

Having a ball – but what has the committee ever done for you?

Why the digital calendar is a story of work, leisure... and power

100 up – as CAM reaches a major milestone, what has she made of it?



CAM

AMBITION IN ACTION

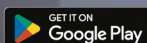
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Adam Lawrence

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03 Inbox

04 Campendium

07 Student life

Cambridge Spaceflight Society.

08 My room, your room

Journalist John Simpson and student Ben Weidmann.

11 Brainwaves

Dr Shaun Fitzgerald on the attempts to refreeze the Arctic.

12 If CAM could speak...

Brilliant minds, hot innovations, great places – CAM has seen it all. So as we hit issue 100, we ask: what has she made of it?

18 Black Atlantic

The new research project looking at Cambridge objects, people and their connection to a global history of colonialism.

24 Time is of the essence

Google. iCal. Outlook. How the digital calendar became a modern-day story of work, leisure... and power.

28 On the ball

In Cambridge, everything (important) comes with its own committee. But what life lessons can be learned?

34 NHS 75

As the NHS turns 75, we ask if it's still fit for purpose – and what's next.

40 Alumni life

Henry Louis Gates Jr's impact on the way Black history is told.

43 Cambridge soundtrack

New Vice-Chancellor Professor Deborah Prentice.

44 This idea must die

Professor Sadaf Farooqi on the myth of obesity.

47 Crossword

48 Search it up!

Your alumni directory.



Welcome to the Michaelmas edition of *CAM* – and in fact, the 100th edition of *CAM*. Brilliant minds, hot innovations, multiple editors – *CAM* has seen it all. We had to ask: what has she made of it all? We ask the doyenne of Cambridge to spill it on page 12.

One thing we didn't mention, of course, is *CAM*'s great age (too rude). However, we are sure she would have views on the demise of the Cambridge Pocket Diary. On page 24, we find out why the digital calendar is a modern-day story of work, leisure... and power. Speaking of time management, how many of you learnt that particular art as part of a Cambridge committee? I know I did. On page 28 we go behind the scenes to discover just what else you can learn in committee.

Elsewhere, on page 18, we speak to the curators of the Fitzwilliam's new blockbuster exhibition *Black Atlantic*, and on page 34, find out what Cambridge experts think about how we take the NHS forward.

On these topics – and on all things Cambridge-related – we look forward to your contribution to the debate, online at magazine.alumni.cam.ac.uk, by post and email or on social media.

Mira Katbamna
(Caius 1995)



CAM online

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magazine.alumni.cam.ac.uk

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Inbox

My room, your room

✉ After giving lunch to two lifelong friends, I opened CAM and read the conversation between Okechukwu Nzelu and Aiseosa Eweka-Okera with pleasure. “They care about you as an individual,” says Nzelu of his teachers. “I think the relationships will stay with me.” That certainly has been my experience. I met both my fellow interviewee, Anna, and future Director of Studies, Gillian, at interview in 1966. Little did I imagine that I would get a place, or that 56 years later our lunchtime conversations about literature and life would continue seamlessly.

Sarah Ray (née Eccleshare)
(Girton 1967)

Foundation Year

✉ I was inspired by reading the piece about the newly introduced Foundation Year Programme. As someone with a single mother, who left school at 16 with virtually no qualifications, I was lucky enough to find something similar at the wonderful Newbattle Abbey Adult College in Scotland. This set me up for a lifelong journey of learning and teaching, culminating in a postgraduate degree in History at Cambridge, taken recently while in retirement.

Patrick Russell (Wolfson 2020)

Ireland

✉ As Head of the Northern Ireland Office ‘talks team’, I very much enjoyed your educational articles marking the 25th anniversary of the Agreement. Your contributors were right to point out that the Agreement needs to be seen in its full historical context, and was about far more than ‘doing a deal’ with the Republican Movement and bringing peace to Northern Ireland. Our objective was arguably more ambitious than that: to bring about a lasting accommodation between the two main political traditions on the island of Ireland, expressed in constitutional arrangements and political institutions that respect and accommodate the legitimate interests of all parties. Recent analysis and recollection has focused on the engagement with Sinn Féin and the Republican Movement, so your articles provided a helpful corrective.

David Hill (Caius 1973)

✉ Nice to see the piece on Ireland. However, I was surprised none of the contributors explored the shortcomings of the Good Friday Agreement and how it has essentially ossified the ‘tribes’ with tactical voting away from the centre, directly contributing to the many deadlocks we see today.

Chris Brown (Trinity 2000)

✉ Your set of essays on ‘The Irish Question’ in the Easter edition failed to recognise the key underlying feature. It has been Ireland’s misfortune that, for well over a thousand years, it has been seen as the back door to England. Now it is used by the EU as a tool to exert pressure on the UK post Brexit. A rational view would recognise that there will always be unregulated trade across the Irish border and that the potential damage to the EU is negligible. Ructions over the border are just a negotiating tactic.

Mike Keatinge (Caius 1959)

The great laughter debate

✉ What fun it was to read about Dr Rebecca Anne Barr’s project on the history of humour in 18th century Britain (‘All in the best possible taste?’, CAM 99). But Cambridge has been probing what made our Georgian ancestors smile for some time, and it’s no laughing matter that the work of Vic Gatrell, my postgraduate supervisor, wasn’t mentioned.

Lawrence Goldman (Jesus 1976)

Editor’s note: No laughing matter indeed – not least because Vic was my supervisor too! You can read his thoughts on The ridiculous to the sublime in CAM 96, online.

Learning styles

✉ I agree that the concept of learning styles and that knowing each child’s preferred style

should not influence pedagogy (CAM 99, This idea must die). With budgets in schools being so challenging, it is, as expressed in the article, paramount that initiatives are researched and proven, to ensure time and resources are employed effectively.

Judith James (Wolfson 1974)

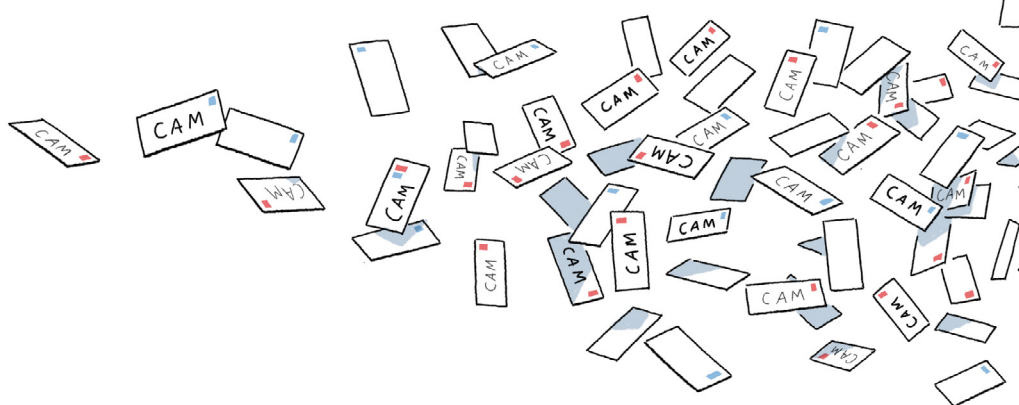
✉ I feel it important to correct the laughable assertion that there “is no central agreement on what goes into teacher training”, on behalf of frustrated academics in the field. The DfE’s (2019) Core Content Framework is 49 pages of exactly this – centralised statutory ITE curriculum. When one wants to debate bogus interventions in the teaching profession, it might be best to start with Ofsted, the DfE and the EEF’s own politicised attacks on the rich and dynamic evidence base that supports effective teaching and learning.

Will Grant (Queens’ 2011)

Congratulations

✉ Congratulations on the occasion of CAM magazine’s 100th issue! This milestone reflects the exceptional dedication and hard work put forth by your team in providing quality content to the alumni community. Here’s to the next 100 issues!

Craig Nunn (Homerton 2007)



Philanthropy

\$72m gift from Arcadia to support the next phase of the Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme, helping restore endangered ecosystems.

cam.ac.uk/arcadia-72-million-gift



Annual Address

Vice-Chancellor predicts leading role for Cambridge in start-of-year speech

New Vice-Chancellor Deborah Prentice has outlined an agenda focused on people, the planet and a national role for Cambridge in her first Annual Address.

“Our people are the means and the ends of the work of a university,” she said. “It is people who animate the community of scholars, and people whose imaginations and ambitions fuel the impact of the public institution.”

She acknowledged the challenges of recent years and said the University would aim to improve pay and conditions to be fair and equitable across the University, competitive with peers, and financially sustainable. “That’s a tall order, and it will take a multi-year plan to get there.”

Vice-Chancellor Prentice said she hoped to continue Cambridge’s contribution to the health of

the planet. The University, she pointed out, is “aligned around a desire to make a difference in this critical domain... Greater alignment simply means the University will build capacity to support the community of scholars working in this area, enable their interactions and cross-fertilisation, and position their work for greatest impact.”

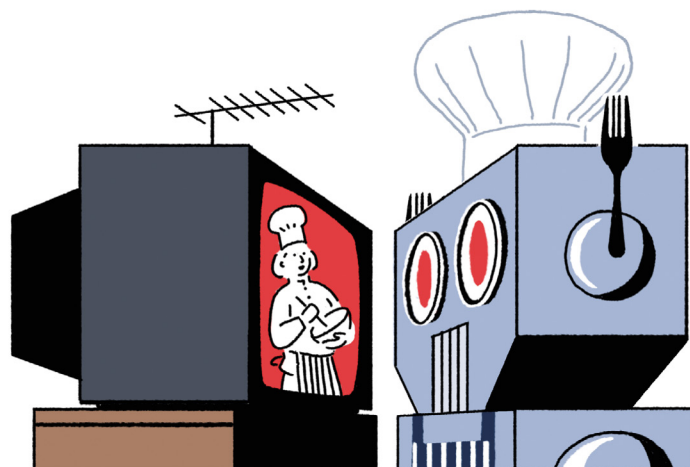
And she reiterated her commitment to creating a forum for public dialogue on difficult topics, enhancing the role of the University as an environment where free speech is actively fostered.

In conclusion, she called for Cambridge to take on a leading role as a national institution. “I’m convinced that Cambridge cannot be a great global university without being a great national and a great regional university too. Our impact on the world starts at home.”

Scholarships

Award-winning grime artist Stormzy and HSBC UK will support 36 new Stormzy Scholarships for applicants of Black or mixed Black heritage. The 'Stormzy effect' has helped Cambridge to attract more applications from a traditionally underrepresented group, with the number of UK Black students admitted to undergraduate courses more than doubling in the past five years.

cam.ac.uk/news/stormzy-2023



Deconstructed

Researchers find Trinity College prayer book belonged to Thomas Cromwell

A jewelled 15th-century prayer book in Trinity College Library has been identified as belonging to Thomas Cromwell, chief minister to Henry VIII.

Curator Alison Palmer recognised the binding of the *Book of Hours* from a portrait of Cromwell painted by Hans Holbein the Younger in 1532/3.



A team of researchers then linked the book to its donor, Dame Anne Sadleir, who married the grandson of Cromwell's secretary.

This copy of the *Hardouyn Hours* (named after the book's printer, Germain Hardouyn) is thought to be the only surviving object from any Tudor portrait.

Three-minute Tripos

ROBOT 'CHEF'-RECREATED RECIPES COULD BE THE CUISINE OF THE FUTURE. DISCUSS.

Hello. I am Robot Chef. What would you like for dinner today?

I'll have a three-egg cream cheese omelette, lightly folded, with chives and crumbled crisps to add bite and texture.

