

Lent 2018

**THE
GOAT
POST**



Fitzwilliam's student magazine

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Edited by [Tom Knight](#)



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Student Charities

By Anna Mareschal
(Fitz's Solidaritee Rep)



In our limited position as students, how can we best bring about social change?

Cambridge is full of student societies seeking to use their privileged position to better the lives of others around the world that are not so fortunate. From the Amnesty International Society, to the society for SOS Children's villages, to the International development society, there are dozens of groups looking to improve the fate of people in the UK or around the world. Many of these groups focus on 'raising awareness' for their respective causes, but how useful is awareness in making a fairer world? The obvious, and optimistic, answer is to think that once people know about injustice they will feel compelled to act in a more direct way that will have a lasting impact in future.

As the Fitz rep for Solidaritee, a student led campaign that raises legal aid money for refugees stranded in Greece and Turkey by selling T-Shirts, I have often wondered if a symbolic show of solidarity in the form of a T-shirt is really enough to make a significant impact.

The answer to this question lies in the gap between awareness and action. In some ways, we might feel powerless as students: we are not lawyers, journalists or policy makers and our ability to raise awareness seems limited to the few people around us.

What we do have, however, is the capacity to influence those who are in positions of power: we can write to MPs, pressurise university authorities and try to influence policy making at a local level. We also have significant fundraising-power.

The success of NGOs such as MFS (Médecins sans frontières, doctors without borders) or Advocates Abroad (the NGO that Solidaritee fundraises for, which provides human rights lawyers and interpreters to refugees) depends heavily on charitable donations. From our limited position as Cambridge students, we can put our time and resources into ensuring that the most effective charities are properly supported. This is why media awareness campaigns are so important, because, unfortunately, the charities sector runs on reputation.

People's attachment to a cause is usually emotional, it can stem from personal experience or from an emotive reaction to something in the media. The endless streams of students holding white boards that flood our Facebook feeds serve this exact purpose: they help us link a personal experience to an issue that seems so far away from us. Regrettably, this works in both directions as donations tend to follow trends that correlate with the media's representation of a certain cause or organisation.

This is why printing pictures of drowned children on the front pages of the Daily Mail has an impact and why media allegations of financial mismanagement lead to the collapse of Kids Company in 2015. Equally, this can explain why high-profile supporters have pulled their funding from Oxfam after the recent abuse claims. The main problem in the last two examples is the lack of outside scrutiny leading to big media backlash that brings

entire organisations down very fast. The charities sector is incredibly precarious, which is in my view the exact opposite of what it should be striving to be. That leaves us with the key question: how can we have a positive effect on the causes we care about? We need to understand the implications of our position just as much as we need to understand the situations that we are trying to improve. Particularly with regards to international aid, we are unlikely to have the practical skills and cultural understanding that is required to have a direct impact. What we do have, however, is access to thousands of people who have enough money to buy a £10 T-shirt or put a few coins in a donation box. We need to use our privileged position to get those who have the skills the support they need. This is where student involvement in international aid really comes into its own. Solidaritee fundraises for Advocates Abroad who are entirely run by volunteer professionals and focus on legal aid as a practical, permanent, solution rather than just filling the gaps. Like many other student campaigns, it takes existing and durable ways to help and makes them more accessible to those who want to get involved. We can't forget the power we have, but we must also recognise that nothing we can do will be an instant or direct fix.

[Anna Mareschal is a second year Spanish and Arabic student.](#)

The Admissions Gap

By Finn Manders

(Target and Access Officer)



Fitz receives an above-average rate of state school applicants, but is below-average when it comes to state school offers. What goes wrong?

Fitz is pretty decent (scientific accuracy there) at outreach. Of all the non-mature colleges, we come a solid 7th, with about three quarters of applicants coming from state schools. It's still not representative – only 14% of the population attend a private sixth form, with 7% attending private schools generally (2015) – but it is alright, and higher than the Cambridge average. We can give ourselves a small pat on the back.

