in their budgets, meaning that total expenditure, generally, should not exceed 60% of their ticket sales. As a result, there are differing budgets for different venues. Shows at the Burton Taylor Studio ("the BT") are unlikely to exceed £720. Shows at the Michael Pilch Studio have a ceiling of around £1,500. At the Keble O'Reilly, it's around £3,500. And at the Oxford Playhouse, where the most "professional" productions are performed, the budgets will stretch to £24,000.

The ways that budget impacted the production itself were myriad. Most reported technical limitations: one show had to choose between the entire cast having mics, or none of them, and could not afford the former. Practical effects would be limited to Playhouse shows, notorious for their expense, and the trade-off for elaborate costumes would often be a threadbare set and lighting.

Even before design was considered, a production's budget impacted far more fundamental aspects, like which show would be put on at all. Shakespeare can seem endemic in

student theatre (this term alone has *King Lear*, *Richard II*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *The Merchant of Venice* being performed in various venues), but there is a strong financial incentive. Since they are all in the public domain, there is no estate to contact, no stipulations to abide by, and no rights to purchase.

For contemporary theatre, particularly for small-scale productions, rights can take up almost half of the budget, in some cases costing more than venue hire. Translated scripts prove even more difficult, since the copyright attaches to the translation, as well as the original. Even plays written centuries ago may require budget allocations for rights, because the translation is not in the public domain. For one respondent, the cost of licensing pre-existing licenses was so much that they were translating the play from Italian themselves.

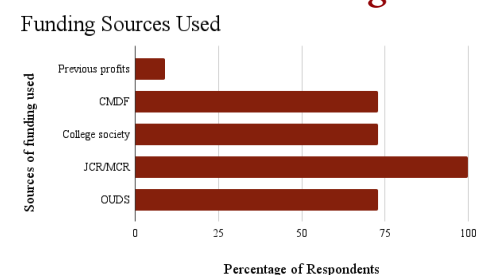
Funding Oxford drama

There are two primary forms of funding for Oxford student theatre: grants and loans. Grants can come from JCRs, college societies, and the Cameron Mackintosh Drama Fund (CMDf), while the Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS) offers pro-rata loans. Productions that receive these loans must pay back the amount

they borrowed plus a share of the profits; a loan worth 25% of the budget would be repaid with the amount itself and 25% of the profits. One hundred per cent of the respondents stated that they had used JCR or MCR funding in their productions, and just under three-quarters used OUDS loans or CMDf grants.

Grants and loans are not the only dividing lines for funding sources. OUDS and the CMDf are drama-specific entities. As an entity created to fund student drama, the CMDf takes an interest in ascertaining how they can best help beyond the bare provision of grants. The University Drama Officer exists to facilitate and

Figure 1



support student theatre, and to liaise between production companies and the CMDF. In service of this, he has introduced numerous changes in order to make funding more accessible. This term, he is running production workshops to help first-time producers make funding bids. Additionally, he advises bidders on the best way to structure their budget. The next innovation will be a requirement for all shows receiving CMDF funding to submit a financial report at the end of their production, so that the Fund can

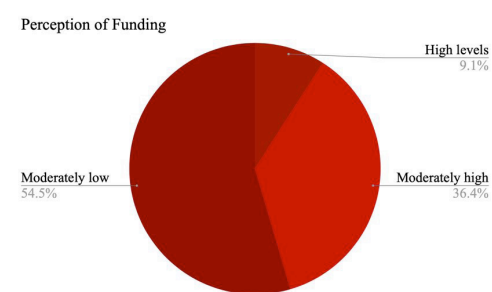
“I had no idea of the budget for mine – all I knew was we had enough for frequent snack runs during rehearsals, and for very nice drinks at the cast party. My friend knew all too well the state of her show’s finances.”

better see which areas to aid.

Similarly, the Treasurer of OUDS, Chess Nightingale, has been closely involved in ensuring as many production companies as possible secure funding. Nightingale circulates a funding provocation form each term, when bids for theatres open, advising how best to structure the form to ensure acceptance. Reels on the OUDS Instagram are aimed at debunking common myths, and a new website is currently in development to better convey key information like deadlines and expected awards. She stated that OUDS “very rarely reject applications” and never “purely on technicalities”.

In contrast, JCRs and MCRs are not designed with the purpose of funding student drama, which can lead to some issues. They have other priorities, and therefore may be more likely to refuse or to limit the amount allocated. On

Figure 2



average, they contribute between £50 and £200, depending on the number of students from that college involved in the production. The utility of JCR funding will also depend on the colleges making up the production team and the actors, since wildly different levels of funds exist between each.

Some colleges have their own arts societies, but they may also have a more convoluted method of securing funding. For example, the Brazen Arts Fund (Brasenose) is unaffiliated with the JCR, and will only reimburse receipts, limiting the extent to which they can be used in the development of a show. College drama societies may also introduce stipulations, such as the proportion of students from that college who must be in the performance, or for a committee member to be in the production team.

Still, it is relatively simple, administratively, to request funding from JCRs, and such funding is a well-known source. The nature of their grants means that all of the profit from a show can be retained, and potentially reinvested into the next. This is unlikely to cover a full production, being more effective as an ad-hoc supplement.

The less centralised structure of Oxford student theatre is partly a result of abundant sources of funding. At other universities, like Newcastle,



LSE, and York, there is a central dramatic society, funded by ticket sales, membership fees, and the Student Union. The numerous external sources of funding for Oxford drama limit the need for centralisation.

While the production companies in Oxford are affiliated with OUDS, they are autonomous entities, which allows them the freedom to put on whatever show they wish. But this autonomy goes both ways. If a company doesn't have a knowledgeable producer or an experienced stage manager, there are no guardrails. As a result, significant polarisation is possible between the resources and expertise of prominent companies with a strong track record, compared to smaller, first-time companies. The availability of central funding limits the disparity here somewhat – the alternative of JCR funding is once again dependent on the composition of the production company. One respondent identified tension from different companies “fighting over limited funding”, but without OUDS and the CMDF, such fighting would only intensify.

“If funding remains accessible to all, as OUDS and the CMDF are working to ensure, then the show will always go on.”

Audience experience

The budget of a play didn't make a considerable difference to the audience members' enjoyment. When asked whether they enjoyed watching larger scale or smaller scale performances, the vast majority stated that “it depends” on a far wider variety of factors. Only one person had a preference at all, and that was for smaller shows, because “they often have more time and love put into them”. For them, Playhouse shows, with budgets of over £20,000, had never been “anything better than just fine.”

Among the rest of the respondents, one criterion stood out: how well a show knew what it wanted to be. The only relevance of the budget was whether it was “in line with ambitions”. As a result, there was something of an expectation gap between different venues. Those at the Playhouse, which signified a higher budget, brought higher expectations. Respondents admired the “spectacles” that could be created, and their potential to be “impressive, exciting,

and immersive”. The flipside of this was a lack of risk in terms of content. The need to break even, when that number is in the tens of thousands, meant that high budget shows tended to stick to established work that would bring in an audience. No-one disputed the technical marvel that could be produced with a larger budget. But several remarked that, with higher expectations set, there was a greater risk of falling short.

With a lower amount needed to break even, smaller shows could take more risks, and the more basic set design meant an unflinching focus on the performers themselves. Respondents enjoyed smaller venue shows for “intense moments”, “subtle emotions”, and “real gems of new writing”. In both cases, the quality of the show to the audience was not tied to the budget, because they knew to expect different things from different productions. “Quality drama” above all, was the most important consideration. That isn't necessarily guaranteed by money.

Funding from an actor's perspective

In terms of ideal productions in which to participate, opinion was more divided. Over a quarter preferred larger-budget productions, although it still depended on other factors for half. The throughline for those preferring larger productions was a sense of security. The necessary resources were already in place, so the actors could focus on what they were doing in the play, rather than worrying about what was going on backstage.

In particular, the presence of “extra” features made a difference, like intimacy direction and choreography. Intimacy direction is a recent, fought-for inclusion to OUDS, and still remains difficult budgetarily. Wild estimated that a significantly discounted professional intimacy director was around £450 a day; more than it costs to hire the BT. One interviewee spoke of having a student intimacy director, who was not involved in rehearsals, and only came on the day of the show to check the entire production. The lack of thoroughness and organisation contributed to a feeling of discomfort, impacting the actors' enjoyment of the play.

“Professional” was often used to describe better-funded plays. Whether this is guaranteed depends on how you view professionalism. Onstage, a larger budget goes a long way to make a show appear professional, with a cohesive set design, fantastic practical effects, and the lack of obviously borrowed props or costumes. One respondent talked of the “OUTTS chair” – a style of prop that you'd instantly recognise if you'd ever been involved in a play. The immersion for the audience, and the actors, is more likely to be secured with these design considerations, meaning that funding may be important for a more professional production.

But there is another sense of professionalism

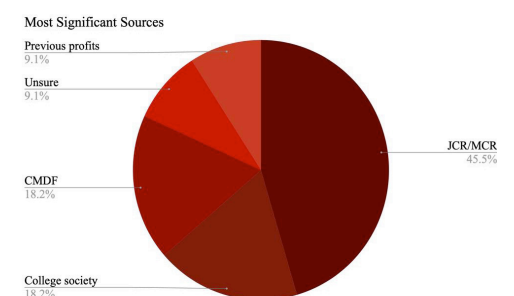


Figure 3

that cannot so easily be seen from the stalls. Conduct and organisation backstage impacts the experience of everyone involved in the production, and this depends on the cohesion of the cast and crew, not the set, which is far more difficult to secure with money alone. Tensions may be lessened when there is a sufficient budget, but a dedicated production crew, a well-equipped producer, and a welfare officer who knows that their role goes beyond providing snacks are no less necessary. Improving comfort backstage is not necessarily a question of more money, but of a more purposeful approach to putting on a show. That's something that can only really be built from experience.

The opportunities to build this experience in student theatre are nearly unparalleled in Oxford. Only Cambridge was brought up as a potential competitor. One respondent, who graduated in 2023, explained the sharp contrasts of her experiences with student theatre at Oxford and at her subsequent university. There was “almost no funding”, leaving them reliant on ticket sales and often suffering losses, making musicals increasingly unsustainable. The variety was limited, having to “carefully... pick shows that will bring in a big audience in order to make our money back”. There were less direct comparisons too – the tech resources available from the Oxford University Technical Theatre Society (OUTTS) are discounted compared to commercial rates, and the CMDF pays for the electricity in the BT.

Oxford student theatre's variety is its strength. It allows for shows that are new, experimental, and genuinely exciting, while also creating masterpieces of technical skill that allow actors and crew alike to develop their abilities. The money available ensures such an assortment can be performed, but equally important is how well the cast and crew work together. If funding remains accessible to all, as OUDS and the CMDF are working to ensure, then the show will always go on.

Image Credits: Oxford Playhouse/CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons [Left] and Omassey via Wikimedia Commons [Right]

You wouldn't steal a *Cherwell* article

TikTok might provide fun for some, but much of its content is stolen from elsewhere. With the rise of AIs that erase the role of creators, there is a pressing need today to prevent content theft.

By CHLOE SMITH

Hello, *Cherwell* reader! Think this is a good article? A TikToker probably thinks so too. 'Korean Consultant' posted a TikTok on 5th January 2025 titled "What your university says about you - Russell Group Part 3". It featured nine universities – each briefly described on a slide – and it stereotyped both the universities and their students.

I received this TikTok on the 6th January from a friend. She was amused, for she had read some of the descriptions before. The 'Oxford' slide included quips like, "Either a Moocher that cares more about having first class friends than first class thoughts, or a Pampered Swot wearing a scholar's gown every night dreaming to be a spy."

This was suspicious. I had written just a few months earlier about a moocher who cares "more about having first-class friends than first-class thoughts" and a "pampered swot" who wears a scholar's gown and "probably will become a spy."

Maybe great minds think alike. But the next point was about someone who claimed to be state-educated, "ignoring their private sixth form and secondary schooling at the best grammar school in the country." What a coincidence that I had written those exact words too!

My friend immediately recognised that, "whoever made it read your *Cherwell* article." Curiously, 'Korean Consultant' only cited "GPT and online", not my absolute banger of an article, "A comprehensive guide to Oxford student stereotypes". Yes, I'm bitter.

Why I'm bitter

Firstly, someone had used my writing to potentially make money. Meanwhile, I'm not making any money from my own work.

Secondly, I'm bitter because I didn't receive credit for my own work. If people are going to enjoy my writing, I'd like them to know its stupendous mastermind. This TikToker clearly knows that creating something is difficult and time-consuming, seeing as they stole my work instead of making their own. Stealing my work brings me neither fame, nor success, nor notoriety – and I didn't exactly write satires of my friends as Oxford stereotypes because I wanted to fly under the radar. I did it because I am pretentious and somewhat irritating in my desire to be the Next Big Thing (i.e. Giles Coren/Caitlin Moran/Evelyn Waugh/similar). It is unlikely. But it is made even more unlikely when 'Korean Consultant' copies my writing, bringing me nothing but anonymity and unpaid work. No thanks.