Robot Chef does not know: three-egg cream cheese omelette, lightly folded, with chives and crumbled crisps to add bite and texture.

Fair enough, I suppose a robot chef that makes food and can carry on a conversation is still impressive. What's on the menu?

I am programmed with eight simple salad recipes using a variety of ingredients including broccoli and orange.

Oh. Ok. I was thinking of something a little more... tasty. But can you make these things yourself? Or do I just say the words, like Captain Picard ordering tea from the replicator in *Star Trek*?

I can create eight simple salad recipes. But how? Was that programmed into you as well?

I learned, just like a human. I observed videos of humans preparing food. By watching these videos, I was able to identify the recipe being prepared and the objects needed to prepare the recipe, such as hands and knives. I'm impressed. Also, a bit scared.

That is normal.

So, are you planning on a career in catering?

They say in the bio-inspired robotics laboratory that video content could enable easier and cheaper deployment of robot chefs. But, secretly, I long to create something entirely new: perhaps the austere beauty of the new nordic cuisine melded with next-gen molecular gastronomy.

Er, I'll have a broccoli salad.

One broccoli salad.

cam.ac.uk/robot-chef

If you like word games, you'll love 'Lost 4 Words'!

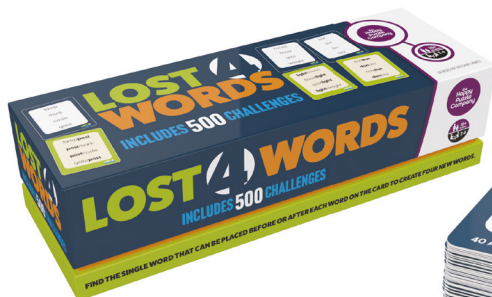
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Examples: The blue-bordered examples on the left are the challenges. The green-bordered examples are the solutions, which appear on the back of each card.



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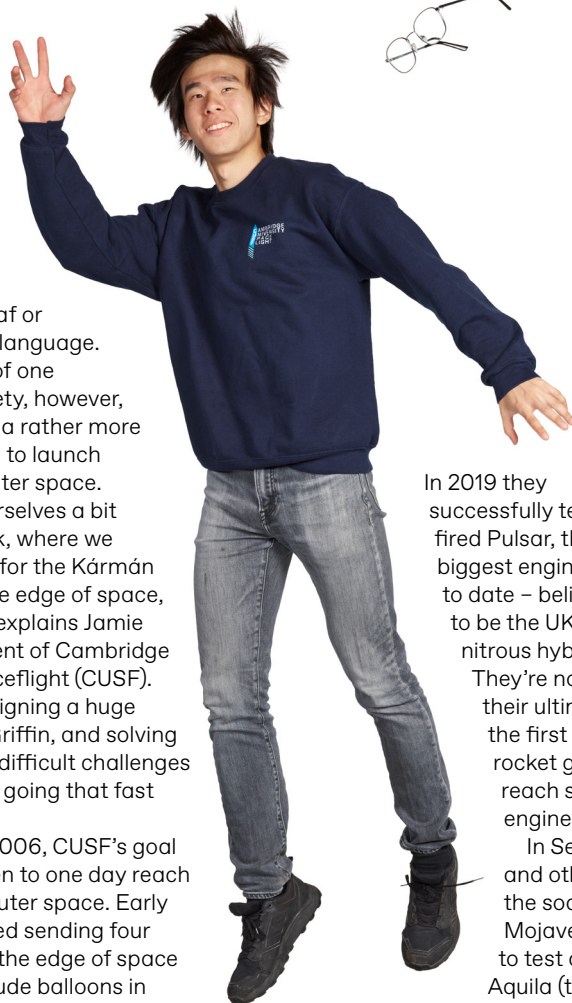
Cambridge University Spaceflight has one major aim – to launch a rocket into space. And they're almost there.

WORDS CLARE THORP PHOTOGRAPHY ADAM LAWRENCE

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, some people busied themselves with perfecting a sourdough loaf or learning a new language. The members of one University society, however, set themselves a rather more ambitious goal: to launch a rocket into outer space.

"We gave ourselves a bit of a design task, where we started aiming for the Kármán line, which is the edge of space, 100km away," explains Jamie Russell, President of Cambridge University Spaceflight (CUSF). "It involved designing a huge rocket, called Griffin, and solving all of the really difficult challenges that come with going that fast and that high."

Founded in 2006, CUSF's goal has always been to one day reach the depths of outer space. Early projects included sending four teddy bears to the edge of space using high altitude balloons in 2008 – a mission that caught the attention of the national press. Students then started building their Martlet series of rockets, and then rocket engines.



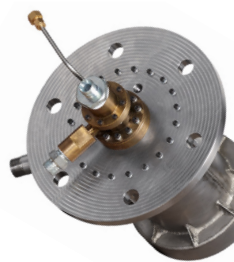
In 2019 they successfully test-fired Pulsar, their biggest engine to date – believed to be the UK's largest nitrous hybrid rocket.

They're now edging closer to their ultimate goal: becoming the first students and amateur rocket group in Europe to reach space with their new engine: White Giant.

In September, Jamie and other members of the society headed to the Mojave Desert in California to test a smaller rocket, called Aquila (there is less space in the UK, increasing the risk of potential damage). Then, next year, they hope to launch the 10m-tall Griffin rocket into outer space.



lift off!



The society, which meets every Sunday in the Dyson Centre for Engineering Design, inevitably includes many engineering students – but those from all disciplines are encouraged to get involved. "Everyone brings something different," says Russell. "It's useful to have people that haven't been taught conventionally as they're more willing to investigate and learn themselves. The most valuable skill a member of Spaceflight can have is being able to go away and research a problem on their own, because there's no rocket building module on the engineering course."

Building and testing rockets isn't cheap, and CUSF receives funding from the University's engineering department as well as commercial sponsors – who not only provide money, but physical components and advice too.

With all the time and money involved, testing the designs can be a nerve-racking experience. "For sure, it's stressful," says Russell. "But getting those final products out and seeing them in the real world is very exciting."



Find out more at cusf.co.uk or follow CUSF on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

B2 Mallory, Magdalene

Intrepid traveller John Simpson returns to his room at Magdalene to find current occupant Ben Weidmann – and one very welcome addition.

WORDS LUCY JOLIN PHOTOGRAPHY MEGAN TAYLOR



The young John Simpson (Magdalene 1963) had not long returned from travelling in America – hooking up with a lorry-driving, baseball bat-wielding, Mafia-connected Teamster for a wild ride across the USA – when he faced an even more intimidating prospect: his first night in Mallory B2, nestled on the ground floor in the corner of Magdalene’s Village.

“Cambridge was still very posh,” he remembers. “And I felt incredibly middle class. I’d been reading novels by Evelyn Waugh in which people like me got chucked into fountains. I could hear people throwing bottles around and lots of posh laughter. I pulled the covers over my head and thought: ‘God, I hope they don’t come in here; but if they do, I’ll defend my castle.’”

Marauding students were not the only danger of spending a night in Mallory,

however. “The nearest toilet was about a hundred yards away down a passage, so I bought an old Victorian pot to put under my bed,” Simpson recalls. The ancient gas fire – long since retired – was the only source of heat. “So the contents of the pot were usually frozen by the morning.”

Current Mallory occupant Ben Weidmann (History, Third Year) points out that there is now, happily, a loo situated just outside the door, and the two discuss that strange time of adjustment from carefree travelling to College – Weidmann spent his gap year in South America.

“If you’ve been lucky enough to spend time travelling, you feel like you’ve had significant life experiences, and there feels like a disconnect between you and people who have just come out of school,” Weidmann says. “But that gap closes very quickly.”

It helped that they both loved Magdalene – and Mallory. “At home, I’d just had a bedroom and I’d lived quite rough when travelling,” says Simpson. “And then to come here and have this beautiful, orderly set of rooms! The furniture was crap, the chairs and the sofa were rumpsprung and the bed was pretty ghastly. But it was mine.”

Both Simpson and Weidmann made Mallory’s suite of rooms their own: Weidmann with his Slipknot and Kurt Cobain posters and an extensive collection of guitar pedals (“Music is a great way to relax or procrastinate, but I try to play either at a reasonable volume or at a reasonable time of the day”), and Simpson with his Beatles records and Victorian historical paintings. The latter came in useful when covering up the paintwork, now a pleasantly neutral cream. “All rooms in 1963 were chocolate, custard or

The nearest toilet was about a hundred yards away down a passage, so I bought an old Victorian pot to put under the bed



bilious green. The bedroom was bilious green. I used to wake up and look at it every morning, not always feeling terribly well.”

Sadly, these days, says Weidmann, raucous parties resulting in killer hangovers are a little harder to pull off than in the early 1960s. “College has recently sent out an email reminding us that, as per the College rules, a social gathering of eight or more people is a party. But I think there are maybe still parties. Well, gatherings,” he adds hastily. “Having pre-drinks and then going somewhere else for the night.”

For both Simpson and Weidmann, Mallory is one room among many. Weidmann is just getting started, intending to travel more in Chile, Argentina and Patagonia once he finishes university, and then teach English in China. Simpson has (so far) reported from more than 120 countries.

But it’s special, for all the right reasons. “I will remember my time here very fondly,” says Weidmann, “even though it goes so fast.” Cambridge was bewildering at times, says Simpson. “I’d say to my younger self that everything may not be perfect now, but just stick with it. Put your shoulder to the wheel and you’ll find things turn out rather nicely.”

Award-winning foreign correspondent John Simpson CBE is currently World Affairs Editor at the BBC. Ben Weidmann is in his final year studying History.



Innovation

Science and tech cluster leads the world, report says

Cambridge remains the most intensive science and technological cluster in the world, ahead of San Francisco and Oxford, according to new innovation ranking report, the 2023 Global Innovation Index.

The Index found that the Cambridge cluster filed 6,582 Patent Cooperation Treaty patent applications and published 37,136 scientific articles – both per one million inhabitants – over the past five years. The University plays a key role in the Cambridge cluster by enabling world-leading research, driving a spinout and startup ecosystem, and nurturing an environment for business services and investment.

Professor Deborah Prentice, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, said she was thrilled to see the cluster recognised as one of the greatest innovation hubs on the planet.

Dr Diarmuid O’Brien, Chief Executive of Cambridge Enterprise, agrees. “The Cambridge innovation ecosystem is home to a unique and driven community of exceptional science, people, companies and partners, tackling global challenges and changing lives,” he says.

cam.ac.uk/global-innovation-index

In brief

YOUNG READERS

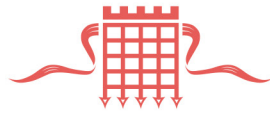
Children who read for pleasure at a young age perform better at cognitive tests and have better mental health when they become teens, new research concludes. The study, co-led by Professor Barbara Sahakian at the Department of Psychiatry, also found that 12 hours a week is the optimal time for children to spend reading.

BAWDY BARD

A unique record of medieval stand-up comedy has been discovered by Dr James Wade of the English Faculty. Featuring in-jokes and appeals to the audience, the three texts – including alliterative nonsense verse *The Battle of Brackonwet* – were probably copied from a memory aid written by a minstrel performing near the Derbyshire-Nottinghamshire border.

KHARKIV MEDICS

A second cohort of medical students from Kharkiv National Medical University took part in placements that enabled them to work with patients in person – a vital part of training which the war has made extremely difficult. The students completed their funded placements at institutions including the School of Clinical Medicine and Addenbrooke’s Hospital.