Unfortunately, that is not the whole story. Of the offers Fitz gave out in 2016 – the same year three quarters of applicants were state schooled – only 63% went to that same group. Whether that's through pool candidates or not, the disparity there is genuinely rather shocking; this figure drops a further 1% when looking at who actually gets here. Both our offer and acceptance rates for state schools are below the Cambridge average. Frankly, only a few colleges are worse: John's, Trinity and Corpus amongst them. However, they have far fewer state applicants – so why is Fitz, the 'welcoming', 'friendly', 'open' college, doing so poorly?

We do have to address the issue that people regularly don't meet or take up their offers. For some, Cambridge is still foreboding and unwelcoming, and they just can't imagine living here; for others, it is everything they want to achieve, but when it comes down to it they don't meet the grades.

These people are our 1%, and through schemes like Project Access, which has begun across the university this year, we can help young people to take up their offers, and look forward to the prospect of a life at Fitz. Project Access also gives support and advice about A Levels and Cambridge-specific tests like STEP, to ensure the people that Cambridge wants to see here can achieve their potential.

However, the big issue is the 11%. Those who apply, the brightest in their class or school or area, hoping that Cambridge is going to work out for them. Many get an interview, but then *something* happens that means they don't get that stage further, an offer. So what goes wrong? My school had 1 applicant in the year above me, 2 in my year, 3 in the one below. I'm the only one to have been given an offer, but all except one got to interview. I was also the only one who was able to take up interview practice at a private school, thanks to the support of my favourite teacher and her sister, who worked there. In my view, many, many state schools, especially comprehensives like mine, really have no way of knowing how the Oxbridge interview system works. They base their ideas on rumours, the occasional (usually unsuccessful) applicant, and those articles online that tell you you'll have to count the atoms in a glass as a want-to-be History student. It's over before you get the chance.

In my view, Fitz has to improve the way we look at interviewing state school candidates, or better still, provide more support to schools with that part of the process. It's a more complex picture than just state or private anyway, and that too is worth keeping in mind – parental education, experiences of class or care, and ethnic background can also have a huge impact. However, the gap between applicants and offer holders from state school backgrounds for Fitz is deeply saddening, and I believe that the only way we can remedy this is by going back to our schools and communities.

Over the next few terms Target & Access will be running workshops to support you in making presentations and providing guidance to schools at home. Talk to your old teachers, visit the school that you know no one's been to Oxbridge from (or CUSU tells you – there's a map, link below) and offer to come back and chat about the experience. We know that Fitz, and Cambridge more generally, is a welcoming place that is trying to be more open. However, the stats would suggest that we need to put in some work to make that a reality.

Link to CUSU schools map:
<http://www.target.cusu.co.uk/E>

Finn Manders is a first year History student.

BLUE

By Grayson Elorreaga

Of late blue
has become more
blue,

and the late blue
of the sky has become
a moon-like puddle
of space.

And like
the earlier blue
the earliest blue
in the morning
wrapped around
to slap my skull
from behind,

to wake me up.

It was a sober colour,
that quickly turned clear,
like the sea.

Five Albums

By Ellie Paine

Five of the best new albums picked and reviewed by Ellie Paine.

Want to pick 5 of your favourite new albums next issue?

Contact: jcr.publications@fitz.cam.ac.uk



Neō Wax Bloom – Iglooghost

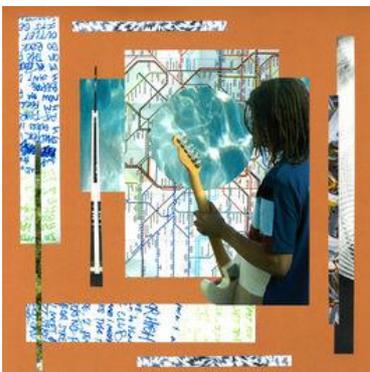
This was Iglooghost's first full-length album after a couple of stints producing for various hip-hop artists, and after releasing one EP called Chinese Nū Yr. Whilst the music comes under the umbrella of electronic music, what he actually produces is a very complex mix of frantic fast-paced instrumentals of an intensity to comparable to breakcore beats. On top of this heady mixture he manages to layer oddly melodic synth leads, the occasional saxophone sample, and high-pitched and largely indecipherable rap. While this sounds like an absolute nightmare listen, it is actually a very nice 40 minutes of well-made, exciting and tuneful beats.