And I'm not alone in this. Millions of writers are not receiving credit for their works. 'Korean Consultant' lists "GPT & online" as its sources, when its real sources are more likely writers just like me.

Using my work without crediting me is a violation of copyright. The legal counsel to OSPL (*Cherwell's* parent company) has issued a takedown request for the video, to which we have received no response. Violating copyright is a violation of the owner's rights. In this case the owner is OSPL. OSPL owns the particular sequence the words are in, not the idea.

For example, it is not a violation of copyright to write about poncey students interrogating their peers in Hall, but it is to write "If you want to hide silently in Hall, think again – Mr Art Historian will slide up next to you and ask how you really feel about the representations of Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald". In this particular example, although the TikToker had altered the order of the words taken from my piece, the content remains recognisable as my original work and some phrases are intact, making it a violation of copyright.

Copyright law

Copyright is an unusual law – and there are caveats, known as 'fair dealing' exceptions. Use of protected materials in newspaper reporting, criticism, and education is permitted within reason if the original creator is credited and the material is not used extensively or for profit. But the TikTok can generate profit, violating OSPL's copyright.

However, AI models also use creators' works without giving them credit in less obvious ways.

When you prompt an AI model, it generates results by scanning the internet. This might save the time when the alternative is doing a manual search for 'Oxford student stereotypes'. But AI does not produce its sources or credit individual authors without being prompted to do so, and seems to respond irregularly. For example, when my editor asked ChatGPT, "What are some Oxford student stereotypes? Please cite your sources," it directly cites my *Cherwell* article. However, for me, it includes no content from my article and suggests "a 2017 article in *The Guardian*" "*The Oxford Student* (2018)", "*The Oxford Mail* (2019)" and "*The Independent* (2019)".

Unlike the video, ChatGPT can cite specific sources, but only when asked – again leaving the onus on the individual creator to find and cite their sources. It is a search engine that cuts out the middleman: it works by scraping material publicly available and using it to generate synthesised results.

Large language model data

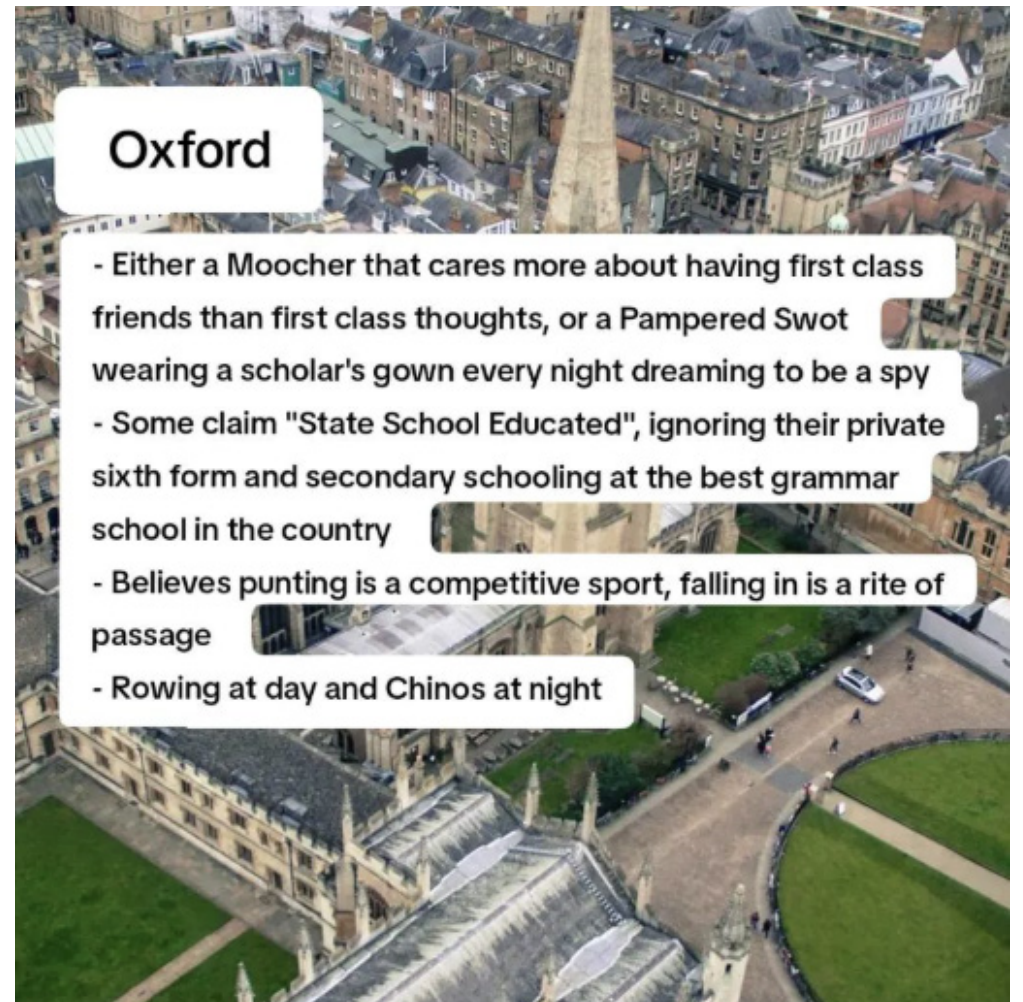
But AI models must be trained on something. Large Language Models (LLMs) use creators' materials in their training process, improving the quality and specificity of results. "GPT" could be responsible for the post not only as a search engine, but as a writer – almost a ghost writer. A good writer must be a good reader.

Baroness Stowell of Beeston, chairwoman of the House of Lords' Communications and Digital Committee, argued in *The Times* that tech companies are evading responsibility by training their models, which need "huge amounts of data to work properly", on copyrighted materials. Tech companies can afford to pay for licences but are instead "simply exploiting rights holders" – such as *The New York Times*, who are currently suing OpenAI for infringing its copyright by using its material to train their AI model. They contend that OpenAI (the owner of ChatGPT) not only breaches their copyright, but that the use of verbatim NYT content in ChatGPT allows users to access NYT content without a subscription. The lawsuit claims that "the tool is now competing with the newspaper as a trustworthy information source" and will damage subscription revenue.

Some companies are now selling material to AI crawlers for training through licensing, giving them short-term profit on material which might otherwise earn them nothing. AI crawlers explore the internet through a variety of sources, for example websites and databases, both to generate better results for users and to train the model itself.

For example, Lionsgate has sold its whole catalogue of film and TV material to an AI company Runway to be used in training its new AI model. In turn, Lionsgate can use the resulting AI technology in their upcoming projects. Similarly, HarperCollins have made a deal with Microsoft, allowing Microsoft to train its AI models on their non-fiction books. Yet authors do have the opportunity to decline, meaning that authors can retain control over their material. While this may indicate that traditional publishers are selling out to AI, these licenses are an official agreement, showing that it is possible to train AI models without breaching copyright.

Once material has been crawled on and used, there is



Screenshot from a TikTok that stole *Cherwell* content

no going back. HarperCollins' crawled material will go, claims Richard Osman, into the "large language pool" of "high quality prose" used to train AI models. But what is being done to protect creators?

Fighting back?

Although AI crawlers can be disabled, some are hesitant over fears it could reduce traffic for businesses. Google's web crawler – which informs its 'Bard' chatbot – puts publishers in a difficult position. Businesses may have barred other crawlers from accessing material, but they fear, writes Katie Prescott, that "barring Google's equivalent [...] would disadvantage them in the long term when it comes to making their information findable and accessible on traditional Google." This pressures businesses to accept AI crawling to retain traffic.

In December 2024, the government opened a consultation on copyright and AI. The consultation intends to establish "how the government can ensure the UK's legal framework for AI and copyright supports the UK creative industries and AI sector together." Both industries are vital to the UK economy and the statement makes clear that there must be a balance between protecting creators and supporting AI development.

To address the current uncertainties, the consultation proposes, in short, that AI models can be trained on any material unless the copyright owner reserves their rights. Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport, said that further licensing will in turn allow creators to "secure appropriate payment for their work". Ultimately, this will give creators more control over their materials use, allowing them to be paid for their works use in training.

Where the burden lies

This puts the responsibility on the copyright holder to declare that they do not want their work used. Yet a government spokesperson from the Intellectual Property Office stated that the consultation "does not propose exempting AI training from copyright law". They said:

"No move will be made until we have a practical plan that delivers each of our objectives: increased control for right holders to help them license their content, access to high-quality material to train leading AI models in the UK, and more transparency for right holders from AI developers."

An "exception" allowing AI training on copyrighted content "unless the rights holder has expressly reserved

their rights" is "deeply unfair", writes Owen Meredith, chief executive of the News Media Association. An opt-in system would surely be fairer. Peter Chen, legal counsel to OSPL, suggested instead that "the government should work with industry groups like Creative Commons to establish a new licensing format where artists can decide when and how AI companies can use their work for profit".

It is already extremely hard for people to protect their copyright against generative AI. Judge McMahon ruled against Raw Story Media, Inc. and AlterNet Media, Inc.'s case against OpenAI for violating copyright due to "lack of standing". Because AI models synthesize information, rather than copying verbatim, there's less likely to be evidence of direct plagiarism. The government consultation must address the use of copyrighted work in generative AI and its training, and prioritise individual creators whose work needs to be protected.

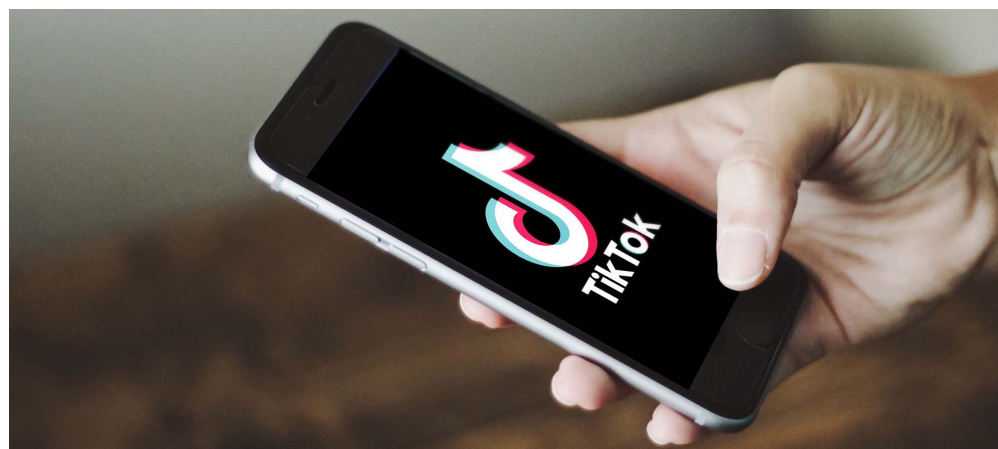
I don't want a random TikToker to be able to steal my writing and get away with it. I want them to take it down – or at least to pay me for it. At the outrageously bare

"I don't want a random TikToker to be able to steal my writing and get away with it. I want them to take it down – or at least to pay me for it."

minimum, I want to know for certain that the TikToker knows they have stolen it, rather than taken it from an AI generator which will only reveal its deviously acquired sources if begged. I considered asking ChatGPT (or maybe it should be DeepSeek now?) to write this article, but if I had, I know for a fact that it would completely undermine my strongest feeling: that I want everyone to know that my writing was written by me.

Cherwell has contacted TikTok for a response.

Image Credits: TikTok on iPhone, CC BY Nordskov Media via Flickr [Left] and Chloe Smith [Right]



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With warmest thanks to Oxford Student Publications Limited

John Evelyn

Editors' Note: It appears that Jevelyn I is indisposed! Could they be suffering an essay crisis? Maybe, but hacks would never be so mundane. Could they have been fired from committee? Maybe, but this isn't MT24. Could they have caught some illness, perhaps from the fine establishment located underneath the Union? Maybe, but we'll never find out. In this moment of great need, we present you with Jevelyn II...