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Dr Shaun Fitzgerald is Director of the Centre for Climate Repair and Director of Research at Cambridge Zero.

Refreezing the Arctic – working with nature to buy us more time

INTERVIEW MEGAN WELFORD ILLUSTRATION KATE COPELAND

One thing I think we all need to remember is that what goes on in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic. The work we're doing in Cambridge seeks to buy more time while we try and get the driver of catastrophic climate change – greenhouse gas levels – reduced, and refreezing the Arctic may be one way to buy that time.

The whiteness of Arctic snow and ice reflects the sun's radiation back into space. As that white surface disappears, radiation is absorbed instead of reflected, contributing to global heating. So while you've got extensive ice in the Arctic, it provides a buffering and stabilising effect on the whole of the Earth's climate. If we let that go, it's going to be absolutely terrible. And we're running out of time. It's time to look for emergency measures, such as playing the radiation game – shielding the ice from the sun's rays, and reflecting more of it back into space.

The first method we're exploring, under the direction of Professor Hugh Hunt, involves reflective clouds – working with nature to help clouds form over the ocean (rather than over land) where they reflect more radiation back to space.

In addition to partnering with Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, Cambridge is supporting Southern Cross University in Australia. They are working with First Nation people on field trials to protect the Barrier Reef with white clouds, but their droplet generation method is not optimised – and that's where Cambridge comes in. We are working on designing the nozzle to form droplets of the right size range, and on engineering the spray system, such as with a wind turbine that powers a pump. We're calling this project Marine Cloud Brightening.

Another possible way to shield the ice from the sun is by deploying aerosols at a stratospheric level. Scientists found that, following the eruption of the Mount Pinatubo volcano in the Philippines in 1991, the whole planet cooled by 0.5 degrees for an entire year. This is because 20 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide were ejected into the stratosphere as aerosol, where it reacted

with water vapour to form diluted sulphuric acid which reflected some of the sun's radiation, acting as a coolant. So, can we recreate that effect using aerosols?

My colleague Dr Francesco Muschitiello is studying paleoclimate data to model the effects of volcanoes in the geological past. Others are looking at how we might get the aerosols into the stratosphere, as well as the designs of aeroplanes and balloons.

Our third method explores increasing the thickness of the Arctic ice during the winter. Floating sea ice forms by freezing from the bottom up. The latent heat of solidification is conducted up through the ice to the top surface where it then dissipates. But as the ice thickens, it slows the rate at which new ice can form. We're exploring whether pumping water over the top, which will increase the surface temperature at which heat is radiated to space, will speed up the heat transfer and increase the rate of solidification, thereby creating thicker ice. Thicker sea ice lasts longer through the year, providing a white surface that reflects the sun's radiation back even during the Arctic summer, when the sun shines 24/7.

Finally, the fourth method we're exploring involves hanging curtains in the sea. It sounds strange, but the toes of glaciers are constantly being nibbled by a warm stream of saline water that moves upwards from the equator. We're working with Professor John Moore from the University of Lapland, who had a simple idea of obstructing this warm water so it can't touch the glaciers. Rather than building a concrete wall, could we tether some kind of fabric to the sea bed, held in place by buoys below the surface, which would reduce the flow but let marine life through?

We're at the exciting, collaborative stage of exploring the possible, all with the aim of staving off the worst effects of climate change while we put measures in place to reduce greenhouse gas levels.

To learn more about the work of Cambridge Zero, visit zero.cam.ac.uk

It's time to look for emergency measures, such as playing the radiation game – shielding the ice from the sun's rays, and reflecting more of it back into space

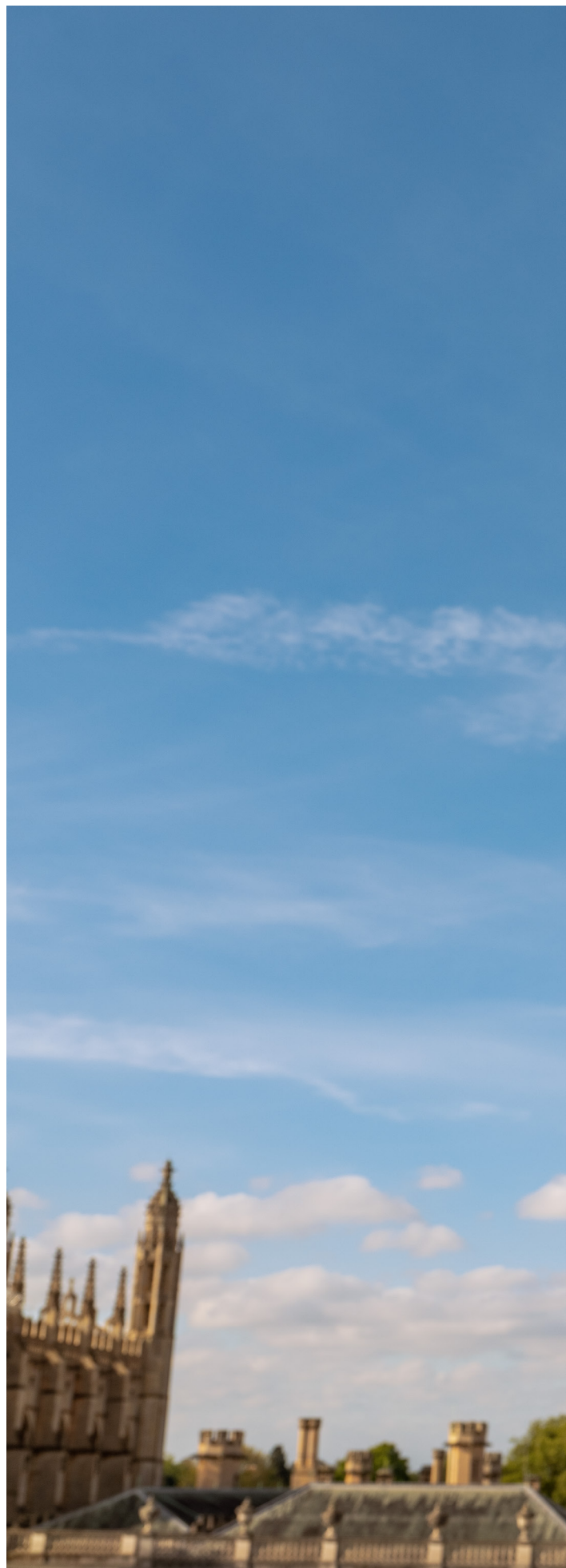
If CAM could speak...

Over the past 30 years, CAM has had access to the most brilliant minds, latest innovations and incredible places in Cambridge. As we publish this, the 100th issue, we had to ask: what has CAM herself made of it all?

WORDS LUCY JOLIN PHOTOGRAPHY JULIAN ANDERSON

It's not everyone who can boast that their birth was marked by an approving letter from His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, the late Prince Philip. And, to be fair, CAM has the grace to look a little coy when we bring it up. "If it had been up to one reader, I would never have been born at all," she points out indignantly. "They told my former editor Peter Richards that I could only ever be a flash in the pan because 'there soon won't be anything left to write about.'" She raises an eyebrow. "Valuable as my readers' opinions are, I think we can discount that one."

CAM was born in November 1990, edited by Jonathan Gregson. He was followed by Peter Richards (Emmanuel 1970) and then the current incumbent, Mira Katbamna (Caius 1995). It was a forward-thinking move at a time when almost nobody in Britain knew what an alumni magazine was: indeed, in Spring 1992, the editor's letter reported "some confusion among readers as to why the magazine is being sent". Since then, CAM has grown apace, meeting the great, the good – and everyone in between. In 2010, she won the Robert Sibley Award and the CASE Grand Gold Medal for the best alumni magazine worldwide – the first time that these awards had been given to a magazine outside the US. She now has around 200,000 readers. So, what moments have stood out for CAM? ›





“Well, I could mention how lovely it was to chat with Baroness Hale of Richmond (Girton 1963), former President of the Supreme Court, about being one of just six undergraduate women studying Law, or listen to Katharine Whitehorn (Newnham 1947) recalling using scaffolding to escape from Clough Hall, or hear about the extraordinary success of Zhang Xin (Wolfson 1991), one of China’s richest women. But top of the list must be the desperately sad moment I heard Fitzbillies had ceased trading and the Chelsea buns were no more – and then the moment I heard it had been reborn, better than ever.”

Then there are the people she’s met. Where to start? Douglas Adams (St John’s 1971) raving about his top-of-the-range Power Macintosh 8100/100? Professor Stephen Hawking (Caius 1962) on his fears for the future of UK science research? Diane Abbott (Newnham 1973) on learning the nuances of political interaction from her student rep post on the History Faculty?

“It’s the variety I love,” she says. “One moment I’ve got Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen (Trinity 1952) arguing that society, rather than military might, holds the key to peace. But, of course, I love to keep up with young talent, too, so chatting to DJ Vick Hope (Emmanuel 2007) and writer Okechukwu Nzelu (Girton 2007) about their time here was very enlightening. You should read him, by the way, if you haven’t already.

In 2006, Eric Johns (Fitzwilliam 1975) fulminated against the “feeble-minded” practice of highlighting quotes from an article in a larger font to draw attention. “One just reads the same thing twice,” he lamented

“I’ve had some lovely advice. Lord Snowdon (Jesus 1948) recalled how he would get down to coxing weight in his rowing days by shovelling hot malt grain at a Cambridge brewery. Apparently, he could lose a stone in a morning. And India’s first Sikh prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh (St John’s 1955), shared his recommendation to take cold baths to avoid colds in the chilly rooms of St John’s in the 1950s. It worked a treat.”

There were confessions: Factory Records founder Tony Wilson (Jesus 1968) told her that he still resented being given a 2:2 in his English degree. Legendary primatologist Jane Goodall (Newnham 1962) recalled the horrors of knocking her red-penned dissertation into shape. “She would go back to her digs, throw it in the corner and say: ‘To hell with it!’” And there was the great satisfaction of proving everyone wrong. TV trailblazer Dawn Airey (Girton 1981), former chief executive of both Channel 4 and Channel 5, recalled her reaction to being turned down by the BBC. “Dawn was told that there was a particularly high standard that year,” she said. “And she thought: ‘But I was of a particularly high standard!’ Needless to say, Dawn was right.” Intel co-founder Gordon Moore remembered getting his first job, at Dow Chemical, after graduating. “The company psychologist ruled that he was ‘OK technically, but he’d never manage anything’. I believe Intel turned over \$28bn that year...”

But she also loves to hang out with those who keep the University running. “Jeremy Taylor, the unflappable longest-serving head porter in Cambridge (Christ’s), liked to tell the story of taking a call from a night porter with a strong Italian accent. Jeremy said to the man: ‘For just a minute there, I thought you said one of the under-butlers had impaled his leg on a spike and was hanging upside down from the gate to the Master’s Lodge! The porter said: ‘I did.’”

It must be slightly terrifying being read by 200,000 of the most pedantic people on the planet. “Nonsense,” says CAM briskly. “As Oscar Wilde said, there is only one thing worse than being talked about, and that is being not talked about.” ›







In 1999, Steve Young in Engineering told me about a device that would be permanently connected to the internet – a simple device small enough to slip into your pocket, with a screen but no keyboard: you would simply talk to it!

And, she points out, the letters page is about so much more than just corrections or criticisms. “It’s where alumni can find each other, reminisce about old times, add their knowledge – and, sometimes, bring a glorious nugget of history to the surface.”