Saturation I,II, and III – BROCKHAMPTON

Formed by rapper Kevin Abstract as the 'Internet's first boy-band', BROCKHAMPTON have been making waves throughout 2017 with three back-to-back albums, not to mention a documentary and a feature-length film. Despite the ridiculous number of songs released by the group this year, they maintain quality, creativity and a variety of tone. All of these qualities can be found in their song 'BUMP' from the first album, in which one aggressive verse seamlessly moves into another much lighter and melodic refrain that is accompanied by a simple guitar hook. The multiple voices and rap styles of the group's many members make for catchy and interesting tracks.

Just Cosmo – Cosmo Pyke

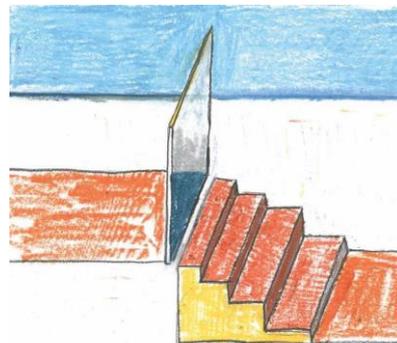
This was Cosmo Pyke's first release with more material to follow in 2018. With his low and gravelly voice, at first listen there are a lot of parallels to be drawn with King Krule's first album, 6 Feet Beneath the Moon, though Cosmo definitely lacks a lot of the darker elements of King Krule's sound. Instead, his tracks constitute an eclectic mix of jazz and reggae influences and paint an evocative picture of growing up in Peckham, with some charming lyrics, a rap verse or two, and a section read aloud from Just William.



Fresh Air – HOMESHAKE

This was HOMESHAKE's third full-length album all of which were released in the last 4 years, and is arguably his most complete work to date. The man at the helm is Mac Demarco's ex-guitarist Peter Sagar, who is behind the subtle yet piercing vocals, which are often distorted in his more sythn-based songs. This project can be likened to a lot of current lo-fi acoustic artists, and the Mac influences are undoubtedly prevalent in tracks like 'Getting Down Pt II (He's Cooling Down)'. Although, in this album, he incorporates

more soul and R&B elements to form a more laidback sound.



Together as One – Dinosaur

This was Dinosaur's first studio album, which won them a nomination for the 2017 Mercury Prize, as the token jazz album of the year, although it is a dynamic and enjoyable listen in its own right. The tracks are endlessly unexpected. 'Robin' for example, begins with a rather odd synth lead, which melts into a completely different syncopated drum section before the main section begins. The progression of each song is far from linear, but the album functions extremely well as a colourful mix of improvisations, groove and sassy-ass trumpet solos from leader Laura Jurd.



Ellie Paine is a second year MML student

Girls vs Boys: Misconceptions In Youth Mental Health



By Richard Sharman (Mental Health and Disabilities Officer)

Stigma and gender still get in the way of talking honestly about mental health.

How we talk about mental health is changing. It is becoming more open and more acceptable, but there is still a long way to go. Statistics on mental health for teenagers show a clear discrepancy between boys and girls. Two-thirds of anti-depressants that are prescribed to teenagers are given to girls., which has fuelled the narrative that girls suffer more than boys. But teenage boys are more than twice as likely to commit suicide. Perhaps it is not that boys suffer less, but that they are less likely to talk about their mental health, and less likely to seek help. Why are boys suffering in silence? Before university, I was at an all-boys school that's extremely competitive. The school produces great exam results, and in 2012 had the third highest percentage in the country of students going to Oxbridge. But I know first-hand that these results often come at the cost of student's mental health. At my school, this pressure came not just from the teachers and the establishment as a whole, but was absorbed and regurgitated by the students. It was normal for us to place huge pressure on each other, and that resulted in an inordinate number of students who required "special support" or were on the Special Educational Needs register. I am one of these. I'm writing this because every day, I saw – and still see – boys around me with crippling stress and anxiety problems, that they cover up with bravado and 'banter'. As a gender, boys are not taught how to express our feelings. Instead, we are taught that, to be a "man",