Alert! Alert! Corpus Pope reported first traitor then missing, as Ginger 3.0 returns to stalk the buildings following his demotion and HR warning, the CCCCCC dynasty seems in tatters as the supposed prodigal son seems to have truly run away to a monastery this time. The Lieutenant wasted no time in demonstrating his martial art skills and deployed the replacement move of hidden Yang crouching Yang upon papal abandonment. One wonders if CCCCCC has even heard of the

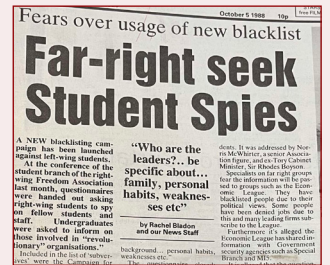


situation at hand, he seems to still be awaiting a taxi in far flung suburbs of Oxfordshire, apparently none of them happen to print paper receipts for reimbursements, or the cannon fodder, sorry seccies desperately needed. Perhaps his one hope is Harvey Spectre's balling affair suffers the same fate his did, dying out even before it got dark. That is if Harvey Spectre makes it make in time from the red lights to light the green light. Speaking of lights, Ra seems to be back to lighting things on fire, making a characteristically aggressive appearance on Monday at Firing Squad and leading the rapid fire blast that left the Scottish Sloughnian clutching his hair even more than the Slatecest that seems more prevalent than his spreadsheets. At least his Grandpa Joe is receiving more definitive answers from their potential cannon fodder (no) then the supposed Bellwether is providing. Regents Ruler meanwhile is preparing to take the ISI to the big stage with this

Hilary being less the Bhutto Memorial Lecture and more the Bhutto family reunion. Your dearest Jevelyn (II) is far more excited for the events of Friday however, the hacks will give the peacocks a masterclass in how to show their feathers and strut like vain headless birds, after all that's what the Barista is known for having graduated with flying colours from Tesco to "Social Shifts" I suppose that's what we call Campaign manager privilege. The Graduate of the Malicious Antiquated Academy seems to have taken up the same responsibility with none of the fun, it seems like the days at the top are only getting lonelier and sadder, the Race to Stand seems to involve none of her fans. The Guild of Counters and Riggers are deep in their magic caves preparing, Thursdays night will be stretching late and cash will be making a comeback as they prepare to produce their favourite methods of disqualification. Its nomination season soon everybody, Jevelyn (II) cannot wait for what is to come.
XOXO
Jevelyn II

Editors' Note: As for which Jevelyn will grace us with their humour in the final print edition, only time will tell...

Cherwell Archives 1988:



Current OUCA members might long for the opportunity offered in 1988, when right-wing students were asked to report on their peers' "revolutionary organisations" by The Freedom Association.

The questionnaire sought out students supporting nuclear disarmament, the abolition of Apartheid, and Communism, although it also encouraged students to report those involved in the far-right National Front.

Those reported were believed to be added to a blacklist, alleged to be given to M15 and shared with firms, preventing students from being hired later.

Perhaps it is for the best that student spies never fully took off, or the stakes of hacking and backstabbing would have risen considerably. Why use the standing orders to remove your opponents when the government can do it instead?

by Emily Henson

Editorials



Zoë McGuire Puzzle Maker

If you can tell exactly which word should come next in the following set: DRIBBLE, ADDITION, FREEDOM, ELLIPSE, BOOKSHELF, ???; you might have a mind for puzzles. I've always thought that the best, most pure form of a puzzle, is one in which you're not given any instructions. Just a set of data, and working out what to do with it is left to you. This was the idea I tried to put forward with my first puzzle for *Cherwell*, 'Guillotines', at the start of this term, and in general I find the variety slot particularly exciting for the ability to try wacky things that solvers hopefully haven't seen before.

Finding inspiration for puzzles can be tricky. The ones I've been most proud of are the ones that have hinged on a gimmick or concept that is truly original, but I also don't mind trying my own take on an established format (such as the Printer's Devilry in this issue), or even blending two existing genres together. But even then, you don't necessarily need an original format to be able to show

creative expression. I've a friend who makes regular Sudoku puzzles – no funny rules or gimmicks – and yet somehow he sets them up in a way that makes them feel unique and satisfying.

The most important part for a puzzle setter is making sure the "aha" moments are there – that brief strike of inspiration when you break through a hard cryptic clue, or realise why these answers are too long for that crossword grid, or spot a pattern in the seemingly unrelated set of words – that's an intoxicating feeling, and one that a constructor will seek to manufacture. But it's a hard process – you don't know how solvable a clue is if you're the one that came up with it; of course it seems obvious!

To be a good writer, you've also got to enjoy solving puzzles. I'd really recommend taking part in "puzzle hunts" if you like this sort of thing; they're big online competitions that are full of well-made puzzles by some fantastic people. If any of what I've said sounds interesting and you'd like to know more, get in touch with me!

Oh and by the way, it's CONTINUUM.

Morien Robertson Head of Features



Joseph Schumpeter famously argued in 1942, as any good PPEist will know, that democracy was competition between elite groups. This opposes a Rousseauian idea of a 'general will' emerging from collective decision-making, in which we discover our commonality and shared interests.

Now, Rousseau was surely wrong to think that there is a will that can encapsulate our shared interests and produce something that is agreeable to all. But this shouldn't lead us to overemphasise our differences. In fact, both aggregation of views and reflection on the lives of others are essential for social participation. And this is precisely what *Cherwell* aims to deliver in its print every two weeks. In Features, the section I lead, we try – as any good social scientist does – to use both qualitative and quantitative tools. This means blending stories, anecdotes and impressions with hard data and a broader viewpoint.

Some very smart people that I know like to aphoristically quote 'the plural of anecdote is not data'. The point being that talking to a few people doesn't give you a reflective picture of the world. But actually (and I make no claim to being the first person to note this), the plural of anecdote is

data – what more could data possibly be? It is very simply the collection and combination of each person's stories, experience, memories and ambitions. There's not some spooky emergence operating that transforms the lives of those around us into capital-d Data; quantitative work is just a macro approach to the very same issue – an inquiry into the nature of those things that surround us.

And this is precisely what will happen next print edition, when we return with the fourth annual Sextigation. This is (to our knowledge) an unparalleled exploration of some of the most personal aspects of students' lives, and their thoughts about the wide state of affairs in Oxford. We are interested not only in how much (or little) sex people are having (we wouldn't want you to think us prurient...) but their perceptions of others. Of course everyone wants to know which college is actually having the most sex, but would you be able to guess? We want to get the aggregation, but also the shared reflection that approaches the general will.

PROFILES

“Universities will become the fulcrum of exceptional change.” *Cherwell* spoke to the new Chancellor of the University, Lord William Hague

By OLIVER HALL and AMELIA GIBBINS

Lord Hague is taking on one of academia’s most historic positions as the Chancellor of the University of Oxford, a role that dates back to 1244. Succeeding Lord Patten, who retired last year, Hague has been preparing to lead the University into a decade of change and innovation at a pivotal moment for higher education. In an exclusive interview, Lord Hague sat down with *Cherwell* to discuss his vision for the University, the challenges facing the sector, and what this decade of change will mean for Oxford.

Hague won the Chancellor election at the end of last year, following several months of campaigning that led to victory over 38 other candidates. The first round of voting saw a final five of Lady Elish Angiolini, Rt Hon Dominic Grieve, Lord William Hague, Lord Peter Mandelson and Baroness Jan Royall, with some 23,000 votes cast.

Several months on, Hague is now ready to get to work as Chancellor. The former politician jokes that the process “was possibly a bit more complicated than electing the president of the United States”, and that now he is “ready to get going.” Reflecting on the other candidates that made it to the final five, he believed that “they were very worthy competitors... [who] all remain very committed to doing things for Oxford in the future.”

Hague has strongly emphasised that the Chancellor “does not actually run the university.” The position involves ceremonial duties, alongside representing Oxford on the national and world stage. He was full of praise for Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey, describing her as “absolutely great.”

An area that Hague does regard as within his remit, however, is fundraising. Hague said that Oxford will “need the generosity of its benefactors over the next decade in a very big way.” In a similar vein, he explained that “some of Oxford’s

fundraising plans over the coming years will be the most ambitious ever, ... [requiring] updated science facilities, graduate scholarships, and support access for students across the board.”

During the campaign, Hague had emphasised his links to the United States and the funding that he would strive to attract from over the pond. However, the political landscape of the United States has changed drastically since he spoke to *Cherwell* in October, and the new presidential administration has spoken out against diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) schemes that it views as a waste of spending. Concerns have now been raised over whether US-UK research partnerships could be caught up in Trump’s crackdown on DEI. For instance, a US embassy-funded grants scheme, run alongside the British Association of American Studies, collapsed when the UK found out that they had been asked to erase any mention of diversity from awarding criteria.

When asked whether the Trump administration may be problematic for the University, Hague was clear that although it may present issues, “the answer is to ensure the excellence of research so that there is a compelling case across the Atlantic to continue those partnerships.” Hague’s opponent in the Chancellor elections, Lord Mandelson, is now the British Ambassador to the United States – Hague remarked that since “[Mandelson] has been so keen to support Oxford”, maintaining relations between US investors and Oxford would be yet “another task on his checklist.”

In recent years, Hague has written extensively on the potential of artificial intelligence, including uniting with Tony Blair to applaud the government’s new AI Action Plan and calling for further investment in the field. In his interview with *Cherwell*, he said that AI “will change education in many ways that we can’t yet anticipate. ... Universities will be the fulcrum of a decade of exceptional change.”

Though it is a clear opportunity for innovation, policies regarding the use of generative AI in particular present a dilemma for universities.



Currently, Oxford has very strict rules that restrict its usage by students. Although reluctant to predict the outcomes of the rapidly evolving technology, Hague was keen to stress how important it is for “universities to be an utterly human experience.

“There are great strengths of personal tuition and of a collegiate community,” he said. “Universities will have to work even harder to make sure that people are having a fantastic human experience.

“In a world [that is] in a state of economic, social, and political upheaval, ... what happens in Oxford is and will be critical to the success of the UK.” Investing in Oxford, he explained, “is in the critical national interest of the United Kingdom.”

Recent months have seen Chancellor Rachel Reeves turn to universities as an engine for growth, including the revival of plans for the so-called ‘OxCam Arc’, which the government states could generate £78 billion by 2035. Hague stated that it is “a key part of my job, as a public figure and somebody who’s had a lifetime in politics, to urge them to deliver on those things.”

Hague was also keen to underline the balance

required between this investment into research and the undergraduate teaching experience. “We are so high in the world rankings because we are such a great centre of research and of teaching,” he said.

Another key element of Hague’s election campaign was the focus he placed on broadening access to the University and ensuring that it was open to people from all backgrounds. Having attended state school himself, Hague has recently advocated for the 93% Club, this year attending as a guest at their ball. When asked about Oxford’s declining intake of state school students since 2020, Hague told *Cherwell*: “it’s not good that it’s slipped back. ... Covid may have had a greater impact on education in state schools than in private schools.” However, he did caveat that whilst one “should not obsess about small changes, it is really important to keep up the momentum on this.”

Cherwell then presented Hague with comments from Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch, who has broadly spoken ill of the sector as it stands, leading him to stress that he “does not agree that too many people are going to university.” He continued that given the era of unprec-



edented change in the world, “highly successful countries will end up with a higher proportion of their young people going to university.

“We have some work to do... in improving the image of higher education, which is often seen by all political parties as something that just takes up money.”

The financial crisis that universities are facing has been widely reported in recent months, with 1,000 proposed redundancies in the sector projected in 2025, and more than 500 staff moving on from Oxford during the last financial year. On this topic, Hague said that “there is clearly a major problem in the funding of higher education in the UK.” He welcomed the increase of tuition fees in line with inflation, announced last year, but warned that most of its benefits had been “taken back away from universities by increasing employers’ national insurance contributions.”

Hague called for change in the ways of thinking about the issue, stating that he did not “see a solution to the problem in the UK without some greater public funding of higher education... On the long list of items that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has that need more money, the

higher education sector is one of them.”

The new Chancellor also pointed out that as tuition fees rise, Oxford has the ability to “enlarge the resources available” to those in need. He pointed to the success of Crankstart scholarships in helping students at the University, and said that “we’re going to need more of that sort of thing... the financial pressures on students will not go away.”

Paying higher tuition fee rates than domestic students, international learners play a vital role in the financial sustainability of UK universities. However, new rules introduced last year restricted the number of dependents that students could bring to the UK. As a result, the number of applicants from overseas has declined.

On the recent protests that have taken place at the University, including the occupation of the Radcliffe Camera, Hague stressed the importance of respect and understanding. “There are bound to be really fierce differences... on both sides of the argument. The important thing is to hear both sides of the argument and to respect that people may have a difference of view.”

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

Image Credit: David Hays

Student spotlight: Swap shops, self-defence, and mutual care with Cowley Community Closet

Cowley Community Closet spoke with Sara Rourke about building a beloved clothing swap organisation

Cowley Community Closet (CCC) is a self-described, “sustainable, anti-capitalist, queer-run collective”, founded by students Delphi, Abby and Connie in the spirit of creating a diverse and inclusive community within Oxford. They began with swap shops, creating a space for people to come together and exchange clothing and have since incorporated sewing workshops and free self-defence classes. Cherwell spoke with Delphi about the project co-directed by the three.

Talking about the inspiration behind CCC, Delphi tells me “it was just kind of serendipitous. Abby and I went to secondary school together, so we’ve known each other since we were eleven, and we both went on to do our postgraduate degrees at Oxford and met Connie there at a party. We just got along really well. We were all rocking the dyed hair and a kind of sparkly situation. We spent ages hanging out with each other, having hair dyeing parties, and swapping a lot of our clothes. And then we thought it would be really fun to invite other people into it and we had no idea it would get this big.”