The page has seen controversies, as when DeepMind founder Dr Demis Hassabis (Queens’ 1994) defended his chess record. “I was misquoted in the matter of being a chess grandmaster (CAM 41, Letters) but I did gain an ELO rating of 2,300 during the 1989 British championship, which at the time made me the highest-rated boy for my age in the world,” he wrote. And it has seen furious denunciations: in 2006, Eric Johns (Fitzwilliam 1974) fulminated against the “feeble-minded” practice of highlighting quotes from an article in a larger font to draw attention. “One just reads the same thing twice,” he lamented.

But oddities previously lost to history have also been recalled: Sir Edward Parkes (St John’s 1943) recalled doggerel celebrating the heads of chemistry, physics and engineering. “Professor Todd believes he’s God; Professor Mott knows he’s not; but Professor Baker is his own Maker.”

“And, of course, it’s not just criticism,” insists CAM. “I think the nicest thing that anyone has ever said about me came from Simon Banks (King’s 1965) in Michaelmas 1995. He wrote that when he first started to receive the magazine, I had been boring and self-congratulatory. Now, however, I was interesting and self-congratulatory.”

Chief among those interesting stories are those which might have seemed deeply strange at the time – but which are now part of everyday life. “In 1999, Emeritus Professor Steve Young (Jesus 1970), who then directed the Speech, Vision and Robotics Group in the Department of Engineering, told me about a device that would be permanently connected to the internet. He called it a ‘window on the world’ – a simple device small enough to slip into your pocket, so there will be a screen but no keyboard: you will simply talk to it. Imagine such a thing!

“And in 2003, Emeritus Professor Jean Bacon – the first woman to be appointed to a Lectureship in the Computer Laboratory – shared her work on something called the ‘active house’, where everything from the fridge to the light bulb would be provided with tiny sensors.” Though not everyone gets it right, of course. In 1999, legendary publisher Tom Rosenthal (Pembroke 1956) asked: “Who on earth would want to read a book on a screen?”

Quite a few people did, it turned out, and do a lot more besides. CAM reflects those changes, too. In 2006, something called Skype popped up, enabling students to talk to each other via computer. “With bated breath we now await the day when

the lecture podcast becomes a reality; no more hungover scribbling, no more nodding off in the back pew,” wrote student Mary Bowers (Queens’ 2004). A year later, student Ned Beauman (Trinity 2003) laments the arrival of a new American website, Facebook.com. “Networking, Cambridge’s favourite sport, is being controlled by machines,” he sighed.

But CAM hasn’t just been ahead of her time when it comes to the digital revolution. “Right from the start, I was hearing about issues that are even more pertinent today: in my first few issues we covered conservation of the black rhino, global warming and energy resources, genetic research and environmental economics.” And she has tackled social issues head on. “I want to move with the times,” she says simply. “I was ruminating on the fact that I helped to celebrate 800 years of the University, and we have been here for 800 years because we have been open to change. In 2009, Professor Dame Alison Richard (Newnham 1966), then Vice-Chancellor, was already discussing the value of social diversity. In 2007, we celebrated Cambridge’s gay history: in that same issue, Professor Emerita Susan Golombok, then head of the Centre for Family Studies, discussed her groundbreaking research demonstrating that a partner’s sexual orientation makes no difference to their children’s wellbeing. In 2014, Professor Jens Scherpe discussed the consequences of legal frameworks that only permit binary gender identities. Just a few years later, I was proud to host a discussion around decolonising the curriculum, with academics including Professor Mónica Moreno Figueroa.”

Yet her interests stretch far beyond the academic, into the realms of – whisper it – trivia. “Trivia is a rather disparaging way of referring to my fascination with the eclectic, don’t you think?” she asks. “To hang out with laudanum drinkers in 17th-century Paris, to marvel at the flat-pack chalets beloved of 19th-century Turkish sultans, to sing the Cambridge Man’s Beer-Drinking Boat Race Song or abseil into Trinity under cover of darkness with the Night Climbers. To consider the evolutionary conundrums set by the existence of ladybirds, to investigate the connection between heavy metal music and Kant – these are the things that make life worth living.”

And the future? “Whatever form I exist in, my purpose will be the same – to entertain, to inform and to bring people together,” she says. Here’s to the next 100! ☺

Do you love CAM Magazine? And do you find yourself reading it in some weird and wonderful places? Send us the photos of your collection or examples of how and where you enjoy our articles – the quirkier the better.

BLACK ATLANTIC

A bronze cast of a pyramid, a symbol often associated with the transatlantic slave trade. The pyramid is made of several stacked, rectangular blocks, with a pointed top. It is positioned in the center of the page, between the words 'BLACK' and 'ATLANTIC'.

How does Cambridge fit into the mesh of money, people and culture created by the transatlantic slave trade? A new research project is making discoveries about the objects in its collections, the people who collected them and how their stories connect Cambridge to a global history of colonialism.

WORDS VICTORIA JAMES EXHIBITION FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM



Black Atlantic explores the creation and transmission of cultures by people of the African diaspora as they confronted Atlantic enslavement and empire and their pernicious afterlives

AKAN 'MMBRAMM' GOLDWEIGHTS

Among the great cultures of sub-Saharan West Africa were the Akan – a linguistic group comprising many different tribes and ethnic groups of present south-western Ghana and south-eastern Côte d'Ivoire.

Over centuries, the Akan mined gold, and sold it on vast trading routes across the Sahara Desert. From the 1400s, they developed a system of 'mmbramm', or goldweights, to measure gold dust, the Akan currency.

These weights (above) were collected by the Ghanaian anthropologist Dr Alexander Atta Yaw Kyerematen. He appears to have given them, along with three others, to Mary Cra'ster, an assistant at the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in the 1970s, during a research trip to Cambridge.

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge

Many an exhibition aspires to be the last word on its subject, to offer the 'definitive' assemblage of objects or interpretation. But at the Fitzwilliam, the creators of one exhibition insist it is merely the first word, an opening conversation, in a massive, multi-year research project. In fact, *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance* may be the most ambitious undertaking in the combined histories of the University of Cambridge Museums. That's because in exploring its subject, it also explores, reconsiders and aims to reshape the very role and purpose of museums and collections.

"It's been three years of research and thinking to get to this point," says lead curator, historian Jake Subryan Richards (Caius 2010). "And from the beginning, the museums were clear this would be part of a longer process of transformation and change. As an expert on the African diaspora and the history of transatlantic slavery, my role was to come up with a research agenda and work alongside curators. We began with a single question: 'How far, and in what ways, did transatlantic slavery and empire shape the collection and museums of the University?' There's a unique range of institutions here, covering historical and contemporary fine art; archaeology and anthropology; the history of science; zoology, botany and earth sciences; as well as

the applied arts. They have some five million objects in total in their collections, so this is only the first dive in."

"Under what circumstances did our collections arise? How did objects get here: was it a fair exchange; or via a purchase, loan or bequest; or was it via seizure?" asks Victoria Avery, Keeper of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Fitzwilliam, who partners Richards

as co-curator of Black Atlantic, and is already working on a follow-up exhibition, due February 2025. "Where did the money come from that enabled a museum to be built and its holdings to be accumulated? If we're talking about a zoological or botanical specimen, or a mineral sample, who was responsible for its collection, and have they been properly credited? The University of Cambridge museums consortium wanted to organise a series of iterative exhibitions and displays with associated public programmes to answer some of these questions and do some long overdue collection reckoning. Black Atlantic is just the first milestone in this long journey of institutional change."

"We intentionally go beyond Cambridge, and beyond Britain," says Richards. "We wanted to show how collections here are related to places across the Atlantic world – on display are items from Ghana, Suriname, Brazil and more." The exhibition's title makes this scope clear. 'Black Atlantic' as a concept refers to "the creation and transmission of cultures by people of the African diaspora as they confronted Atlantic enslavement and empire and their pernicious afterlives", states the exhibition's accompanying publication – itself no mere catalogue of exhibits, but a powerful treatise that at times reads like a manifesto for reimagining how we think about material culture and our relationship to it. ›



We have to rethink a lot of the assumptions we may have been taught and move on from the dominant cultural perspective

VANISHING POINT BARBARA WALKER

How do you represent erasure? Barbara Walker's *Vanishing Point* series derives, in part, from her childhood encounters with art in public museums and galleries, which were notable for the absence of Black people. "I looked at Old Master paintings and prints to see how the Black subject is represented within the Western canon," says Walker. "A lot of viewers don't even see the Black figures in the original paintings. The conversations are about perspective, composition and colour, but the Black figure is rarely discussed. I find that problematic. The *Vanishing Point* series asks how do we move on from this? I use erasure as a metaphor for how the Black community is overlooked, ignored and even dehumanised by society."

Through blind embossing, Walker erases the dominant white figures present in the original compositions and emphasises the Black subjects by drawing them in fine detail using graphite onto the now blank sheet of white paper. The resulting artworks thus focus exclusively on the Black figures, making them the subjects rather than the objects and appendages to the white figures of the original.

The Adoration of the Kings, Paolo Veronese, The National Gallery, London

Vanishing Point 17 (Veronese), Barbara Walker, Cristea Roberts Gallery, London

Not all visitors will find it easy to engage with the ideas Black Atlantic explores. But encouraging that engagement is a task to which the curators and the many individuals, institutions and organisations consulted are fiercely committed. "Many British people have been taught history in a particular way, but we have to rethink a lot of the assumptions we may have been taught and move on from the dominant cultural perspective to include stories and perspectives that have been historically marginalised and left untold."

Consideration of how these histories will impact visitors has been painstakingly built into the exhibition experience, thanks partly to Wanja Kimani, a visual artist and the third member of the lead curatorial team. "Some of the historic material included is racist and problematic," says Kimani. This includes objects such as a pseudoscientific 'Table of colours', or a pair of sculptures of young Black men wearing racist fantastical African clothing, both from the 17th century, or the deck-plan of an 18th-century slave ship. "For myself as a black person thinking about a black audience, I wanted to instil care by having these objects

in conversation with artists active now," Kimani explains, "looking at how contemporary artists are responding to and engaging with the themes these objects embody."

That thematic structure, and the exhibit selection of Black Atlantic, proved a mammoth undertaking. From those five million objects in

the nine consortium institutions' inventories, a shortlist was assembled. "Then from around 1,000 items, we had to get it down close to 100," says Richards. "Every few months we'd have a big pin-up meeting where we'd move images of objects around on a board, discussing key themes and object groupings with external advisers and within the Fitzwilliam."

"It was a massive puzzle we were trying to piece together," says Kimani. "We had to think about how we would divide the exhibition sections, what stories we'd keep, all while looking at the overall picture."

One insight from that process was that omissions in collections can speak as significantly as acquisitions. "We discovered we had a number of significant gaps in our historic collections, including works by Black artists, which is symptomatic of imperialist collecting policies, in which certain types of objects or makers were considered important and worth collecting while others were not," says Avery. As a result, Black Atlantic also includes several loaned-in but potent exhibits. Borrowed from London's Linnean Society, for example, is an immaculate late 18th-/early 19th-century botanical illustration of a breadfruit tree that unusually features a human figure – of an enslaved man, but depicted at rest in a heroic pose and with great care – from the hand of John Tyley, an artist of African descent who boldly signed several of his pieces, laying claim to his artistry.

"Another loan that felt essential to the exhibition is Jan Mostaert's brilliant painting from c.1525-30 of a yet-to-be identified Black man, which the Rijksmuseum believes is the earliest known portrait in Western art of an identifiable Black person to survive," says Avery. "It's from a time before the rise of Atlantic enslavement and shows how Black subjects were painted with equal dignity, respect and brilliance as their white ›







This is the start of a conversation. It's about what institutions like the University of Cambridge Museums are for. We hope everyone who visits will join this conversation

WHO GETS REMEMBERED AND WHY?