you have to bottle everything up, put on a macho front for the world. If a boy shows emotion, they are "weak", "a girl", or "gay". I've seen how damaging this can be. If a boy gets upset about something, no matter whether it's something petty, or a massive social issue, he's just "tearing"; a term that immediately shuts down, demeans and removes the importance of any thoughts that don't fit with the strict idea of masculinity. Of course, I recognise that it is more acceptable for men to be more sensitive today than in the past, but we still have a long way to go, especially with boys and young men. Why is emotion such a poisonous concept to us? Why is a man showing emotion or empathy a sign of his "feminine side"? We are restricted by the unspoken rules of society and of our own minds, that force gender into rigid boxes with rigid rules about the expression of emotion. This sort of psychological prohibition, often self-inflicted because we feel it is taboo to go against it, is immensely damaging in the long run. Men can grow up thinking that they must always remain stoic, bottle everything up, always be the strong one, always be resilient. Their problems are devalued by the fact that they are assumed to be coping and are constantly sidelined. This is learnt behaviour, and so to change it, we must start from the bottom. Of course, a similar problem occurs with girls. If a girl is stoic or tough, she is "cold", "heartless", or "a bitch". We force people into boxes, that they are too scared to escape from. The sad truth is that this is only

one facet of the crisis we have in mental health amongst young adults. Restricting emotion and personality forces someone to alter who they are and suppress their emotions until they build up and up, and eventually become too much. At school, I saw how people burn out and break down because they felt trapped and unable to express themselves. Now that I'm at university, I am seeing the same thing, only in a different form. Alcohol is used as an escape, but often results in all the emotions hitting at once, leading to panic attacks and bouts of overwhelming depression. But that's ok, because you won't remember it in the morning. This may sound like a cliché, but for some, it is reality.

It is high time we start addressing the fact that teenagers and young adults need help. We should ask more questions of the media, society and ourselves. Perhaps we will find that the cause isn't just "teenagers and their mood swings". This is not just a phase – it's an epidemic. The dark cloud of stigma and taboo that surrounds mental health is beginning to lift; but the problems suffered by young people are still too often dismissed as the effects of teenage rebellion. We must start by recognising that emotions and mental health are universal, and that no one should feel devalued, less important, or confined because of their social status, age or gender.

Richard is a first year MML student

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'The Darker the Chocolate, the Richer the Taste?'



By Danielle Jefferies and Ramnik Uppal

On the back of Fitz's first BME discussion group, Danielle and Ramnik consider the issues of race and attraction.

Fitz recently had its first BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) discussion group to discuss the impact of racial preferences and colourism on Cambridge students. A number of students of all races, backgrounds and genders attended, as well as students from other parts of Cambridge, to engage in an informal discussion. It provided a perfect opportunity for students to share personal experiences and reflect on the society around them in a safe and friendly space. We want to thank all those that attended for listening and contributing so thoughtfully, which created an attentive and understanding atmosphere in which people felt comfortable speaking.

Issues Raised

Racial preferences are problematic when entire races or ethnicities are dismissed as being less desirable or inferior. No one should be made to feel as though their race is not beautiful inside or out. These racial preferences are often based on stereotypes of how certain races behave even though race does not determine personality or behaviour. They are also based on society's idea that only a very specific set of physical characteristics are attractive.

The reverse of this is fetishizing a certain race and it is equally

as problematic. It uses the same stereotypes to infer someone's personality based on little more than their skin tone or hair colour.