The most important thing to the group is creating something that aligns with their values: a clothing swap naturally fit into their anti-capitalist ethos. Delphi told *Cherwell* about the thinking behind this: “Particularly within the fashion industry, there’s so much waste and there’s so much abuse of human rights that it was a no-brainer. We don’t orient ourselves around financial value at all. For any item that you bring into the swap you get one token, and for anything that you want to take you give one token back. That means people don’t have to be worrying about cash value if they need a warm coat, they can get a warm coat without having to bring us loads in the first place. It focuses more on the items finding the right home, where they’ll be well loved, rather than on the potential cash value of something.”

CCC found its first home in a pub called The Star in Cowley, enabling them to move the clothing swaps out of their bedrooms and open them up to the public. As the number

of people attending the swaps quickly grew, they relocated to Common Ground in Jericho for more space. With Common Ground’s future rendered uncertain by the University’s proposed redevelopment plans for Wellington Square, and CCC’s sister community closet in Cardiff being recently evicted from their venue, we talk about the necessity of protecting third spaces.

“Creating community was very much what we wanted out of the swap. Yes, the clothing is great but it’s so much more than that. For me personally, I was looking for sober accessible spaces, because I’m a wheelchair user. A lot of young people don’t have these spaces. And you never know how connecting to another person may help you in the future. We can all help each other, even just spending more time socialising and meeting your neighbours, it’s all so beneficial to literally everything that happens in your life. We were keen to not have it situated in the university either. We love it when students are there, but we also want it to be somewhere that feels open and accommodating to people who are residents. I love seeing what people pick out and the shared experience of doing the same activity, occupying space.”



Delphi tells me about how CCC’s self-defence classes, which are free and open to anyone who feels vulnerable, was a community suggestion. “We met Emily, who is a Jiu Jitsu master at one of our swaps. She said she was interested in doing a free self-defence class and we said, ‘we would love to help facilitate that!’ The classes are very fun and popular and a very organic growth for us.”

Having now organised hundreds of swap shops, I asked Delphi what her favourite find has been so far: “Ooh, I think I probably know that for everyone. Mine has to be this beautiful pink tulle skirt. It’s hot pink, it matches my hat, it’s fluffy. I love it. I would put money on Connie’s favourite being the cream leather cowboy boots she found; they belonged to a burlesque dancer who brought us this huge crate of shoes. It was amazing, we love her. And then Abby has got an excellent collection of botanical shirts. I think we are always blown away by the beautiful things that people bring in, and that was what started it all: with beautiful items that just weren’t being treasured the way that they could have been.”

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

Image Credit: Cowley Community Closet

Cherwell Mini-Crosswords

Brought to you weekly by Zoë McGuire, follow @cherwelloxford Instagram to play!

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7				
8				
	9			

Week 0: Oxford Colleges

ACROSS

- 1 Top of the ____
- 5 Went wrong, perhaps on the side of caution
- 7 Swanky restaurant's garlic butter
- 8 College with divisive architecture
- 9 Sometimes, it's more

DOWN

- 1 Summit
- 2 College that became the last to admit women in 1985
- 3 Investigate
- 4 Puts on the market
- 6 1A one's clogs, euphemistically

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

Week 1: Oxford Authors

ACROSS

- 1 Discard, perhaps as a bit of paper
- 6 Hertford College alumnus behind "Brideshead Revisited"
- 7 Under the covers
- 8 1A, as a poker hand
- 9 It helps you drive?

DOWN

- 1 Hertford College alumnus behind "Gulliver's Travels"
- 2 Watercraft that's appropriately an anagram of "ocean"
- 3 Moscow moola?
- 4 Long in the tooth
- 5 Doctorate degree

		1	2	3
	4			
5				
6				
7				

Week 2: Oxford Pubs

ACROSS

- 1 Key that might close a window?
- 4 "___ & Flag"
- 5 Called for
- 6 Vogue's competitor
- 7 Scotsman's no

DOWN

- 1 "___ & Child"
- 2 Hook's henchman
- 3 Compound perhaps found in gummies (or hipster soda)
- 4 "Land" film in which Emma Stone wears a yellow dress, or yellow teletubby
- 5 "Wig & ___"

		1	2	3
		4		
5	6			
7				
8				

Week 3: Oxford Libraries

ACROSS

- 1 Secretly include in an email
- 4 With 2D, a library, familiarly
- 5 AJ & Big Justice might give you five big ones
- 7 Lennon's lover
- 8 Hoover or Three Gorges, for instance

DOWN

- 1 Witch's whip?
- 2 See 4A
- 3 Successors to LPs
- 5 Another library, familiarly
- 6 "I'm ___ roll!"



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DAILY 1 HOUR SHIFTS

TURL STREET HOMELESS ACTION

@TSHAOXFORD

Oxford's flora & fauna

By Cherwell Photography: David Hays and Kenneth Wong



Shakespeare and the 'Dark Lady'

STAGE

Behind every strong man is an even stronger woman. In the case of Shakespeare, it was (probably) Æmelia Lanyer

By MADDIE GILLET

Shakespeare is undoubtedly the most well-renowned English playwright. Thus, the chance that the bard might have been strongly influenced by a woman, as early as the 17th century, would mean something truly radical, redefining how scholars read the dramatic canon and place women within its landscape. The influence of Æmelia Lanyer is something that has been debated and discussed, with scholars ranging from identifying her as the 'Dark Lady' to thinking her the real Shakespeare. But who was she, and what is the actual evidence?

But who was Lanyer? She was one of the first women to publish poetry in her own name, designed to attract patronage, and 'Description of Cookeham' was even one of the first country house poems. She was a pioneer in women's writing.

She was brought up by an Italian-Jewish family of musicians, the Bassanos. After the death of Lanyer's mother, it is suspected she became mistress to Baron Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain of Elizabeth I. Her fairly liberal access to education, and musical ability, landed her in the charge of Lady Anne Clifford, daughter of Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland. To enter this domestic sphere was to enter into sympathy with a woman fighting for economic autonomy – Margaret Clifford was in conflict with her husband, who wished to deprive his daughter of inheritance and neglect his financial duties towards his wife. Clifford acted as Lanyer's patron, and thus 'Description of Cookeham' is dedicated to her.

So why is Lanyer linked to Shakespeare? Lanyer's affair with the Lord Chamberlain would likely have put her into contact with the Lord Chamberlain's men, the most prolific Elizabethan playing company, which Shakespeare was a part of. This is why many suspect that Lanyer and Shakespeare had an affair, or at least met. But is there any textual evidence for such an encounter? Well, many have ascribed Shakespeare's strikingly modern instances of female characterisation to Lanyer's influence. Her namesake in *Othello*, Emilia, argues something very similar to Lanyer's



poem *Eve's Apology*: "I do think it is their husbands' faults / If wives do fall." As Emilia subverts the blame of women for poor behaviour, pinning it on the patriarch of the marriage, Lanyer asserts that Original Sin is not the fault of Eve, but of Adam, who had more agency as a man to exercise judgement, but transgressed anyway. It does seem idiosyncratic for a Renaissance man to write characters who make such radically subversive political statements. Furthermore, Shakespeare's Bassanio, in *The Merchant of Venice*, sounds surprisingly similar to 'Bassano', Lanyer's maiden name. This is certainly striking circumstantial evidence, and might suggest that Lanyer had influenced Shakespeare's works, at

least.

But many scholars identify the potentially negative social implications of attributing Shakespeare's works to Lanyer. For a start, feminist scholars are concerned today that identifying Lanyer as the 'Dark Lady' takes attention from her own merit as a poet. She becomes not a female pioneer, but merely a propellant of one of English dramatic history's most famous men. Similarly, many believe that Lanyer was Shakespeare's real identity because she had a background with courtly education, in fields such as Latin, which the Bard's plays hold numerous references to. The assumption that Shakespeare could not have written his own plays, due to his yeoman status,

has been decried as a fundamentally classist one. Many see Lanyer and Shakespeare as coincidental contemporaries, and argue there is no evidence that they had any close liaison, though they might have met. Has the history of English drama been corrupted by conspiracy theorists, who merely share a love of gossip and scandal?

Overall, there is certainly circumstantial evidence that Lanyer and Shakespeare are connected. Whether you believe that Lanyer is the 'Dark Lady', the real Shakespeare, or another figure entirely, what is clear is that she is a forgotten but truly radical poet.

Image Credit: Johann Heinrich Füssli via Wikimedia Commons

Review: *The Goat* – 'Raw, absurdist, and honest'



By MICHELLE JIANG

With this revival of Edward Albee's drama of transgressive love and family dysfunction, Clarendon Productions leaves audiences with nowhere to hide.

Clarendon Productions brings *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (Edward Albee) to the Michael Pilch studio, painfully, humorously, and soulfully. Seated in the round, the audience is gifted a fly-on-the-wall experience in the exclusivity of a family dining room.

The set (Lucas Angeli, Vita Hamilton, Fraser Gilliat, George Vyvyan) feels distantly familiar. Upon the wooden dining table at the centre, newspapers and books are strewn carelessly, and a vase of seasonal flowers is displayed proudly alongside half-enjoyed cups of tea, glasses of water, and a small dish of peanuts. Warm lampshades on side-tables punctuate the rows of audience, and a couple of bookshelves neighbour the doors.

Honor Thompson plays Stevie, an affluent subur-

ban wife. Sitting amidst the audience in the comfort of her tastefully curated home, she lights up upon the entrance of her husband, Martin (Rob Wolfreys). They joke and they touch, effortless and unsparing in their affections. Wolfreys portrays Martin, a 50-year-old architect at the summit of his career, concealing a hauntingly transgressive secret. He has fallen in love with a goat, Sylvia, the partner of his emotional and sexual affair.

The play begins with Martin struggling with his memory in conversation with his wife. Shortly after, the scene introduces the family's oldest friend, Ross (Luke Bannister), who arrives to interview Martin on his latest success. Here, Martin wrestles with distractedness and verbal incoherence, much to the frustration of his friend, and is soon pressured to reveal the source of his anxiety: he is

sleeping with a goat. Bannister consistently and impressively harmonises stunned disgust with fierce loyalty in his performance of Ross; what begins with an apparent sentiment of pride in being the one in whom Martin confides, quickly transforms into stark repulsion and despair, his head-in-hands disposition enmeshed skillfully with tongue-in-cheek farce.

While Martin's memory and emotional wellbeing seem spotted, his demeanour remains largely unfazed. There's some sort of honest assurance coursing through his despondency, which Wolfreys conveys impeccably. His speech is erratic and disjointed; it's annoying and worrying, simultaneously igniting and disrupting the fast pace of the performance.

Read the full article on cherwell.org

FILM AND TV

Editor's Picks

IN THEATRES



THE BRUTALIST

Brady Corbet's epic of over three hours follows László Toth and his attempts at rebuilding his life in America. Toth thinks he's found his stroke of luck after his work is recognised by a rich industrialist.

TO STREAM



WHITE LOTUS

Mike White's infamous black comedy drama returns for a third season, introducing a host of new hotel guests, exploring wild opulence, romance and debauchery.

Image Credits:
[The Brutalist] - Reed Probus/CC-BY-2.0 via Flickr
[White Lotus] - VascoPlanet World Photography/CC-BY-3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

A GUIDE TO GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

By TARA WILLIAMS

With Robert Eggers' remake of the classic vampire horror *Nosferatu* taking the world by storm, now is a great time to look back at the cinematic legacy that precedes it. The original *Nosferatu* – directed by F.W. Murnau in 1922 – sits within German Expressionism, a cinematic movement of stark, stylised visuals, externalised emotion, and a refusal to conform to realist approaches to storytelling.

To aid anyone interested on their journey into the wonderful world of German Expressionist film, I present this brief list of recommendations (all of which should be available on YouTube or the Internet Archive, free of charge). *Viel Spaß!*

Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens (1922)

To start with, we have the iconic horror flick that inspired Robert Eggers' *Nosferatu* (and Werner Herzog's *Nosferatu the Vampyre* from 1974). Although it doesn't feature the jumpscare and graphic imagery that aid the scares in Eggers' version, Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* uses light and darkness to create ominous visions of Nosferatu the vampire terrorising his victims. Look out for the legendary shot of Nosferatu menacingly ascending a staircase, cloaked in shadows, towards the end!

Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari (1920)

Widely regarded as the most famous example of German Expressionist cinema, *Das Cabine*

des Dr. Caligari (or *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*) is another horror film. Centring around a series of murders amongst a community visited by a travelling circus, the characters of the mad ringmaster Caligari and his sleepwalking protégé Cesare are some of the most iconic from this era of cinema (and arguably from cinema full stop). The uncanny, jaggedly constructed sets are brilliantly visceral externalisations of the horror that lives within.

Metropolis (1927)

Clocking in at a whopping two-and-a-half hours, *Metropolis* is certainly a commitment but absolutely worth the time and effort. Featuring stunning visuals and groundbreaking special effects that remain impressive today, *Metropolis* depicts a dystopian society where the rich live in opulence on the surface while the workers toil in squalor underground. *Metropolis* is also an early example of sci-fi on film, featuring mad scientists and robots galore.