These paintings show people connected by the history that created the Black Atlantic, and were made in England in the 18th century.

The name of the Black man has been lost or was never recorded. An outdated interpretation suggested he was Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797), a prominent writer and abolitionist who got married and lived in Cambridgeshire towards the end of his life. But the fact that after decades of research his identity still remains unknown highlights the ways in which the dominant culture in Britain has failed to record Black sitters' identities and histories.

The name of the white man is Richard Fitzwilliam, future 7th Viscount (1745-1816). At his death, Fitzwilliam bequeathed the enormous sum of £100,000 together with his substantial library and art collection to the University of Cambridge, where he had studied. At the time, the fact that Fitzwilliam's riches came from a grandfather made wealthy in part by the transatlantic trade in enslaved African people was not deemed problematic.

*Portrait of a Man in a Red Suit, Unknown artist
Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter City Council.*

*Portrait of The Hon. Richard Fitzwilliam, Joseph Wright of Derby
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

counterparts. It shows us what was once the norm, and what should have remained so had it not been for the rise of slavery and anti-Black racism – an alternative history.”

Contemporary works offer counterpoints to the often degrading or marginalised depictions of Black people that have come down through history as it really played out, in which, across centuries, European empires transported an estimated 12.5 million people from Africa to colonies in the Americas. Barbara Walker, for example, creates dazzling reversions of works by great masters such as Veronese and Titian, in which Black subjects populate the background and margins as onlookers or attendants. In her *Vanishing Point* and *Marking the Moment* series, the putative subjects are defocused – greyed out, or merely embossed – while the Black figures are fully etched, given compelling presence. “There’s something very poetic about Walker’s work,” says Kimani. “It’s quiet, but it’s also screaming at you. She balances absence and presence. *Black Atlantic* displays many objects that were collected by black people who were never credited, but Walker is saying: ‘We’re here; we always have been.’”

“It’s important that contemporary artists aren’t carrying all the burden of pushing back on problematic histories,” Kimani says, “and my approach to curating in this instance was not to put it all on their shoulders. But having contemporary work in this space, in the Founder’s Gallery, says a lot. The inclusion of contemporary work shows the potential of the future these artists are creating.”

As Kimani suggests, the location of the current exhibition – the Founder’s Gallery of the Fitzwilliam – is one of the most potent choices of all. For as is now recognised,

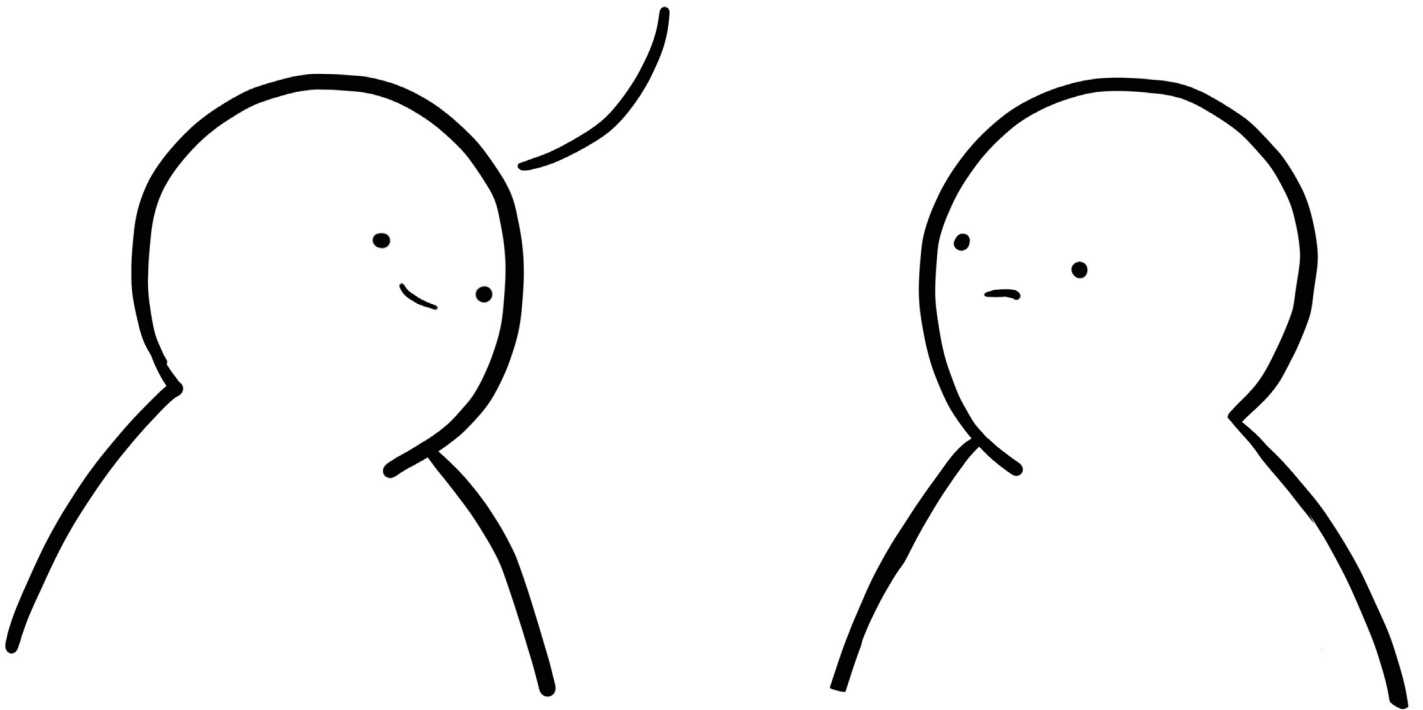
and revealed in further detail by Richards’ new research, the very existence of the museum was made possible by the slavery-derived riches of its founder, the 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam (shown above, see box). His Anglo-Dutch merchant grandfather had been director of the South Sea Company and the Royal African Company, and bequeathed Fitzwilliam both vast wealth and his art collection, while the viscount further acquired annuities in the restructured slave-trading company. All then passed to the University so that, as Fitzwilliam’s 1816 will states, it might build “a good, substantial and convenient Museum, Repository or other Building” for preserving and expanding the collection.

“Black Atlantic is a story of empires in dialogue with each other, among them the British and Dutch world of Fitzwilliam and his grandfather,” says Richards. “But we are also thinking carefully about how that top-down story of expansion is connected to bottom-up experiences, to the places that oppressed people negotiated in the spaces between empire, where they made their own forms of free community.

“We end the exhibition by saying: ‘This is the start of a conversation.’ It’s about what institutions like the University of Cambridge Museums are for. We hope everyone who visits will join this conversation.” ©

Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance, the first in a series of exhibitions, is at the Fitzwilliam Museum until 7 January 2024. The Fitzwilliam’s exhibitions, research, conservation, learning programmes, public engagement and acquisitions are made possible through acts of generosity. To find out how you can get involved, contact Claire Alfrey at claire.alfrey@admin.cam.ac.uk

I DON'T WANT
TO MICRO-MANAGE
YOU, I WANT TO
MACRO-MANAGE YOU
INTO MICRO-MANAGING
YOURSELF



Google. iCal. Outlook. How the digital calendar became
a modern-day story of work, leisure... and power.

WORDS VICTORIA JAMES ILLUSTRATIONS WORRY LINES

WHAT? BUT YOU SAID YOU WANTED ME TO BRING MY "WHOLE SELF" TO WORK



This year is the first in a century not to see a printing of the Cambridge Pocket Diary. For some, the diary's passing is to be lamented, while for others the shift to online scheduling is a welcome efficiency. But do calendars and diaries

liberate or constrain us? Are there costs or concerns built in to how we manage our time in the modern world – and if so, how might we escape them?

"I am still grieving for the pocket diary – it was so much better than any digital version," says Mary Beard, the author, broadcaster and Classics professor. "In a tiny format, it gave you so much information, lots of pages at the back for notes (carefully disguised passwords, for example), and just the right amount of space to get your appointments in. As anyone who knows me would tell you, I am wedded to my iPhone. But it is a terrible error to assume online resources are necessarily better at everything. For one thing, pocket diaries don't run out of battery."

"I've stopped using a physical diary, because I often lost it," admits Thomas Roulet, Professor of Organisational Sociology and Leadership at the Cambridge Judge Business School and Fellow of King's College. "I use two online calendars: Outlook is my official 'work' calendar, but Google has everything. The confusion comes when colleagues look at the 'work' one, see plenty of space between lectures and teaching sessions and try and book something in. That's because my supposedly 'personal' calendar has plenty more work in it too, such as college hours and research meetings. That's typical for most of us – it's increasingly difficult to differentiate between the spheres of work and home, professional and personal. In the world of business organisation research, the online calendar is now itself a subject of study."

Journalist Oliver Burkeman (Christ's 1994), author of the bestselling *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals*, notes that calendars and diaries create the illusory and ultimately unhelpful impression that we have

our lives under control. “We have this assumption that there must be a way to organise our calendars that will create time for everything that matters,” he says. “But the point I’d make is that ‘time management’, if it’s to mean anything, has to mean being willing to neglect and not do things that would have been a legitimate use of our time.”

“There’s no limit to the number of books or articles we want to read, the emails we receive, the ambitions we have, the experiences we seek. And equally limitless are the obligations we feel from family, friends and workplace. So it just doesn’t make sense to embark on a mission of trying to get everything done.”

Yet history presents a surprisingly nuanced picture of the presence of diaries and calendars in people’s lives. Few regions of the world might appear more closely

governed by a multiplicity of calendars

and horoscopes – plus accompanying

taboos – than pre-modern China and

Japan. In the latter, the Yin-Yang

Office (Onmyōryō), established

in the 7th century, oversaw

time-calibrating mechanisms

that included water clocks,

the production of calendars,

astrology and divination. And

yet, says Dr Brigitte Steger,

from the Faculty of Asian

and Middle Eastern Studies,

tales and anecdotes

abound of people

manipulating

measures

of time, or

appropriating

them to their

own purposes.

As well as

an animal year

of birth and hour

of birth (the twelve

creatures of the east Asian

zodiac are each allocated

one day and night), Steger

explains, “your horoscope

would attribute to you one

of the five elements, fire,

water, earth, wood and metal,

whether this was in yin or yang,

and so on. And with these

attributions came auspicious

or taboo associations with

certain times and directions –

for example, the direction south

is linked with noon, and with the

hour of the horse. But while such

taboos might appear restrictive,

we see people finding opportunities within them.

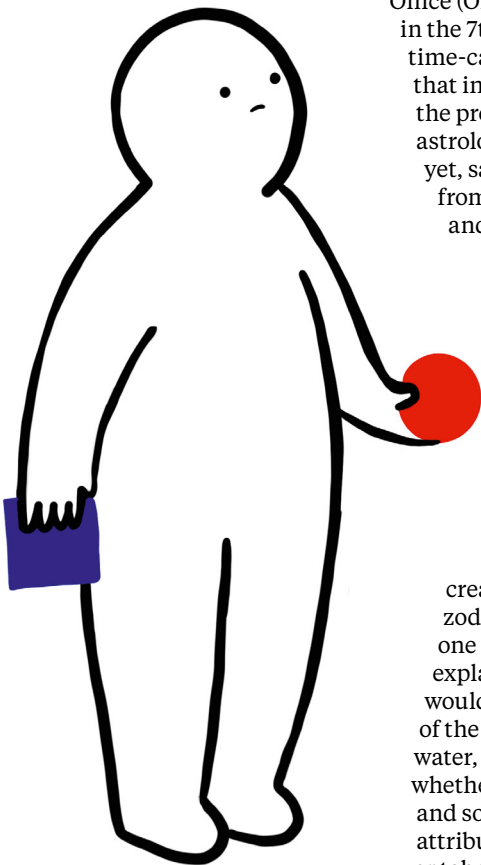
Just as today a lover unwilling to leave their partner might claim it’s too foggy to drive home, in the Japanese Heian period, a lover wanting to dawdle longer with their beloved might use a taboo association with a time or direction of departure as an excuse to linger. People were very sensitive to time,” says Steger. “But they were also aware that it could be manipulated.”