This can be experienced by any race but is often associated with lighter skin. Fetishizing a certain race ignores the fact that people are so much more than their race.

We heard many ways in which BME individuals experience these racial prejudices. Often it comes in the form of seemingly innocent comments like "I don't go for X type of guy or girl" or "You're attractive considering your race/skin colour".

It might be that in reality, when it comes to preferences for long-term relationship, people know that race is not important. How often do people actually choose their life partners based only on the desire to have a mixed-race baby?

However, it is likely that racial prejudices unfortunately do impact superficial partner choices. Furthermore, even if people do not act on the things they say, they still have an effect on how people see themselves and it was, at times, upsetting to hear this amongst our group.

Race is something about ourselves that we cannot change. We should be made to feel proud, not ashamed.

It might be a passing comment for the person saying it, but for the person hearing it can have a powerful effect on how they approach new people, and the way they think about themselves. It can easily make people self-conscious of their racial identity.

Race is something about ourselves that we cannot change and therefore we should be made to feel proud of it not ashamed.

Is it just a Cambridge problem?

It may well be that these are issues faced by BME students in every university because universities bring together people from all backgrounds. Some people move from highly multi-ethnic communities to universities where the BME students are underrepresented. For other people, universities



like Cambridge have more diversity than they have ever experienced before. Navigating a new social world exposes people to racial issues they may have never experienced or thought about before. However, Cambridge does have novel features that may uniquely contribute to racial challenges. The emphasis on having educated and liberal views encourages respect for all individuals. Unfortunately, it may also have the side effect of fetishising BME individuals. Desiring BME individuals should not be a status symbol for liberal views. Desirability should be about respecting a person for who they are as a whole.

Is there a problem within the BME community itself?

By sharing experiences we quickly realized that this is not only an issue between the BME and non-BME community, but also one within the BME community itself. Despite the apparent contradiction, BME individuals sometimes dismiss

whole racial and ethnic groups as less desirable. Some even say that people within their own racial or ethnic group are inferior.

We considered many possible causes of this, from the media and music to hangovers from other cultures such as class systems. It could even be that BME individuals are reinforcing it by succumbing to the pressures of looking desirable in a narrowly defined way. For example, by wanting skin to be lighter or by desiring mixed-race babies.

What can be done in the Fitz community?

Listening to what others have to say is essential. For BME students sometimes hearing that you are not alone is enough to have a positive impact on how you view yourself. Confidence can stem from sharing your own experiences and relating to other peoples'. It is also important for the whole community, including BME students to understand how everyday throwaway comments

and actions have the power to make people feel inferior. But also to know that this can sometimes be easily rectified by everyone becoming more aware of issues and taking a moment to reflect on how they view and treat BME individuals.

Looking forward

The discussion group naturally brought up other challenges faced by BME students in Cambridge. Some of these include facing racial prejudices in academia, finding ways to express cultural heritage, whether being overly politically correct is helpful and knowing how to respond to everyday acts of racism. Moving forward it would be good to explore these topics further in more discussion groups, in order to increase awareness and provide a sense of solidarity within the Fitz BME community.

For more information feel free to contact Ramnik, our current ethnic minorities officer:
jcr.ethnicminorities@fitz.cam.ac.uk
uk

La La's Character Problem

By Tom Knight



Damien Chazelle's 2017 'masterpiece' makes one reviewer very unhappy. The verdict: not enough characters and not enough characterisation.

In his 1963 classic 'Times They Are a Changing', Bob Dylan tells us "don't criticise what you can't understand" and, as a general rule, I like to do what Bob tells me to do. But in the case of this film, criticism is too tempting to resist. I don't think I understand La La Land, but I know I don't like it.

All musicals are an unhappy compromise between bad songs and bad plots – La La Land is no exception. The story constantly struggles to find space for the music, and when it does, the songs fail to do anything interesting. Other than the half-decent "City of Stars", all of the songs fade into show tune orthodoxy, with their aimless melodies, on-the-nose lyrics and plinky-plonky Piano. Since the film clearly enjoys the musical genre, and since I'm such an old bore, perhaps I was always going to struggle with La La Land. With its bright primary colours and pearly white smiles, the film embraces the overly sweet, Cbeebies-like aesthetic of musical theatre.