Der Letzte Mann (1924)

Here is another film by F.W. Murnau, but one that is very different to *Nosferatu* in both tone and subject matter. The film centres around a nameless, aging hotel doorman as he grapples with the loss of his identity after losing his job to a younger man. Despite a rather bizarre plot twist towards the end, *Der Letzte Mann* (or, to give it its adapted English title, *The Last Laugh*) provides a fascinating exploration into the dynamics of a community, and considers both the juxtapositions and similarities that exist between the rich and the poor in society. The

film also features some fun technical shots akin to those found in *Metropolis*.

Asphalt (1929)

The conflicts that can arise from emotion versus duty sit at the heart of this drama, which depicts the relationship between Elsa, a glamorous jewel thief, and Albert, the young policeman who catches her stealing. Displaying the opulence of Weimar society before the economic devastation of the Wall Street Crash, *Asphalt* explores the lengths to which it is morally permissible to go for love, and the destructive fallout that can come as a result. Similarly to *Der Letzte Mann*, *Asphalt* has a more realist tone than some of the other films on this list, but does feature commonalities in cinematic technique, such as the use of emotive close-up shots and shadow.

Bonus: Mädchen in Uniform (1931)

Although falling just outside the prime years of the German Expressionist movement, which had its heyday in the 1920s, it would be remiss not to recommend this groundbreaking example of LGBTQ+ cinema from the broader Weimar era. Set in an all-girls boarding school, *Mädchen in Uniform* (or *Girls in Uniform*) centres around new student Manuela, depicting her romantic obsession with a benevolent teacher, Fräulein von Bernburg. Themes of authoritarianism, childhood innocence and femininity run throughout, the latter of which is ensured through the film's all-female cast.

Budget is no barrier for Oxford student film

By LARA MACHADO

Making short films is hard. You have anything between two and 20 minutes to tell a compelling story. As an audience member, they can often feel unsatisfying. However, for many filmmakers, the format is less about narrative and more about experimentation, less about a cohesive plot, or in-depth characterisation and more about an initial foray into a theme, about raising questions. It is certainly true that looking back on the short films of now-lauded directors – from Bong Joon-Ho to Paul Thomas Anderson – it is precisely the seeds of what later fuelled their feature films which strike us. But if it is hard to make a short film on any budget, it is even harder to do so on the unavoidably limited student budget.

Comfort Tanie Maseko, director and writer of *Cherubs Grow On Trees*, which was filmed during their time at Oxford, describes the production as a “zero budget, student short film”. The end result becomes, in the light of this statement, even more admirable. This is not to say that the film is perfect, or that it doesn't feel like it was made by a group of talented students, rather than seasoned, industry professionals, but that with a runtime of only eight minutes it submerged me in its world and left me wanting more.

The first thing that will strike you about *Cherubs Grow On Trees* is how beautifully it is shot – particularly its first section. The film – a self-proclaimed gothic, romance drama – follows a girl, played by Avania Costello, who has come back to Earth in the form of an angel and seeks to understand her death. Depicting an afterlife or telling a

story from the perspective of the dead on-screen is a challenge. How can you film living, material things and give a sense of detachment from life? As the film aptly puts it: “A mind can only wrap itself around so much nothing.” However, *Cherubs Grow on Trees* – through very well-executed shots – is truly convincing in its depiction of Costello's distance from what we see around her.

The first part of the film is shot entirely in black and white, with Director of Photography and Colourist Aristotelis Chrysos showing a great command of shadows. The streets and corners of Oxford are bathed in darkness, contrasted with unusually bright lamp posts that take on ghostly presences themselves. Costello's characterisation is also beautiful. She wears a plain white dress, which not only stands out against the darkness that surrounds her, but is accompanied everywhere by a faint white glow. Often she is out of focus when her surroundings are not, which further gives us a sense of her as a non-corporeal being.

This is where Costello's performance is also of importance. As the voice-over details her feelings of absolute detachment from the material world, her voice is almost emotionless and her face practically expressionless. Costello's utter indifference shines through the screen. She wanders through the streets with a strange sense of unshakeable purpose, but simultaneously of utter calm. The dance scene is great at building on this feeling. Accompanied by an ethereal soundtrack composed by Can Arisoy, Costello leaps and turns and shakes in ways that make her body seem impossibly light. The editing of this scene – executed by Joshua Luther Recido, who is also the film's Sound Designer – is very clever.



Recido repeatedly fades shots of Costello's dancing from different angles into each other, so that her movements often seem to extend unnaturally.

The second part of the film is sadly not as good as the first – although perhaps it is necessary as a conclusion. Although the red cinematography is effective at conveying that this is the scene of an unnecessary death and the reveal of Costello's dead body is undeniably effective, the introduction of a more conventional narrative in the film's last two minutes feels rushed.

Cherubs Grow on Trees is a testament to

how a creative, talented set of people working together on a film can create good art regardless of budget. After receiving a Special Mention laurel from the 2025 UK Student Short Film Festival, the team plans on submitting the film to the Oxford University Short Film Festival. Hopefully, this will make it available to Oxford audiences on a big screen later this term. In the meantime, you can follow Sixth Inn Productions on Instagram for more details as well as a trailer.

Image Credits: Comfort Tanie Maseko

Who is the Oxford Coffee Shop Artist?

Florence Wolter discusses childhood, fantasy, and the integrity of art with artists Julia Whatley

ART

It is a Wednesday morning in Blackwell's bookshop and the café is full. The table in front of me is flooded: Pencils, scattered scrap papers, flowers folded into greeting cards, thick reading glasses parted from their case (and its decorative penis sticker), a magnifying glass, an eye patch. I try to clear an alcove from the pencil ocean for my cappuccino. In the artist's absence – she's bustled off to send an email – I seem to have inherited her studio.

I'm here to interview Julia Whatley, the white-haired, eye patch-wearing, (table-hogging?) artist I sometimes glimpse, hunched over her notebooks, in Blackwell's Nero. Apparently I am a less captivating figure to her; when she returns, she's forgotten my name: "I have a mind like swiss cheese – full of holes." She assures me, though, that she is far more lucid in her art: "It comes to me effortlessly... I'm just the flesh lump that gets in the way of the vision." As she talks, it becomes evident she means this quite literally. She sees herself as the conduit through which an artistic vision is realised. Where does this vision come from? Julia's answer: "Somewhere else." In fact, she confesses: "I feel very much not of this world."

A critic once wrote that Julia's art comes from a gentler age. It is easy to see what they meant: Julia's pieces are buoyed by the fantastical and carnivalesque, relics from a world of childhood imagination. Is this the somewhere else Julia never left? Reflecting on her own childhood, she remembers looking out at the reality from a realm of fantasy; to Julia and her siblings: "*Alice in Won-*



derland was our world", and she remembers being captivated by John Tenniel's illustrations of Lewis Carroll's classic novel. Having attended Winchester School of Art and Goldsmiths' College, Julia pursued a career as a professional illustrator herself, in the course of which she has illustrated the Royal Ballet Sinfonia orchestra and rehearsals of prestigious ballerinas at the Royal Opera House, including Sylvie Guillem. Watching them dance was mesmerising, she recalls. Traces of them still

dance across her sketchbooks today – feathery tutus and ribboned calves, the effortless dynamism that seems to animate all her subjects. I cannot help but think of Degas' ballerinas, though the fluidity of her line and penchant for collage owe more to Matisse.

At 70, Julia says, she is no longer interested in commercial illustration. What drives her now is not financial, or even reputational, interest. It is something far more altruistic: Humanitarian and

vaguely spiritual. To understand Julia's art – to understand Julia – is to step into her fantastical somewhere else, and to look back at our imperfect world from there. I try to do this as she tells me her plan. When Julia's project (which she calls *Gadfly*) is up and running, she intends the sales of her drawings to fund art supplies for children across the world, especially for those most in need. She tells me: "Children aren't respected. We need to respect the mysticism of children." This will change everything. It is hard to tell how literally Julia believes this. She talks to me earnestly about a future where unnamed billionaires download digital scans of her art, while she sends paper to far flung, war-torn nations. She invites me to believe with her. That we can raise a generation that channels pain through creative mediums, who speak and are understood. In the rock, paper, scissors of the world, Julia is betting on paper. But in the collage of our conversation, I sense we have veered from the rugged edge of reality into one of her dreamlike compositions.

Real world aside, her generosity of worldview is uncontestedly genuine. When I ask where her intricate designs and whimsical enchantment come from, she does not seem to understand what I mean: "The artworks come from my mind; my mind is like that." It is simply how she sees the world. Julia sits above the bookshop making a beautiful world, one drawing at a time. If we peer through her page-shaped windows perhaps we can also catch a glimpse.

Image Credits: Julia Whatley modified by Florence Wolter

ARTS CALENDAR

What's On.

STAGE

Julie (Michael Pilch Studio, 25 Feb. - 1 Mar.)

Heartbroken and high, Julie makes a mistake that will change the lives of herself and the people around her. A reimagining of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, we follow the newly single Julie in modern London, hosting parties and hooking up with her engaged chauffeur. This retelling explores class and sexuality amidst London party culture — a far cry from the 1888 original!

Unprofessional (BT Studio, 25 Feb. - 1 Mar.)

The life of Guy is pretty empty — literally, he can't seem to remember much anymore. A series of failures leaves him with gaps in his memory and a sinister shadow that threatens to consume his life. Obsessed with Matt Damon, and as an aspiring actor, Guy's feature in this absurdist comedy is the only work he's getting!

MUSIC

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra: Mendelssohn Octet (Sheldonian Theatre, 3 March)

"One of the miracles of nineteenth-century music," is how the music critic Conrad Wilson described Mendelssohn's Octet for Strings – the vivacious, brilliant, and nigh-on perfect work of the 16-year-old composer who had no models to draw on. Soloists of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra join distinguished alumni from the Morningside Music Bridge Festival for this performance of Mendelssohn's joyous score."



Should 'Orbital' have won The Booker Prize?

By LAURENCE COOKE

I have some reservations, but first, some reassurances: this review is not going to claim that Samantha Harvey's *Orbital*, the 2024 Booker Prize Winner, is a work without merit. She really does manage to capture a remarkable synthesis of the galactic and the mundane. She excels in beautiful descriptions of our humble and yet majestic Blue Marble, rotating under the orbit of six ISS astronauts whose lives form the novel's bedrock. Her book cleverly intersperses snippets of her astronauts' personal and professional (read: remarkable) lives: their hopes and fears, their atrophying bodies, and the hope with which they pursue their duties.

Moreover, the fragility of the Earth as seen from the observation window speaks to our vulnerability in the age of climate breakdown. A typhoon is moving across the Pacific and the Philippines look like specks when you're 400 kilometres above sea level. Yet we don't float away into abstract grandstanding – NASA and the European Space Agency appear in the acknowledgements, which is unsurprising since we're also offered a very material picture of life without gravity. Think velcro, swallowing toothpaste, and sinus problems.

There's also room for political commentary, the most amusing case being the authorities' refusal to maintain a toilet shared by astronauts of all nationalities. Harvey does, however, paint an optimistic tableau of the potential for unity at the frontier. The Russian cosmonauts are presented sympathetically, and what emerges is a sense of similarity, not difference.

What Harvey has, above all, is the courage to not shy away from what she presumably considers her central mission: the orbit. We're not allowed to forget that the Earth is moving below, and life in space is not presented as an untethered foray so much as a constant tango between planet and satellite. Each continent rolls into view several times per day.

So far, so good. However, when I think of the Booker Prize's criteria of being awarded to the best "work of long-form fiction", *Orbital's* ennoblement certainly raises some interesting questions about what it means to be a novel, and a great novel at that. It is my contention that *Orbital* is at its heart an extended work of prose poetry. Descriptions abound of the Earth viewed from afar, but there is a distinct lack of jet propulsion as far as narrative thrust is concerned. The characters feel under-developed, and are really just vehicles for the fragmented reflections which provide some human drama.

Think of the great story arcs of some of the previous Booker winners. Does *Orbital* really stand alongside *Wolf Hall*, say, in its depth of character, its woven narrative? Maybe we just don't think these are essential ingredients of truly great novels, but they surely make for a more compelling reading experience. There is nothing wrong with novels whose narrative strand is oblique. One of my favourites is Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, precisely because while it might seem like nothing has happened, everything has happened.

Which brings me to something else which has intrigued me greatly: discussion of *Orbital's* length. Some have alleged that the shortness of the novel speaks to diminishing attention spans, or at least the changing way in which we consume literature. Although it is short, I couldn't read it in one sitting! The detail is so rich, the motifs so repetitive: the novel is a dense travelogue of space. So many sentences run like this one, from one of the final pages of the book: "Rose-flushed mountains, lavender desert, and up-ahead Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and a round of faint cloud that is the moon". These descriptions do have great value, but on finishing the book, I still felt as though Harvey had done a great job of *seeming* to say very profound things, without actually doing so. An interesting piece of prose poetry it certainly is. A genius novel? Perhaps not.