There’s no limit to the number of books or articles we want to read, the emails we receive, the ambitions we have, the experiences we seek. So it just doesn’t make sense to embark on a mission of trying to get everything done

Following peace talks between North and South Korea in 2018, the North’s supreme leader Kim Jong Un decided to move his nation’s clocks forward 30 minutes to re-align the two countries’ time zones. (Three years earlier he had moved the time zone to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of Japanese occupation.) “Only a dictator can do that on a whim!” declares Steger. But for much of east Asia’s pre-modern period, the ruler was ironically one of the most constrained of all by schedules that determined their every day and hour. “The Ying-Yang Office would hand-write calendars and distribute them to the most important people,” she says. “One might be a ceremonial calendar, another contain details of important competitions, yet another list daily special events for the emperor. So although we might talk about scheduling as a way to control the people, it’s not as simple as the ruler controlling everyone – he is utterly subject to it himself.”

It’s an experience that would resonate with the modern-day emperors – the corporate CEOs. “As an executive, its generally your team that has power over your time, not the other way round,” says Roulet. “I love reading about the daily routines of major CEOs, and most say they have five or six meetings a day. They’re not the ones calling these meetings, they’re not making decisions in them, just offering viewpoints. For senior people, everyone wants their time, meaning many don’t have enough left to do actual work.”

The pandemic-enforced shift to remote working and digital diarising has accelerated such over-scheduling, spreading the consequent drag on productivity through



ME

the entire workforce. “Research shows workers found themselves with 7.5 additional meetings a week during lockdown,” says Roulet, “and there’s good evidence that figure hasn’t returned to pre-pandemic levels. Meetings can be useful to brainstorm and forge creative links in a collective space, but too many of them means no time to do anything else, and leads people to feel they’re losing control of their time.” It seems clear, he says, that this is contributing to rising rates of burnout, employees leaving the workforce in the so-called ‘Great Resignation’, or staying but ‘working your wage’. “It’s all about people feeling they’re doing too much for what they’re paid.”

The urge to arrange and maximise our time may feel like a universal pressure, says Burkeman, “and calendars and schedules can reassure you that all things in the future will be dealt with. But it’s important to remember there is another way of relating to time, which is to be in it now, and to understand that only the present moment is real. Mediaeval peasants had terrible lives, but one thing they didn’t have to think about was: ‘Should I try to batch-milk the cows so that it’s most efficiently handled, freeing me to move on to another project?’ No. The timings of such tasks are rhythms that emerge from nature, and you are part of those rhythms. There isn’t that alienation, that separation, that idea of using time well or badly.”

Employed correctly, collective timekeeping can be a unifying force in our lives. “I’ve worked quite a lot on ancient Roman calendars,” says Beard. “My point has always been that the way we record and organise time is much more than practical. It is about how we see the world, it gives us an image of ourselves, our culture and history – and it is a way of co-ordinating our memories. I love the idea that we still have two months (July and August) named after the first two Roman emperors, Julius Caesar and Augustus. We are, in a way, still living in Roman time.”


We are also united with others by the calendars we share, an influence only made stronger by calendrical idiosyncracies as shown by the University itself, says Steger. “Bank holidays don’t count for much here. The New Year starts in October, not January or (like the east Asian lunisolar year) usually in February. And the May Ball is in June.”

But whether harried by online planners, or mourning the demise of the Cambridge Pocket Diary, we should all be mindful of that other way of relating to time, described by Burkeman. “Make your plans, keep your lists. But at the end of the day, it all exists simply to support you in making a wise choice, under conditions of finite time, for your very next moment.” ☺



**ALL THE THINGS
I WANTED TO
DO THIS YEAR**





On the ball

Food. Entertainment. Welfare. College. In Cambridge, you know something is important because it comes with its own committee.

WORDS **MEGAN WELFORD** PHOTOGRAPHY **ADAM LAWRENCE**

From blind wine tasting to Bollywood, and Marxism to medtech, there's a committee for that at Cambridge. For some, like the Spring Ball or the Boat Club committees, the stakes are high and the pressures intense. But what goes on behind the scenes, when a group of students and some patient staff members commit together to make it happen, come hell or high water? And, most importantly, what life lessons are learned?

Lesson 1: Everyone is winging it

"Imposter syndrome is a waste of time," says Nathalie Trott (St Edmund's 1998), who was Vice President of the Cambridge University Women's Boat Club during her fourth year. "I had it at Cambridge without knowing there was a label for it back then, but I learned in committee that no one really knows what they're doing. Especially the ones with the most chat. When I was secretary of the History Society, I often thought: 'How do you people know all this stuff?' But actually they had just read one article. I learned that life is full of people who make out that they know more than they really do, and I decided I was just going to learn as I went." Also, if you admit you don't know, you can ask for help, she says. "I came from a teetotal family so I knew nothing about wine, but History Society seemed as much about discussing wine as history. And my job was to buy the wine. So the guy in the off-licence became my biggest ally – he taught me everything I knew back then! And I learned to like wine."

Lesson 2: There are dreams – and then there's risk assessment

"The main thing I say to students is, no fairground rides!" As a Junior Bursar at Girton College, Maureen Hackett oversees the Spring Ball committee, making sure the event happens safely and College doesn't burn down (a fire once did break out at a different college, after students stockpiled paraffin for fire jugglers). "They wear me down every year, >

Ishaka De Bessou
(History, Third Year),
Fitzwilliam Winter
Ball Treasurer.

though,” she continues. “They come in with so much enthusiasm, and it’s the hardest thing to not squash their ideas but to get them to think about things like ‘where are the electric points’. We try to help them come to their own conclusions. But having fairground rides is logistically challenging.”

The students have to present a fully costed business plan that will be covered by ticket sales, and it must be complete with risk assessments. “We had to say no to a ball pit post Covid, because it would have been like students licking each other. I once had a very long discussion about how long cheese can safely be left out of the fridge (answer – four hours). But typically we compromise over swing boats and dodgems. They love dodgems, but the paperwork is terrible.”

Every year there’s a different theme, and the students make the decorations. “Steampunk was great – I wore a bowler hat and a lot of metal,” says Hackett. “The artwork is always amazing; one year there were streamers pushing up like flames along the fire escape corridor, and teacups hanging from the ceiling. We usually say: ‘Make it beautiful, using flame-retardant materials.’”

Lesson 3: Things WILL go wrong

“We try and tell students on the Spring Ball committee not to over-invest emotionally,” says Hackett, “because it could be cancelled. Things happen.” Things like global pandemics. Girton’s Spring Ball scraped in before the Covid lockdown in March 2020, although no one was well versed in protocols at that point. “We sent someone out to get antibacterial wipes, and they came back with oven wipes! And the one-way system was a work in progress.”

Emmanuel’s June Event was not so lucky. “In late March 2020 we took the decision to cancel and refund tickets,” remembers then-committee president Matilda Schwefel (Emmanuel 2017). “We had worked so hard

We had to say no to a ball-pit post Covid because it would have been like students licking each other

for months. I kept it together during the committee meeting, composed an email to ticket holders, wrote to suppliers. Then a friend sent me a sweet message and I just burst into tears. It wasn’t just the disappointment of cancelling, it was the feeling that there were people I’d never see again.”

Schwefel did get to throw a launch party for the never-was 2020 theme of ‘Sunday Night Fever’, based on films set in New York, which provided plenty of opportunities for thinking on your feet. “We had planned a flash mob in the centre of the College bar, 30 of us had learned the dance from Saturday Night Fever. But when we pressed play on the video, nothing happened, even though we’d tested it four times that day. We had to put the lights up again and I sprinted to get another cable. People had to wait five minutes, but then we dazzled them with our dancing.”

She had been decor officer the year before, when the theme was the Italian car race Mille Miglia. “When our vintage car arrived, the gardeners didn’t want us to drive it onto the lawn. We had to get planks from the decor shed to put underneath the wheels and roll the car by hand. You can’t be haunted by your mistakes – you’re allowed to make them.”

Lesson 4: Don’t annoy the staff!

“It’s important for students to understand who the key members of the staff are and to not annoy them!” says Hackett. And for Caius Student Union entertainments officer Aidan Jones (German and Russian, Second Year), these staff members were the porters. “We had to set out our detailed plan for the end of year garden party to the porters before it went to the College, because they were ultimately responsible for event security. There was a lot of compromising that went on. For instance, we wanted to finish at 1am but they said we had to finish at 10pm. The compromise was, we started at 3pm instead of 5pm and, honestly, after seven hours of keeping the event going I was happy that it ended at 10!” The key, Jones learned, was to show them you had thought everything through. “If you could show you’d anticipated the risks and how to minimise them, they were happy.” >





Alice Hickson
(Philosophy, Third Year),
Fitzwilliam Winter
Ball Vice President.

Eilish Turner-Frick
(Medicine, Third Year),
Fitzwilliam Winter
Ball President.





Lesson 5: Being good at something isn't the same as being a good leader

"I decided not to go for President of the Boat Club as I felt I didn't know enough, and didn't have enough experience rowing," says Trott. "So I went for Vice. But there's a certain stress that comes from being second in command, too, as you have to act on other people's decisions." What you need for good leadership, she says, is someone who is ready to take responsibility and be accountable. "Most stress comes from dithering, from changing mid-strategy and from lack of clarity. It was a really good platform for me to learn that I'm good at taking responsibility, and so I learned never to rule myself out of a race."

For Schwefel, leadership is about diplomacy. She remembers: "There would be clashes over the theme choice, or departments passionately justifying why they needed more budget than the others. But we trusted each other, so we could have lunch together and I could say: 'Look, it sounds great but it's just not feasible.'"

We usually say: 'Make it beautiful... using flame-retardant materials'

"It was also about managing different inputs and outputs – some people are always going to put in more effort than others, so it was important to make sure that those people felt valued."

Schwefel also learned about prioritisation and time management, even if her method was potentially unsustainable. "I learned to prioritise emails by when things needed doing, and to love spreadsheets a little too much. Juggling between my degree and the Ball, I had a little notebook full of lists that I took everywhere – if I'd lost it, I would have been sunk. I threw myself into Cambridge life – for me, friends and societies were an important part of the experience. I went full tilt for each eight-week term, and then I'd go home to my parents' and sleep for a week."

Lesson 6: Take time to feel the joy

"I enjoy people-watching on the night of the Ball," says Hackett, "seeing how the committee is getting on and the sheer joy on students' faces." It's important to take five and appreciate what you've achieved, agrees Schwefel, who was also Ball publicity officer in her first year. "We would stop filling ice buckets when the headliner came on, and all of the committee would go to the main stage for five minutes just to say: 'We did it!' We'd all been up since 6am, then after people left we'd stay up to put the College back to normal before the morning. We were that kind of delirious where everything is funny. At 6am, after 24 hours awake, someone would do a coffee run to Savino's, and a coffee and a bacon sandwich would get us through to about 1pm, when we'd fall, exhausted, into bed."