Its admirers will claim that it plays with the musical form, making knowing nods to old classics whilst subverting clichés. But for me, it all fell on deaf ears. La La Land seems to take everything I don't like about musicals and turn it up to the max.

I am content with the fact that I am probably missing something crucial here. I am sure that musical aficionados will get a lot more from the film, and I can appreciate the sheer technical

feat of some of the song and dance set pieces. Which is why, ultimately, I don't hate the film because it is a musical. I hate the film because it is a bad film. The problems start with the two main characters and the fact that I found Ryan Gosling's Seb so easily unlikable. He is thorny, awkward and annoying – treating life like he treats Jazz in this uncompromising and boringly puritanical way. When the owner of the restaurant fires Seb for not sticking to the set list, the audience are probably meant to loathe him for failing to appreciate Seb's genius. I, on the other hand, thought he was the best character in the film. This has nothing to do with Gosling as an actor. Normally I could watch him struggling on the toilet and still be captured by his charm (see The Nice Guys), and we know that he can turn the most unlikable of characters into intriguing on-screen figures (see The Believer). But even Gosling couldn't salvage Seb.

He is thorny, awkward and annoying – treating life like he treats Jazz in a uncompromising and boringly puritanical way.

And to be fair, Gosling had very little to work with because, other than his love of jazz, Seb has no defining features. The scenes in which we should learn about his complexity as a character – like the apartment scene with his

sister or the argument with Mia – he just comes across as a sketchy caricature of a 'troubled genius'.

It is as if the film could not be bothered to make him into a real person, relying instead on his banal hipster comments like "they worship everything and value nothing" to point towards – but never demonstrate – his hidden layers.

Emma Stone's Mia is annoying for different reasons. Although she is not as instantly as boorish as Seb, she never really gets the screen-time to develop into a fully-rounded character. We are introduced to her as a fumbling, clumsy wannabe and leave her as a successful actress. In between, I suppose, there must have been some character development, but the audience never gets to see it. By far the best scenes of the film take place in Mia's audition room, where Emma Stone perfects 'acting-an-actor' in the most toe-curlingly brilliant way.

She manages to capture all of the anguish awkwardness and

conflict of those few moments with quick blink and a slow grimace. For me, these seconds alone justify her Oscar, but I wish we got to see more. This 'behind-the-scenes' idea is as close to a theme as the film

gets and it is woefully under developed.

Mia's self-written play would be a perfect opportunity to further explore her craft and struggle, but the film brushes over it in a series of montages. We see her write, produce, direct and act the play in a total of 7 scenes, which means Mia remains a one-dimensional character and the film remains chronically linear. One moment she is a struggling wannabe actress, until suddenly, one cheap montage later, she is a fully fledged and successful star. Like Gosling's Seb, Stone's Mia is given too little to interact with. The best on-screen personalities reveal their

characters by playing off a whole cast of personalities. They illustrate their different traits in different scenarios with different people and leave the audience with the impression of a fully-actualised person.

Mia and Seb, however, only have each other to talk to: the film has next to no other characters.

There are a couple of annoying bosses, a future husband, some ever-singing housemates and a brief cameo by John Legend. And that is literally it.

The lack of characters limits the film's potential for conflict, twists or resolutions. Mia and Seb are responsible for the whole energy and drive of the

film, but there is simply not enough interest created by either of them to keep up the narrative momentum. The result: weak plot exposes weak character and weak characters expose weak plot.

Like with all films, most of my feelings about La La Land are the consequence of the pre-conceptions I went in with and I am happy to concede that my musical prejudice may have got in the way. But I still think that there is something rotten at the heart of the film.

So, sorry Bob. I don't think I understand La La Land, but I know that I don't like it.

Tom Knight is a second year Philosophy student.