BOOKS

FASHION

Cheap cashmere, freezing February

By MARTHA GATHERCOLE

Cashmere is a luxury fibre, warm in winter, sustainable, but you may have been put off in the past by its rocket-high prices. Nearly New Cashmere offers reworked second-hand cashmere that is attainable with a student budget, with prices starting at around £45 per jumper rather than soaring into the triple figures. I strongly recommend you purchase one as the February chills seem to stay! Ali, the brand's founder, shares the joys of second-hand cashmere and tips for second-hand shopping.

Why is starting sustainable brands so important?

"We believe in consuming less, and being considerate of our environment. It is shocking how much textile waste there is in the world, and especially in the UK. I think not many of us really understand it, but how can you if you haven't seen it with your own eyes? How do you get across the message of sustainability without sounding preachy or judgy?"

"We believe in consuming less, and being considerate of our environment."

What makes cashmere unique as a material and better than, for example, acrylic and other synthetic fibres?

"In terms of sustainability, it is a natural fibre, so when it reaches the end of its life and is discarded, it can be recycled quite easily into either yarn, but if it ends up in landfill it will just decompose like any natural product. However, it is mostly out of people's budget, particularly for students, so I would encourage them to buy one or two cashmere pieces rather than a load of acrylic pieces, for the reasons I've mentioned. Cashmere will last you years and years. We've all had a disappointing acrylic jumper. Cashmere, although it has a reputation for being hard to care for, is really quite easy once you know what you're doing."

Do you think other brands should follow the example of Nearly New Cashmere?

"Yes, often when buying on Vinted you just end up with more stuff to resell. You can find good things, but for something special, like an outfit for a wedding, it's not straightforward, especially for my generation. I don't think we do second-hand shopping terribly well in our charity shops, it's too much of a jumble and they resell things that are not great. Why would I want a Tesco's T-shirt if I can buy it new for a few quid?"

For those who might be a bit intimidated by second-hand shopping, do you have any tips?

"Build an understanding in your mind of where the good charity shops are and just pop in regularly with no expectations. You could go in three or four times and find nothing but then another day find a jewel. I think following people on Instagram who are advocates of second-hand is useful, like @charityshopgirl. Just try things and avoid all the tat!"

Fontaines DC and the (re)rise of Indie Sleaze

By KIAYA PHILLIPS

I recently took to my finsta to post a story claiming that the Fontaines DC's Radio One Live Lounge cover of Lana Del Ray's 'Say Yes To Heaven' should play at "all my future birthdays, my wedding and my funeral." It's undeniable that recently the band seems to be dominating the music scene, with their alternative indie-sleaze aesthetic, dry Irish humour, and pints and cigarettes in hand, they are the perfect image of 'bad boys' that you can't help but be obsessed with.

Fontaines DC are at the front of the continuously growing Irish Indie scene, followed closely by bands like Inhaler who have also boomed onto the scene this past year. If you don't know them, get to know them. Fontaines DC, who originally met in music college in 2014, have grown their audience immensely, allowing them to perform at larger spaces such as Glastonbury, and next year hitting the United States, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. With artists such as Fontaines DC, Wunderhorse, Inhaler and The Dare becoming more mainstream, it's clear there is set to be a resurgence of the sleazy early 2000's scene. In this era, making music independently suddenly became a lot easier due to the advancing of technology and online social media platforms that allowed the opportunity for the indie scene to be big. Currently, everyone has access to the potential to create music at their fingertips, as well as the potential to be successful. Where one viral TikTok can change a career trajectory, perhaps it's these mass technological developments that are helping cultivate more independent artists.

We must remember that originally Indie was

also a political movement, an optimistic response to 2008 financial crisis. Now, in an age where everything is progressing extremely fast, we crave a certain type of nostalgia and release, exactly the kind the era of Indie sleaze offered us. It's not just music, it's fashion, television, photography, the parties, the hedonism, it's a lifestyle. It first had its comeback in the form of a cultural response to the pandemic, and now we can see indie sleaze as a response to the cost-of-living crisis, as we are nostalgic for an era in which the vintage clothes of the 2000s were a few quid in a charity shop, as opposed to hundreds sold by some sketchy Depop seller...

I must have listened to over fifty times Fontaines DC's newest album *Romance*. The eerie quality of the record adds a unique element to its indie roots, but it's the lyricism that hits hardest. Where the band has been applauded in the past

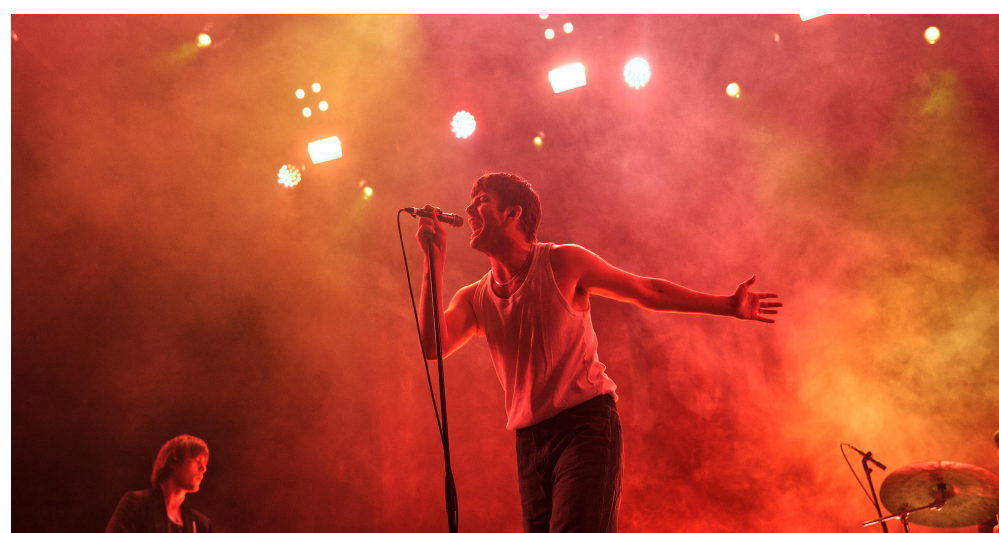
for their rawness and post-punk sensibilities, this new album brings much more sophistication. The importance of the poetics in their songwriting doesn't miss, as the truths they proclaim, spliced between catchy choruses and melodies, creates a raw album that sits well in a discography that is full of real songs.

Whether you like it or not, it's undeniable that indie is having a comeback. I can talk all I want about how much I love Fontaines DC, and *Romance* in particular, but Chatten himself puts it best when he says: "It's intense but it's beautiful. Like coffee." So, drink up.

Image Credit: NOS Alive 2022/CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

via Flickr

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



The Source

By YASMIN BEED

Copies

in the bookstore
sit a stack of two
illustrated editions,
nestled together.

we had trekked, a year
or two ago, around
every shop in London
to track them down.

and here they are,
not one but
two.

identical sisters.

I stand staring
in the cold.
they rest, watching,
warm through the window.
I should buy you a copy

but I don't.
I want them,
long after I leave,
to remain together.



Artwork by Joe Walford

Reflections on my hometown

Will Gulliford contemplates returning home from Oxford in the long vacations

Something I miss about home is the sea. There's a comfort in the fact it's always there and never seems to change. When you walk through my hometown, even if you can't see it, you can smell it. Here, I feel claustrophobic: I like Oxford, but it's weird to live in a place that seems so permanent and solid, constrained on all sides by land. The beach is integral to my town's identity. The boundaries of the shoreline shift and change. As the tide meets the earth, new environments are born and thrive. Mud and sea come together in the salt marshes to form something that is neither one nor the other. If it weren't for the groynes, the stones would migrate and shift to somewhere else and the whole landscape would look different. The council tries to stop it, but nature will take its course eventually.

There's an odd sense of liminality about this town, which is always changing in little ways, but simultaneously constant. My memories of the town from childhood colour these changes and lend a kind of discordance to the buildings and the trees. An uncanny feeling pervades the place as if it were in flux. I love to walk around my hometown; I've become so familiar with its small number of streets that I even dream about walking them sometimes. There's something terrifying about coming back and seeing that things have changed.

On paper it's not a big deal, and it's not something that can be compared to the difficulty that so many other communities in the UK face. My concern is one that comes from a place of privilege. However, it feels like the place is in a bubble: even something like the local chip shop, owned by one family for decades, closing and being replaced by a Starbucks, introduces a sense of decline. Whitstable has been, unlike many other Kentish seaside towns, gentrified to such an extent that it's almost unrecognisable from 20 years

ago (or so my parents say). I've worried before that when people stop coming from London and find somewhere new and 'cool' to visit, and investment dries up, the town will basically die. Its reliance on tourism means it must be beautiful and picturesque, but that is a curse rather than a blessing: I have friends whose families have lived there for generations but can't afford to buy their own house, rents driven up by people owning holiday homes they never visit. Oxford seems a world away: going back home to visit feels more like a vacation.

The people are what make the town. You can walk down the High Street and see at least five people you know; in the pub, there are always familiar faces. Yet, it seems that the people are in flux just as much as the town – I notice how my mates have met new friends, and it's not something I begrudge them for. In many ways, I love meeting these new people, but there is a voice in the back of my head that asks: "Is this the beginning of the end for us?" There's a strange awareness that, as the terms pass, the distance is only going to grow. There are jokes I'm not in on, new habits unfamiliar to me, events that I'm not privy to. The tide is going to march on, and the stones are going to shift, and this is something I won't always be a part of.

Image Credit: Geograph Britain and Ireland // CC BY SA 2.0



A guide to Hot Girl Hilary

Amy Lawson considers how, halfway through the bleakest term, we can still make Hilary work for us

Better late than never, right? It's the sentiment which lies at the heart of every tutorial essay, every sprint to a looming lecture. Oxford time seems to weigh down every step taken or word written, until you're gasping for breath at the knife-edge of the essay deadline. It's the fifth week of term and you don't want to run out of steam, but there isn't much left in the tank.

So you keep your mind fixed on sunny Trinity days and clubcard G&Ts on the grass. Exams or no exams, it doesn't matter when nights out no longer require queuing at the cloakroom, and when your skin is finally soaking up the first baby sunbeams of what we like to call a 'heatwave'. Maybe you think about the end of term: Back into the family fold, or not, back into bed at least, temporarily leaving behind the days where it feels as if you're waking up as soon as your head hits the pillow.

But don't get ahead of yourself. Hot girls in Hilary pace themselves; they know it's a marathon, not a sprint. They're taking it day by day, they've got their planners and their Google calendars, and are colour-coding their way to time-management heaven.

Hot girls in Hilary take what most people think of as the bleakest term of the year and give it a makeover: it's not just about cosy winter 'fits' (read: not pyjamas in the library) but filling up their free hours with social activities they actually want to do, and spending time with people who make life flow a little easier. They seek out community: there's a thrill to knowing there are other people who enjoy yapping about funk music or board games or bread.

Yet, they know their boundaries. Some nights are meant for Netflix and face masks, or phoning a friend. All too often, bubble baths are swapped for the bubble of Oxford, which can turn into a mire of social politics you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy. But hot girls bounce back. And when they do get their reading done and their bop outfit sorted, it's a glorious thing to behold.

But here's the twist. The Hot Girl Hilary herself doesn't exist. She is a figment of all our imaginations – the girl we curate, often in the middle of the night, when planning to turn our lives around. We want to be her, be friends with her. But perhaps it's enough to simply smile when she passes by, knowing that, deep down, you're just as hot as she is.

HOROSCOPES



Aries

Halfway there – recharge then seize the term!



Taurus

Respond to that Union hack. It's meant to be.



Gemini

Join a new society event this week to find your true love.



Cancer

Enough is enough. Lay off the alcohol for two weeks.



Leo

Treat the ones close to you well.



Virgo

The Rad Cam misses you. Return to her and grind.

Unboxing the past: Snapshots of self-reflection

By Victoria McKinley-Smith

My friends say I'm quite a nostalgic person. You name it, I've kept it. Concert tickets faded at the edges, postcards scribbled from far away places, love letters from a past that still lingers in ink. It's all there, stashed away in a 6x8 Selfridge's box given by someone I once held dear. The back of my phone is home to metro tickets from trips across Europe – scraps of memory preserved in flimsy plastic. My shoebox of a uni room is covered wall to wall with pictures of friends, family and holidays, offering comfort on days where the light

shines less brightly. All around me are memories, reminding me of who I once was and who I have become.

Those who are fortunate enough to be subjected to my stream-of-consciousness-style Instagram posting, a concept which would make even Virginia Woolf turn in her grave, know that they're never safe from me and my trusty camera. Being the designated photographer friend means knowing the quiet trade-off: always the observer, rarely the subject. But this is part of the joy. These memories captured will last a lifetime, the smiles frozen mid-laughter, questionable bop outfits, and moments of pure chaos, all preserved for years to come.