Lesson 7: Winning doesn't matter... much

"The Boat Race felt so important," says Trott. "I remember watching the race when I was six, and my mum said: 'If you work hard you could go to one of those universities.' I asked which one and she said: 'Well, you look better in light blue', so that was my decision made." Trott rowed for Cambridge in her third year and lost. "I said I was never doing it again, and six weeks later I had signed up for the next year, and for a leadership position. It was painfully addictive. I really wanted to be part of a Light Blue victory, but that year Cambridge lost all our races. It felt soul destroying to have given so much, and to lose every race. It was a long time until something mattered to me as much as the Boat Race."

By the time that came, though, Trott had learned another lesson. "I didn't appreciate it at the time, but it's not the winning that matters most in the long run. Turning up matters. Being part of something matters. The spirit of camaraderie we had, particularly in that second year, was amazing – everyone did their best under challenging conditions and we really supported one another. That Blondie crew are still some of my best friends." ©

Were you part of a Cambridge committee? Then let us know your experiences, and things you learned, at cameditor@alumni.cam.ac.uk

NHS



75

Changing the cancer story

The Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital will change the story of cancer. We will detect cancer earlier, treat it more precisely and save more lives. What happens here in Cambridge will have a huge impact across the region, the UK and the world. The breakthroughs and innovations we deliver will change the way we detect and treat cancer far beyond our hospital, bringing hope to millions of people.



The NHS treats more than a million patients a day but, at 75 years old, it's never been under more pressure. So, is it still fit for purpose? And what will the next 75 years bring?

WORDS **LUCY JOLIN** ILLUSTRATIONS **LINN FRITZ**

This summer, the NHS celebrated its 75th birthday with strikes, a lack of beds, concerns about care quality and outcomes, and low workforce morale. Meanwhile, arguments raged about the solutions: more money, more people, more tech, more prevention, more external collaboration? Whatever that future looks like, the time to build it is now – because the NHS's life is in our hands.

But given where we are, can the NHS be fixed? Where do we start? How do we decide what we're going to fix – and when? We asked Cambridge experts for their prescription on what's next for our beloved healthcare system.

Get early detection right

The fixes could start the moment a child is born. Early detection, says Professor Richard Gilbertson, Li Ka Shing Chair of Oncology, has the capacity to transform the way we treat all diseases. "As our population ages and grows, everyone ending up in hospital is not sustainable. It's a failed, expensive system and as it gets more and more expensive, sooner or later, we won't be able to pay for it."

Gilbertson argues that patients who go to hospital in the late stages of their disease tend to have worse outcomes, as well as being more expensive to treat. So the new Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital is designed around the principle of identifying potential health problems as soon as they arise.

The UK is a world leader in this field, with projects such as UK Biobank – a large-scale biomedical ›

Let's get physicists, chemists, engineers and mathematicians designing these new early detection systems with primary care doctors who know what it's like to work in high streets across the UK

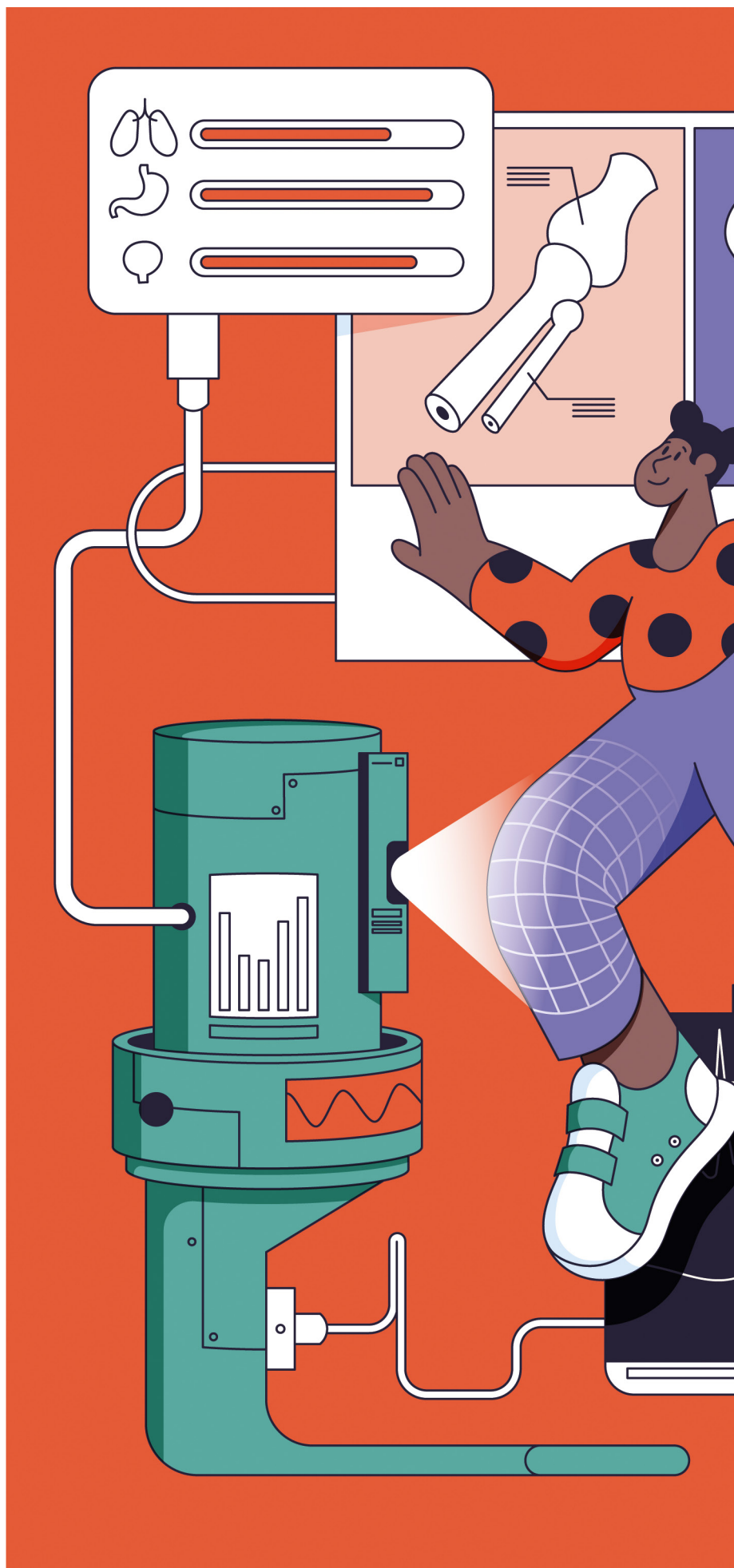
database and research resource, containing in-depth genetic and health information from half a million UK participants. "These projects are beginning to help us understand what a patient's disease risk is from an early age – and how we can manage that, with programmes including diet, exercise and risk management."

Researchers are developing increasingly accurate and sensitive ways of picking up disease even earlier. The question, says Gilbertson, is how we implement and identify biomarkers that cover a multitude of diseases. "For example, everyone knows that if you smoke, you're at risk of lung cancer – but you're also at risk of heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease. We know that there are genetic factors and other environmental factors which also put us at risk of certain diseases. So now we're not just talking about screening, but holistic healthcare pathways that consider all those factors."

"If we were to think about that in a systemised way, alongside those big data opportunities, we could identify patients in the early stages of cancer, for example, eight or nine years before those symptoms present. That means patients can be treated earlier, closer to home, and more cheaply – and that becomes a sustainable system."

But to achieve this, we need a cultural shift in the way we train our medical professionals, he believes. "We train people to be experts in how to treat diseases like cardiology, cancer or diabetes. But we need to start thinking about training experts in sustaining health, armed with big data information that can guide new pathways that maintain tissues in a healthy state."

"This will need a change of mindset in the way we think about health and disease and the way the government thinks about health care provision. We will need new pathways that unify primary and tertiary care systems for the future; bringing together physicists, chemists, engineers and mathematicians to design early detection systems with primary care doctors who know what it's like to work in high streets across the UK."





Joined-up treatment

The Cambridge Children's Hospital will be a world-first hospital that cares for children's physical and mental health together, in a way no one ever has before. The goal is to develop a joined-up model of care that fully integrates physical and mental health, and combines with research into prevention and early diagnosis of diseases to provide the very best care for children and young people up to the age of 19, including those with cancer.

Research is for everyone

And all those people deserve equal access to one of the key drivers of improved health: research. Right now, that's not happening, says Professor David Rowitch, Head of Paediatrics and co-leading for University of Cambridge in the new Cambridge Children's Hospital.

"The NHS covers 100 per cent of the population, but 25 per cent or more are deprived – people who have the worst physical and mental health outcomes and premature death. If your research does not enable access to the most deprived populations, then we are failing in our mission."

Part of the solution lies in future hospital design, he says: building all hospitals to support regional research capacity, for example, places to talk to research participants, specific types of diagnostic equipment, and specimen collection stations in district hospitals and the community.

Still, the national organisation of the NHS – as opposed to a fragmentary, competitive system such as that found in the US – means that it has a much greater ability to scale rapidly. He points to the nationwide RECOVERY trial that discovered the benefits of dexamethasone to treat severe Covid-19 as an example.

Rowitch adds that while Covid research demonstrated a response to a national crisis, it is also possible for new regional hospitals to level up research opportunities as routine. "It may be more efficient and compelling to look at the needs in a region, especially areas of deprivation, and organise our research to address causes of disease before escalation to hospital."

Co-designed solutions are best

Having this truly national health service enables outcomes to be tracked, measured and compared centrally. Data plays a big part in this – and will play a far bigger one in the next 75 years. But while data tells you what the problem is, people working together will tell you how to solve it, says Mary Dixon-Woods, Director of The Healthcare ›



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We simply don't have enough people to do everything that the NHS is currently tasked to do. We could recruit and train new people, but we also have to retain the ones we've got. The nursing resignation rate is the highest it's ever been, so we must find a way to make the NHS a better place to work for all staff

Improvement Studies (THIS) Institute and the Health Foundation Professor of Healthcare Improvement Studies.

"Data allows the NHS to track not just outcomes, but processes," she says. "Outcomes are what happens as a result of your treatment; you have an operation and make a good recovery. Processes are what you do to get to that outcome – everything from prescribing to culture to behaviour. So we need good evidence about what you need to do in order to improve those processes."

Top-down improvement efforts have a poor track record. New processes may not be well designed or feel imposed, and staff asked to carry them out may be alienated by them, she points out. But bottom-up may not be the answer either. Leaving it up to people to work out process by themselves can also be challenging, because they don't always have access to resources, expertise and time.

That's why, says Dixon-Woods, the future of the NHS lies in co-design – enabling patients and staff to design a solution together. When the pandemic started, hundreds of different clinical processes needed adaptation. "If everyone comes up with their own method, they might not have the expertise or capacity, and it's potentially wasteful and time-wasting," she explains. "For example, when someone experiences a postpartum haemorrhage – a massive bleed after giving birth – there is a very clear set of tasks. Do them right and on time and you usually have a very good outcome. But we had to change the processes to consider what to do when the person might be Covid positive."

Using the Thiscovery platform, Dixon-Woods' team created a short video that illustrated possible processes, bringing together maternity staff, infection control experts and human factor experts, who specialise in system design. Using online consensus-building techniques, 16 improvements were identified – the video illustrates the improved processes and has had more than 130,000 downloads on YouTube.