LA LA BLAND: Neither Gosling nor Stone do themselves justice.

Students – a Broke, Busy but Benevolent Bunch



By Caitlin Walker (Ethical Affairs Exec)

A brief tour of the charity opportunities available in and around the University.

The final VK wasn't budgeted for, the essay crisis called for a splurge of ASOS spending, the college bill is looming and charity donations may just not be for you right now. And that's fine. Opportunities to do good in Cambridge seem pretty much endless, no matter what your passion is, how much time you have or what your bank account looks like.

We all know how limited time is in a Cambridge term, which is why all of these charities have roles designed specifically to fit around the student schedule. Their aim is to give students the opportunity to do something worthwhile, fulfilling and outside of the library!

The number of organisations in Cambridge is outstanding (and far too great for everything to be listed here). Whatever you might be passionate about, an opportunity to make a difference will be out there for you.

Local Volunteering Projects:

FoodCycle provides lunch each Saturday for anyone hungry or lonely, using surplus food collected from local stores. Opportunities to work in the kitchen or fundraise are always available.



GoodLad Initiative aims to address lad culture, sexual violence and misogyny, through running workshops and educational programmes working with men and woman.



Schools Plus provides tutorial and extra-curricular activities to disadvantaged children from 5 schools around Cambridge.

Student Community Action offers more than 70 local projects, including work in a range of schools or with the elderly.



Streetbite, Wintercomfort, Jimmy's and the Homelessness Outreach Program all offer help to the homeless community, providing food, support and fundraising.



Hiraeth aims to promote literary expression among people experiencing homelessness of any form or who feel that their voices are not being heard, such as through workshops and street interviews.

Environmental:

Cambridge Carbon Footprint runs events and talks aiming to raise awareness of climate change issues and to support people in low-carbon living.

Cambridge Carbon Footprint



Fitz Green Impact Group holds discussions and takes action towards reducing the environmental impact of college.

Zero Carbon Society campaigns for divestment from fossil fuels as to tackle climate change.



CU Foodbank Society aims to reduce food waste across the university by provisioning local foodbanks and charities.



CU Environmental Consulting Society arranges speakers, networking events, presentations and helps student groups to work on solutions to environmental issues within Cambridge University and city.



International:

Effective Altruism uses evidence and analysis to answer the question: how we can use our resources to help others the most? The society in Cambridge hosts a wide variety of discussion groups, speaker events, seminars and career workshops.



Effective Altruism
Cambridge

RAG carries out fundraising events across the university, such as 'Jailbreak' and 'Blind date', as well as challenges and bucket collections, giving donations to 10 charities chosen each year.



Cambridge Development Initiative runs projects in Tanzania with the aim to improve student volunteering abroad.



OxCam (CU Oxfam Society) organises campaigns and fundraising events, with the aim to help reduce poverty.



CU Amnesty International runs meetings, inspirational talks, letter-writing sessions and events ranging from comedy nights to fashion shows.



Cambridge PEN campaigns for freedom of expression and the rights of writers, journalists and bloggers who are persecuted. Events such as talks, quizzes and socials can help you find out more.

Cambridge Centre for Global Equality aims to identify and resolve social and economic problems for communities in the developing world. The society recently held the International Development Conference and have previously organised networking events to link students with NGOs.



STAR (Student Action for Refugees) and **CU Calais Refugee Action Group** run campaigns, fundraisers and other events, with the aim to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers.



Social Innovation Programme provides a way for students to use research, ideas and problem solving to address challenges faced by local charities and social enterprises.

Cambridge Hub provides students regular updates on volunteering opportunities in and around Cambridge.



Caitlin Walker is a second year NatSci student.

The Debating Problem



By Patrick Nutton (Vice-President of Fitz Debating Society)

Why student debating is stuck in a rut, and why it matters.

My most uncomfortable experience as an undergraduate so far was introducing the Master to speak at a debate in front of 120 guests, at which point she took the podium and rinsed the practice of debate and debating clubs.