But I've come to realise that these memories aren't just windows into the past – they're about preserving pieces of who we are now. Each ticket, photo and memento holds a moment of joy, a glimpse of growth and a connection to the people and places that have shaped us. In an ever-changing world, these keepsakes provide a semblance of stability, serving as anchors connecting us to people, places, and feelings that might otherwise fade with time. These memories are not just our own, they belong to the people we share them with.

Through the lens of my camera, these memories intertwine with the lives of others. As much as I love reminiscing,

nostalgia isn't just about clinging to the past, it's about welcoming the future. With each new memory comes a new story to be told. Looking at the photos on my wall, I'm reminded of how much I've grown, how time has shaped me, and how the world around me continues to evolve. They are not just snapshots of what once was but reflections of change, evidence that every fleeting moment has led me to where I am now. Each photo holds a quiet reminder that the moments I once took for granted were shaping me in ways I never realised. Photographs aren't just fragments of yesterday: they are stepping stones to the future, proof that life moves forward, and so must we.

HOROSCOPES



Libra

Fix your flat's feng shui. It'll fix everything.



Scorpio

Stop delaying that conversation.



Sagittarius

They're right – time to start looking for a job.



Capricorn

Impressive digital footprint. Yikes!



Aquarius

Beware of "J" names this week...



Pisces

Buy some snacks for yourself. You deserve it.

Work hard, drink harder: The Oxford experience no one talks about

Anonymous

Since I arrived at Oxford, alcohol has been woven into the fabric of my university experience. Drinking isn't just expected – it's encouraged, celebrated, and deeply embedded in student culture. Nights out, pub trips, drinking societies, formals: Oxford demands drinking, and I've obliged, over and over again.

You're praised for drinking a lot. Being a 'heavyweight' is a badge of honour. If you say no, you're deemed no fun. The pressure is relentless when you're already overworked and looking for an easy fix, and the embarrassment of being the only one without a drink in hand is enough to push you back into the cycle, again and again.

Alcohol offers an escape from the suffocating perfectionism. After a day of tutorials where every sentence feels scrutinised, and every idea must be defended, the prospect of shutting off your brain for a few hours is irresistible. A trip to the Four Candles with your friends turns the imposter syndrome down to a whisper, makes the academic intensity feel like background noise rather than a crushing weight. It's the pressure valve that allows students to keep going.

But in a place where overworking is normalised, so is over-drinking. Post-essay drinks turn into post-tutorial drinks, which turn into "just one to take the edge off." The college bar is always there, the pub is always full, and the idea of saying no feels like opting out of the student experience.

The toll of drinking isn't just social – it's financial, physical, and mental. I've spent money I don't have on overpriced bottles of wine because I was too hungover to get to the cheaper shops earlier in the day. I've justified drinking over food because I 'needed' the bottle more than I needed my dinner.

Academically, it wrecks you. I can have a 10am I'm terrified of, not because of the work, but because I don't know if I'll be able to wake up. Once, I took a cider in a water bottle to a tute because my accent had been mocked in the last session, and I needed the confidence to

get through it. I'm never caught. I can deal with anything, I tell myself – so long as I get to drown my brain again.

Despite everything, I can't imagine myself stopping. If I stop drinking, will I still be fun? Will I still belong? The scariest part is not knowing who I am without alcohol. I've rationalised it in every way possible. I don't wake up in shop doorways, drink in the mornings or get into fights. I know my wines, I'm 'sophisticated' and I'm fine. But I've also taught myself that an £8 Mendoza Malbec is somehow essential. I've justified my drinking with knowledge, with culture, with class. I can do that at Oxford.

I read self-help books. I was once proud of myself for reading two books on the topic; only to realise I'd read it before and forgotten about it in the morning. I bought smaller wine glasses to drink less. They're still in the box. I won't go to a meeting. I'm too afraid they'll tell me abstinence is the only way forward. If I can't imagine a life without alcohol, how can I possibly stop?

How do we fix a culture that thrives on excess? Universities claim to care about student wellbeing, yet there are

"The college bar is always there, the pub is always full, and the idea of saying no feels like opting out of the student experience."

no meaningful conversations about alcohol unless someone reaches crisis point, and by then, it's often already too late. What would it take to change things? Would students drink less if social events didn't revolve around alcohol? Would we think differently if heavy drinking wasn't normalised as 'part of the experience'? And what happens to those of us who don't know how to function without it? I don't know the answers. I just know I'd like to.

CHERWELL-FED

Shiraz: The Perfect Stop for a Saturday Night Iranian Feast



By **AMANDA LI**

My friends and I went on a walk to Cowley on a cold Saturday night, starving and in the mood for something warm – always the time for Shiraz! On Cowley Road, a few minutes from the roundabout, it's a bit of a trek from the non-central (or non-Hilda's) colleges, but always worth it. Shiraz serves Iranian food, mostly some combination of meat with rice or flatbread, and stews. It's almost always packed with students and locals, with tightly packed tables, though the mandala tiles and warm lighting makes it feel more homely than crowded.

Because it's so busy, it does take a while for your food to arrive: we had twenty minutes of conversation where the entire table sat salivating over everyone else eating their dinner. I had saffron tea: a nice and warm rose tea with a saffron rock sugar stick that I got to dip and stir (or eat by itself). Their Persian tea is also always delicious. My friend got a beer and was rather satisfied. We all forwent appetizers, given the large portions of the mains, which I tend to do. I have heard good things about the starters, ranging from halloumi to fried or smoked aubergine and chicken wings. Eat away

if you're a little more hungry that day. I went with the koobideh lamb kebab with saffron rice, whereas my friends got joojeh chicken kebab (some on the bone, some without) and rice. One of them dared to get flatbread, which I stole a bit of when it arrived.

Can I just say: the portions? For about 16 quid, you get a platter bigger than your head, stuffed with rice and vegetables and lamb. It's saffron rice, as well, which is always extra fragrant and makes everything taste better. The side salad is delicious with a squeeze of lemon, which I also put on my lamb. And the kebab is so good. It's well seasoned and has a lovely sumac aftertaste, and goes perfectly with rice. You can't have it with flatbread. The chicken is even better: fragrant and slightly cumin-y, with a bit of a kick, and perfect whether you order it boneless or not. The flatbread is a great chicken vehicle, though not as good of an addition as the rice. The vegetarian stews also pack in flavour, though it's less filling than the other options. Honestly, anything from here would be good – there's even fish if you're in the mood for it.

If you're feeling a little hungry, this is your sign to go to Shiraz. Or now that I think about it, maybe don't – it's already hard enough to get a table.

Image Credit: Amanda Li

Agony Aunt:

I want to make friends but I'm an introvert and don't like going out.

Do you have any advice for lowkey, relaxed ways to meet people?



Dearest Homie-less in Hilary,

There are so many ways to make friends which don't involve a drunken night out, especially at Oxford. Whilst the loud, outgoing party types might be more visible around college, they're probably massively outnumbered by quiet introverts who prefer to stay out of the spotlight.

The best way to meet the like-minded introverts in our midst is to join a society. There are over 400 clubs and societies catering to a range of interests. From the niche focus of the C.S. Lewis or Toast Society to the more mainstream appeal of the Taylor Swift Society and sports clubs. You will definitely find something you're interested in. Plus, everyone attending society events will also be looking to meet new people. It might still feel daunting at first but once you've made that first step, everything will only get less scary. If you want an even more low-key way to meet people, you could stay within your college. Try attending a movie night, craft session or table tennis tournament. Many friendships form from simply showing up to the same events – so don't be afraid to take that first step, even if it means pushing yourself out of your comfort zone a little.

Lots of love,
Your Agony Aunt

BOOZY BULLETIN

Winter Warmers

1. Hot Toddy

A classic of whiskey, hot water, honey, lemon, and a dash of some spices. Perfect for if you have caught the Hilary cold.

2. Spiked Hot Chocolate

Who doesn't love hot chocolate? Add a shot of Baileys or Kahlúa (and maybe some whipped cream) for the ultimate comfort drink.

3. Mulled Cider

While it is no longer the Christmas period, mulled drinks remain the ultimate cosy option. Simply heat up cider with cinnamon sticks, cloves, orange slices.

4. Moscow Mule

This fiery cocktail, made with ginger beer, is both refreshing and cosy.

5. Irish Coffee

A delicious combination of hot coffee, whiskey, sugar, and topped with whipped cream. It's both an energy booster and a warm, boozy treat.

SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT

Art Soc x Turl Street



This week Art Society and Turl Street Magazine came together in Lincon College to create art for the Magazine's print, the theme being Art Nouveau.

Many friends were made over free drinks and craft supplies; the perfect wholesome Wednesday evening.

Brookes, Bridge, and the Bod: 'A Tale of Two Unis'

Sophie Price explores the relationship between team 'Dominus Illuminato Mea' and team Headington

The University of Oxford, with its ancient colleges and lofty spires, has a reputation of intellectual prestige on the one hand, and eccentricity on the other. Across the river Cherwell, its newer neighbour is a modern, dynamic, and sprightly alternative, full of industrious opportunities. Yet, it is inevitably still a place where "I go to Oxford," if left unspecified, tends to be followed by "no, not that one".

Oxford Brookes: the 'other' university with which we share a city. They've heard it all. I know they have, because I'm fortunate to spend term time and the vac in the same town as one of my closest hometown friends. Our Romeo and Juliet friendship bridges the divide via brunch catch-ups and evenings at O'Neill's.

For many of us, the Brookes versus Oxford conversation is playful banter, a civil war rendition of the infamous Oxford-Cambridge rivalry that stems from our natural tendency to try and prove our superiority, near and far from home. But is this always the case, or is there actually some real antagonism underlying these playful remarks?

The two universities cohabit a relatively small city, yet the students at each institution live parallel lives, barely interacting with each other. Brookes in Headington, Oxford in the city centre – with a couple of miles of river and an A-road separating the pair. Even the social scene doesn't really crossover. For 'Uni of', we love (tolerate?) Bridge Thursdays, TVC Megabops, the Boogaloo and much more. Brookes students frequent Bridge on 'Broke Monday' and Fishies, their sports night at the O2 Academy – supposedly 'better' than Indie Fridays.

No exploration of any 'rivalry' is complete without looking at the other side. Speaking to a Brookes psychology student about the Headington perspective, she insists: "Some students live up to the 'Brookes not books' stereotype, but that's not the case for all of us."

Brookes students are perhaps better than we are at offering respect and appreciation for the other side: "I think Oxford students have worked really hard to get into Oxford, and it's a massive achievement to be receiving an education at an amazing university." However, where both institutions perhaps align is the



sense of pride uniting the student body.

Brookes may not edge University of Oxford out on the league tables, but that doesn't mean it should be looked down upon. It boasts one of the top motorsport engineering programmes in the country, producing Formula 1 engineers who've gone on to work for Ferrari, Williams, and Mercedes. Their sports culture is outstanding, with its rowing club producing multiple Olympic medallists in the last two decades. Many Oxford college teams in fact look to Brookes to get their rowing coaches.

When asked about the typical 'Uni of' stereotypes, Brookes students can admit that not every Oxonian they encounter is that of the tweed-wearing, gown-donning, Byron-reading bibliophile type. But for them it is undoubtedly the case that the 'Uni of' crowd can sometimes come across as pretentious, posh, and snobby. However, what stands out most to Brookes students is our inability to comprehend that not everybody with an OX postcode is banging on the doors of the Rad Cam, trying to be a part of the academic elite.

"I think a lot of Oxford students don't understand or realise that we have differing life circumstances and priorities which led us to choose our universities," she points out. "My learning difficulties and other life challenges hindered my ability to achieve top marks in A-levels, but I'm still glad that I chose Brookes, as they have amazing support for students."

Any concept of a Brookes-Oxford cold war can be resolved by understanding that the two universities are not trying to be one another. They both exist for a reason and differ for a reason, so neither should attempt to diminish the other. In the words of Team Brookes: "I love Brookes, and Oxford students love Oxford. We're all just trying our best to get a degree."

Perhaps the dynamic between Oxford and Brookes students is all part of the city's intellectual flair. The older, more traditional sibling may overshadow its younger, cooler counterpart in the headlines. However, over a century of harmonious student life shows that Oxford is big enough for both of us.

Image Credit: Wuppertaler, Wikimedia Commons/ CC BY-SA 4.0

Cherpse.

Oxford blind dating.

[A rainy Thursday evening in the White Rabbit. Will these lovers tumble down the rabbit hole together or dash off to another important date?]

Mr Sports Captain:

First impression?

She was much taller than me, which was slightly intimidating.

Highlight?

Finding out we have exactly the same taste in movies, she even agreed to come watch *The Brutalist* with me soon. It was nice to just geek about stuff with her.

Most embarrassing moment?

The initial small talk was quite difficult, I kept freezing up.

Did it meet your expectations?

Yeah, totally. I couldn't really say if we are romantically compatible after one date, but I think it was a great conversation.

Will there be a second date?

I really hope so!

Miss Movie Buff:

First impression?

He seemed really awkward but sweet.

Highlight?

The highlight for me was probably hearing about all the crazy stuff he has gotten up to with his sports team. We also had a lot of mutual interests which was nice.

Most embarrassing moment?

When I was carrying my pint back to the table, it sloshed all over the floor. That was pretty embarrassing.

Did it meet your expectations?

I'd say it was better than I thought. He seemed really enthusiastic, which was nice, and it was never awkward or at all uncomfortable.

Will there be a second date?

Potentially. We did agree to go to the cinema together, but this might just be as friends.



SPORT

Varsity Matches

DANCE: OUCD reclaim the spotlight in 4-3 victory



● **JACK DANSON** writes from St John's

In the dead of night, five figures emerge from the darkness. Blazers over their shoulders and hands on their hips, they start to sashay down a cobbled street. It looks like they mean business. Over the span of two minutes, we see a swathe of other performers, clad in a variety of colourful outfits, join them in strutting their stuff around Radcliffe Square to the tune of P!NK's anthemic 'Get the Party Started'. Despite what you might have heard in *Saltburn*, it appears that the groove is alive

and well in Oxford.

There aren't many other sports that can boast a polished trailer for an upcoming competition (imagine a 2s football team trying to generate hype by doing keepy-uppies down Cornmarket...), but competitive dance isn't like other sports. The video is actually a teaser for their upcoming showcase, and it served equally well as a preview for Oxford University Competition Dance's clash against Cambridge on Sunday, 16th February.

This year's iteration of the Varsity Dance com-

petition was fiercely contested to say the least, with both OUCD and their Tab counterparts bringing their A-game. Spectators crowded into St John's College auditorium to watch the dancers go toe to toe. Among those in attendance were Raymond Chai, Lois Samphier-Read, and Amy Ireland, the three guest judges for the competition.

After the action had concluded, a hush descended over the auditorium as the guest judges assembled in the middle of the stage to announce the results. Cambridge came out on top in the Hip-Hop, Wild-card and Solo/Duo/Trio categories, but standout displays in the Ballet, Tap, Jazz, and Contemporary rounds secured a 4-3 victory for Oxford. The narrow scoreline is testament to the skill on show from both teams, and marks only the second time that Oxford has emerged victorious.

Victory in Varsity was made possible by months of hard work, and rehearsing. In the words of OUCD president Josh Redfern and VP Niamh Tooher, "it was incredibly inspiring to see such a high level of dance performed by university students across a diverse range of styles... Varsity is about celebrating our shared passion for dance, and illuminating an often under-appreciated discipline which bridges the sports and arts. We are incredibly proud of both teams, and can't wait for next year's competition!" Anyone who witnessed the spectacle on Sunday can certainly agree with that last sentence.

Image Credit: Nikola Boysova

HOCKEY: Scoreline reversed as reserves fall 5-1

● **SEB PAGE** reports from Cambridge

The only thing higher than Oxford's hopes going into this year's Hockey Reserves' Varsity matches, was the anticipation that had been building since the demolition job that was 2024. Colloquially known in the Varsity hockey world as 'BDotY' or [the] Best Day of the Year, six teams (men and women's second, third and fourth teams) play back-to-back against their Cambridge counterparts on the same astro pitch; as the rest of both clubs surround the players to hurl a mixture of abuse and praise. It represents the closest thing to a clay kiln that any OUHC player will experience throughout their degree, and the pressure makes you feel like you're sat on the wing of a 737.

With that being said, it was a disappointing day out for Oxford, as only the women's fourth team came away with a win. It all started so well, as the Renegades walked over the Cambridge Rovers in a 3-0 riot. But it all came crashing down when the Sporadics lost out on their five game and six year win streak, falling 2-1 to the poorly named Blunderers. Max Woodford's goal to bring it back to 1-1 proved not to be enough after a Cambridge drag-flick deflected off of the goalkeeper's stick onto the post, before painstakingly spinning over the line for 2-1. Late shouts for a penalty stroke to Oxford were controversially turned down when a Cambridge defender was struck on the foot at a last

ditch short-corner.

Four more great games followed these two, as only the Mavericks (women's third team) and Infrequents (men's third team) failed to score despite threatening all game and offering strong resistance. Undoubtedly the most intense game of the day was the Occasionals (men's second team) against the Wanderers. David Moisob and Max 'Schoon' Waucquez both scored fantastic goals as the former used his blistering pace to waltz round the Cambridge defenders before slotting it underneath the keeper, while the latter (fed up of his fellow Oriel fresher stealing all the headlines) binned a drag-flick late in the game before celebrating by impersonating his

nickname.

The game went to shuffles, where it was only by the finest of margins that the Wanderers took the victory, despite heroic efforts from the Oxford takers like Matthew Zahra who scored both of his efforts. It wasn't quite enough for the Os though, and they walked off disappointed to the crowd singing 'O when the Os go marching in'.

On paper, losing 5-1 across the six games is a bitter pill to swallow, but home advantage has always played a crucial role at BDotY, as the previous years' results seesaw from 6-0 to Oxford in 2022, 4-2 to Cambridge in 2023, and 5-1 to Oxford last year.

Image Credit: Emily Jones



MATCH OF THE WEEK

Anne's take down Worcester on penalties

Two of the strongest teams remaining in the Unnamed Plate competition faced off in just the first round, as St. Anne's took down Worcester.

Full of confidence off the back of a clean sheet and [nearly] securing promotion to Division I, St. Anne's goalkeeper Tom Hunter saved all three of Worcester's penalties before star visiting student Elias Mewe slotted home the winning strike with relative ease.

The Mint Green Army march on into the next round where the path doesn't get any easy, where they may face the team that knocked them out last year, in St Edmund's Hall.

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Adhish Kancharla comes up big for Oxford

Adhish Kancharla of the men's squash team came up trumps in the decider over Cambridge. With the match poised at two games apiece, Adhish swept his opponent 3-0 to bring home the Varsity victory, after Oxford fell at the final hurdle last year.

After Samuel Greenrod and Dylan Muldoon won their games and the rest of the team had battled so hard, it sorted Adhish with the motivation required to get Oxford over the line. Captain Shiloh Wu expressed, "Stellar performance from everyone, rounded off by a dominating win from fresher Adhish."

HALL OF SHAME

Whippets the only team to lose out to Brookes

As the Blues steamrolled Brookes 45-8, and the Greyhounds took down their opposite numbers by a similarly emphatic scoreline of 40-5, it was perhaps slightly disappointing for the Whippets to fall to the Brookes 3s 19-12.

While the margin of loss was only one possession, the cumulative 85-13 score in the top two games brings the reality of the result back into question. As the Brookes 1s and 2s combined only scored one more point than you, you would hope you could keep the 3s to less than 19...

SHOE THE TABS

Oxford Women's Powerlifting beat Cambridge

After a twelve year losing streak, the Oxford women were propelled to victory at home after Gwen Marsden put up an astonishing 100.45 GL (the scale used to score powerlifting). She was ably supported with 85.04 and 84.06 GL from Louise Pickenhan and India Hazlewood.

Their 78.66 GL margin of victory was also enough to seal the overall win, after the men suffered just a 27.30 GL loss.

All results

Men's 2s: 2-2L Shuffles	Women's 2s: 2-1L
Men's 3s: 2-0L	Women's 3s: 3-0L
Men's 4s: 2-1L	Women's 4s: 3-0W

Going to watch a Varsity or Cuppers match?

Email sportcherwell@gmail.com to write up a match report

Coffee break with Cherwell



CLASSIC SUDOKU

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

Printer's Devilry

by Zoë McGuire

In this crossword, rather than clues to words, you are provided with sentences, from which a string of characters has been removed, and the punctuation/spaces moved around. Identify what's been removed, and write that into the grid!

Example: The eyes of there seared up at seeing her statistics misused (8) - CHERWELL (the eyes of the resear**CHER** WEL**L**ed up...)

To get you started, two of the answers are Oxford colleges!

	1	2		3		4	
5							
6							
7							
		8					

Across:

1) What's the tug is terf, or this brass piece?(4)

6) Drinks are cool; cubes are placed within (7)

7) In the race between William Sand, whir will be used (3, 4)

8) Men aches; kids, loads about being smart! (4)

Down:

2) I'm like, super. Mo? Scared of green rocks. (7)

3) Excuse met hate? Oolong for this fish tank! (7)

4) I hate howl at Nally; gives me a rash - I'll find different gloves (6)

5) This painting pleases me - assumes give it a warm feel? (6)

Cryptic Crossword

by Alessandra Edwards

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9										10				
11				12										
13								14		15				
16		17				18								19
20								21				22		
23				24								25		
26						27								

Across:

9) Mr beast and KSI possibly best to catch metro (9)

10) Crème de la crème's natural base (low fat version) (5)

11) Greek character originates theatre down under (3)

12) Operation left one variable to chance (11)

13) Put out local ale that's unlimited (there or thereabouts) (7)

14) Hearing sounds rebound around schools' entrance (7)

16) Write your own music to calm down (7, 8)

20) Come back to take exam

again, over six! (7)

21) That guy wears different belt for protection from pricks (7)

23) How to drum "All Shook Up" getting grip of old key by spoken communication (4, 2, 5)

25) Without bearing in mind its average (3)

26) Detectives follow London Underground and are clear (5)

27) Melt our explosive, America quaking (9)

Down:

1) Extended essay subject by

2) Fringe under your bald head (6)

3) Gold crest I lost stupidly because of acts without self-awareness (10)

4) Protein replacement he sent back (6)

5) Evening Standard's headlines: "Journalists love a shot of coffee" (8)

6) Manchester United get a few more lads on the list to pick from? (4)

7) Cut down to two crotchets and one semi/half (8)

8) Depend upon Queen re-

turning to French city (4, 2)

worse (8)

15) Honestly or deviously sat upright (8, 2)

17) Free spirit Mike Lane, he'll never give you up (8)

18) Guess the residential area I'm in? (8)

19) Finished performance of "Wicked" (8)

20) Getting rid of leek? Weed killer spray does the opposite of this? (6)

21) Told to fork out crown cover up? (6)

22) Plant big morning surprise! (6)

24) Likelihood of 1, 3 or 5 e.g. (4)

turning to French city (4, 2)

worse (8)

15) Honestly or deviously sat upright (8, 2)

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24) Likelihood of 1, 3 or 5 e.g. (4)

Acrostic Puzzle

by Julian Xiao

Solve the clues to reveal letters in the grid, referenced by the coordinates under the blanks. When read line by line, the grid will reveal a quote from a 1994 book as well as the author's name (see if you can figure out the book's name!). Note that in the interest of space, words in the grid may continue across line breaks; only black cells indicate spaces between words.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																

- Character with a corncob pipe and a button nose (6)..... K3 D1 C2 H1 A1 E4
- Sleep hormone (9)..... N2 C1 C4 N1 G2 O2 B2 F3 P2
- Extravagant purchase, maybe (5) K7 D3 C5 B1 H2
- Long shot? (8)..... J1 M4 H3 G3 L1 K5 L4 G6
- Hospital uniform (6)..... P1 P4 J2 K4 E2 A3
- It's usually on the wall and sometimes off (5,6)..... D4 G1 N6 M1 B3 G5 M7 E5 E3 D8 N3
- Lost motivation (3,3,2,5)..... C3 M6 N4 J3 E7 M3 B4 A4 E6 F5 E1 E8 L6
- Aside (4,4)..... A5 P5 L2 K1 B5 A5 I5 F2
- Fringe area (8)..... H4 G4 F7 I2 J4 M2 J8 C6
- Electric (9)..... N5 J5 O7 D6 P7 G8 K6 L5 K8
- Object that acts like both a particle and a wave (6) O1 O5 A7 F6 D7 H6
- ___ of Prague, spark of the Thirty Years' War (14) A8 O3 B7 D5 J7 O6 I8 I6 F8 L8 H7 I7 N7 M8

WEEK 3 ANSWERS

Cryptic:

Across: 6) Swagger, 7) Mousers, 9) Ethos, 10) Dog collar, 11) Deposit, 13) Orange, 15) Collaborative, 19) Hoards, 20) Interim, 23) Plays

ball, 24) Basal, 26) Luddite, 27) Synonym
Down: 1) Wash, 2) Egests, 3) Bride-to-be, 4) Autocrat, 5) Well I Never, 7) Mugs, 8) Screen, 12) Propaganda, 14) Fruitless, 16) La-

dyship, 17) Chapel, 18) Emblem, 21) Tubing, 22) Babe, 25) Sink
A Terrible Zoo:
Across: 1) Pies, 3) Eric, 7) Gains Upon, 8) Ran Away, 12) Impre-

cise, 14) Gone, 15) Shed
Down: 1) Page, 2) Eliza, 4) RIP, 5) Cans, 6) Escaped, 9) Amish, 10) Ping, 11) Deed, 13) Pen

Solve our weekly mini crosswords on cherwell.org
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