She had a point.

If you've ever been trained to debate, you'll know some of the tips: don't accept the first Point of Information on principle, get in as *many substantive points as you can* (why there's usually someone garbling really fast), and most importantly - the sacred rule - never concede that your opponent might have a point. "Fake news" is meant to be something foisted on others. Found in the Daily Mail, on the side of buses and coming out of Trump's arse. Yet every week large chunks of an elite university trot down to the Union to hear people speak who aren't allowed to concede that the other side have any correct arguments.

It is the product of arrogance that leads us to believe that falsehoods are for other people. This arrogance has blinded us to the fact that maybe we are the worst offenders. Higher education predisposes students to a different approach to problem solving. Whilst someone in business may view a problem as something to be *eradicated or removed*, a student in higher education will typically think that problems should be *adapted to or worked with*. They innovate, we tinker.

This is happening at a time when our supposed education is consistently not providing any powers of prediction. I felt the warmth drain out of the Union (interesting how dumb things always happen in there...) as everyone slowly realised that Trump would win. None of us saw it coming. How many of us actually know how the Customs Union works? How many of us saw Brexit coming? Who expected May to lose seats? The future is profoundly nonlinear and complex, yet we still attend events that present the answers as contained within one side of a debate motion.

The sacred rule –
never concede that
your opponent
might have a point.

Why do we do this? Because we enjoy listening to debates that preach *our* side just as Oblonsky enjoys his newspaper and after-dinner cigar: "*for the slight haze it produces in his brain*". Don't worry. It's not just us. It's the people making the decisions that govern our lives. In the words of one civil servant my friend met on Tinder the other day: "*I think people voted for it for the same reason they vote Conservative. They either don't understand the issues or they're filthy stinking rich...oh, and nostalgic pensioners*". This attitude is exceptionally bad in the context of large-scale decision making about complex

phenomena such as Brexit, which requires a range of perspectives to even begin to understand, never mind negotiate. And Brexit isn't even the real problem. Our political system is organised 180 degrees away from the challenges of our time that are coming. CRISPR, artificial intelligence, and the existential, cumulative risk of nuclear annihilation ("*What is a very small chance over a single year becomes almost a certainty in the long run.*" - Warren Buffett, speech to shareholders).

As our world gets more complex, the infeasibility of our political institutions becomes deadlier. In Europe, the same civil service machine that couldn't stop a conventional armed war is now expected to respond to the crisis situation of nuclear war, where the scale of death has increased and the response time has decreased to 30 minutes.

Von Neumann, one of the most under recognized intellectuals of the 20th century, aptly recognised this growing problem in the context of the Cold War: "*The great globe itself*" is in a *rapidly maturing crisis - a crisis attributable to the fact that the environment in which technological progress must occur has become both undersized and underorganised.*". Technology is marching on, but we haven't caught up. We're still attending debates at the Cambridge Union.

[Patrick is a second year History student.](#)

Freewheelin'

By Tom Walden



As the bucket is plunged, empty, down and out
gather towards the
harbourside, tattooed men
advise where to go next — "By them grockles; reeling it in, they were."

Their pint glasses line the walls, and she sets the Echo board, swells
intense
already with the day. Advance
onto broken plains; long spray, exalts flashing, the wake ends.

Our scampers offer little, points catching every time. A glance —
they cling. Stolid, now and again
a pebble's needed to prise them off. We
rise and wait, they loosen, calm;

So I bash, and he retrieves. H.B.— "I'll give you that, and hook them."
"Stinks: but fine, you next time".
Our knees scuff, against and together, we pull — until at last, white
concrete defends.

Up on the front, pastel-coloured homes obscure the sky; blinds
open, doors drawn, their motion
keenly returns, and holidaymakers haul past the dulcet signs;

Careering, wooden horses grind along the eye. No devotion
in this town, his pleading son;
stood between, the ocean recedes — in falls a drunk, overdone.



By Grubby Pony
@grubby_pony

Grubby pony is an
anonymous second year.