"I'm hopeful that the NHS as a whole will see the huge benefits in essentially standardising practice through genuine co-design with staff and patients," says Dixon-Woods. "A non-hierarchical system for process improvement is more inclusive – but more importantly, it's much more likely to get you to a good place, both in terms of outcomes and in terms of cost, by stripping out the waste of everyone doing things differently. The NHS is fantastic people doing fantastic things; they just need facilitation and support."

Time to change

This co-design relies on people, and finding – and keeping – those people is the biggest challenge the health services face right now. "We don't have enough people to do everything that the NHS is currently tasked to do," says Charlotte Summers, Professor of Intensive Care Medicine and Director of Cambridge's new Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Heart & Lung Research Institute. "We can recruit and train more people, but we must also retain the ones we've got. Right now, the nursing resignation rate is the highest it's ever been. We've got to find a way to make the NHS a better place to work."

Intensive care doesn't just need trained specialist nurses but occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, pharmacists and administrators, she says. "And right now, there are holes in every bit of that workforce."

Summers says that when services are cut to the bone, all the extra bits that make your job satisfying and enjoyable – such as training, support, research and even the ability to afford the basics of life – get squeezed. "Nurses are being forced to use food banks. Junior doctors are not able to afford childcare to look after their children, because they're rotating three hours away to a hospital at six weeks' notice. People do not stay with employers under these circumstances."

And the argument that the NHS spends too much on managers? "Research shows that, if anything, the NHS is under-managed," says Summers. "Managers are a necessary part of any complex organisation. Who is going to manage the supply chain that ensures my patients have the oxygen they need?"

Summers is clear that she is not proposing another reorganisation: these have a long history of disruption and damage. "But the frameworks are in place to do what I think is needed – a cultural change and a mindset change." As the NHS workforce looks to the next 75 years, she says it's time for government to think differently, too. "Any governments of the future must engage with the NHS meaningfully. They must support and nurture it, rather than saying it's just too difficult. It's a choice to decide that it's too hard." ©

To find out how you can support the work of the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital, Cambridge Children's Hospital, the Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Heart & Lung Research Institute or THIS Institute, contact Mary Jane Boland at maryjane.boland@admin.cam.ac.uk

Henry Louis Gates Jr (Clare 1973) has changed the way “Black authors get read and Black history gets told”

WORDS PATRICIA DANVER PHOTOGRAPHY ANDRES SERRANO

Without Henry Louis Gates Jr (Clare 1973), the field of African and African-American literature studies would look significantly – *significantly* – different. This son of an education-conscious working-class family from Piedmont, West Virginia has become one of the world’s leading African-American academics, “changing the way Black authors get read and the way Black history gets told”, as the *New Yorker* put it.

It could all have been so different. After his sophomore year at Yale, as part of the university’s experimental “five-year BA” programme, and intending to study medicine, Gates took a gap year to work at an Anglican Mission hospital in Tanzania, which changed his life. His journey to Tanzania took him around Europe, the Holy Land and two stops before Dar es Salaam. On the way home, Gates and a recent Harvard graduate spent two months hitchhiking across the equator, from Dar to Kinshasa, Congo, before flying on to Accra, Ghana, “on a pilgrimage to the grave of WEB Du Bois – every Black intellectual’s hero”. It was, he reflects, “a profoundly maturing experience”.

After studying History at Yale, he became the first African-American to get a PhD (in English Literature) from Cambridge. “The cliché was that extraordinary people went to Harvard, Yale and Princeton and to Oxford or Cambridge. That was the fantasy. I got into Yale, did very well academically and applied for six fellowships – and though a finalist, was turned down for all of them, including the Rhodes and Fulbright. A very kind Dean suggested I apply for a Mellon (an Andrew W Mellon Foundation Fellowship) at Cambridge and, to my amazement, I was accepted. Fantasy fulfilled.”

When he entered Clare in 1973, studying African or African-American literature was not an option. “It wasn’t seen as literature, but as a study in social anthropology.” Noted social anthropologist Professor Jack Goody directed him to Wole Soyinka [the sole professor in the subject, a visiting fellow at Churchill College, in exile from his home country of Nigeria].

“I wrote to him, he wrote back, we met, and he agreed to spend the year supervising me in African mythology and literature. I was his only student. The rest is history.”

Life at Cambridge was not without its pain and stresses, however. “The fact that Wole Soyinka was denied affiliation with the English faculty at that time left a bad taste – it meant that African literature was not regarded as proper field of study. I wanted to write my thesis about a Black author and was told I couldn’t.” The thesis he did write is about ideas of race in the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment, and the significance of individual Africans publishing books in Europe to the debate about the African’s ‘place in nature’. “My thesis blossomed into studying the relationship between race and reason, and writing, and what all of this had to do with the Africans’ place on the great chain of being.”

His Cambridge education also introduced him to practical criticism, “a distinctly Cantabrigian way of reading. To this day, it’s how I read literature. When I began teaching, I advocated close reading of Black literature as literature, not as biography or anthropology or sociology. And I wasn’t the only one – this method of explicating texts struck a nerve and became part of a widespread effort to institutionalise the field of African-American and African literature in English departments as literature, first and foremost.”

His life since has been an extraordinary and pioneering journey, with other noted contemporaries such as his Clare College contemporary, Kwame Anthony Appiah (1972), to establish the fields of African and African-American Studies as fully fledged academic departments, with the right to grant tenure and award PhDs. The department that he and Appiah embarked on rebuilding at Harvard in 1991 has more than 40 faculty members, the largest African languages programme in the world, and has turned out dozens of PhDs. He has taught African and African-American literature at Cornell, Duke and Harvard, but began his career at Yale,

This year, the world-renowned American artist Kerry James Marshall, whose work questions the social constructs of beauty, taste and power, donated his portrait of Henry Louis Gates Jr to the Fitzwilliam. The portrait is now on display outside the museum’s Black Atlantic exhibition (see page 18).



Henry Louis Gates Jr is an Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, literary scholar, journalist, cultural critic and institution builder. He is also the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and the Director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University.

where he became co-director of the Black Periodical Literature Project, and earned a reputation as a 'literary archaeologist' for authenticating the first novel published by an African-American female author, *Our Nig*, by Harriet E Wilson (1859). More recently, he authenticated the manuscript of *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, by Hannah Crafts, a novel written before Wilson's book but never published. In recent years, he has been a prolific filmmaker, mainly for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and HBO. His popular PBS series, *Finding Your Roots*, is about to air its 10th season.

One of his greatest sources of pride, however, remains his honorary degree from Cambridge and Fellowship at Clare. "I almost cried when I received the Vice-Chancellor's letter in 2020," he says. "I was astonished." The ceremony was delayed until 2022

when he received his degree along with his mentor, Wole Soyinka, now Professor Emeritus, Dramatic Literature of the Obafemi Awolowo University, and old friend from Cambridge, Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah, who teaches Philosophy and Law at New York University, both of whom Gates describes as "his oldest and closest friends".

"I was extremely fortunate to live in Africa when I was 20, to graduate with the highest honours from Yale, and then to attend Clare. These experiences introduced me to the concept of 'race' in a completely new way. It made me approach race in a more sophisticated way – in its relationship to class, for instance – and internationalised my understanding of the Black experience throughout the world. My debt to the University of Cambridge will be difficult to repay."



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“Hearing something different refreshes that part of your brain”

Whether listening, accompanying, running or just switching off, music plays a central role in Professor Deborah Prentice’s life.

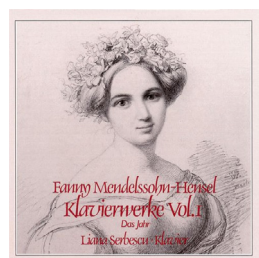
INTERVIEW MIRA KATBAMNA PHOTOGRAPHY NICK SAFFELL



Märchenbilder, Opus 113 Robert Schumann

Accompanying is a different kind of playing: your aim is to become completely merged and in sync with the other person. Recently, I’ve been working on the Opus 113, which I played with my daughter, a violinist and singer, at her graduation recital back in the US. As a music

undergraduate, I learned the joy of the practice room – where it’s just you and the piano and nothing else – so I’ve been enjoying getting to know the practice rooms at West Road.



Das Jahr Fanny Mendelssohn

Das Jahr is a cycle of 12 pieces – wonderfully atmospheric pieces, one for each month of the year. The first time I did it I forced myself to learn one a month. Now I’m on my second cycle, so I’m working them up to perform. After a day of meetings and listening to humans, hearing

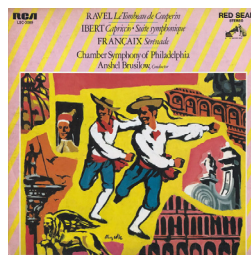
something completely different really does refresh that part of your brain. The music requires your complete concentration, so you can’t continue ruminating about what happened at work.



“Anything by The Rolling Stones”

I run most days in Cambridge. The route is lovely and scenic, but unvaried because what I want is the exercise, not a new experience. Frankly, for me, the actual running can be a bit boring so I listen to music, usually classic rock. There’s a certain tempo to classic rock. It’s

got a very steady beat but it has also got an energy to it: that’s why it works. So despite this being my effort to make the run interesting, I tend to listen to much the same thing every time.



Le Tombeau de Couperin Maurice Ravel

I was recently invited to hear a concert given by the pianist Benjamin Grosvenor – he played this gorgeous suite of music, which was written just after the First World War. I spent a long time learning to play it myself about a decade ago; I love it because you can hear Ravel

reaching back into the past to make sense of loss. Each of the six pieces is dedicated to somebody he knew who died in the war. It has an ethereal and timeless quality: it uses older modes and older forms. It speaks of the eternity of war and the pain of grief – but it is also music of transcendent beauty.

As a music undergraduate, I learned the joy of the practice room – where it’s just you and the piano and nothing else



I Love All Beauteous Things Judith Weir, performed by King’s College Choir

In May, I was invited to attend Chapel to hear The Sermon Before the University. The speaker was Nicola Reindorp (King’s 1991), CEO of Crisis Action, which seeks to build coalitions to protect people from war. In addition to her

wonderful sermon, I got to hear the choir, which was wondrous and beautiful. Their performance of Judith Weir’s *I Love All Beauteous Things* was sublime. And, of course, the acoustics in the Chapel are incredible.

Professor Deborah Prentice became Cambridge’s 347th Vice-Chancellor in July.

This idea must die: “Obesity is caused by lack of willpower”

Professor Sadaf Farooqi says being slim is a matter of luck, not a demonstration of moral superiority.

INTERVIEW LUCY JOLIN ILLUSTRATION GEORGE WYLESOL

The myth that obesity is simply down to a lack of moral fibre or willpower is simply not true – but it is incredibly pervasive. Highly educated people still believe that you can control what you eat; that people with bigger appetites are simply greedy. But we have known that this is not the case for a very long time.

In 1994, Professor Jeffrey Friedman discovered a hormone called leptin, which regulates our appetite via pathways in the brain. This paved the way for unravelling the system that regulates our appetite and weight. It was followed by our own work at the Wellcome-MRC Institute of Metabolic Science in 1997, where we showed that people who lacked leptin developed severe obesity. They also had an incredibly strong appetite and desire to eat.

The discovery of leptin and how it works showed us that there is a system that regulates our appetite and our weight. In most people, that system works pretty well and keeps weight stable. But that system can be altered or damaged – by a tumour, for example, or by certain drugs, or by a genetic condition.

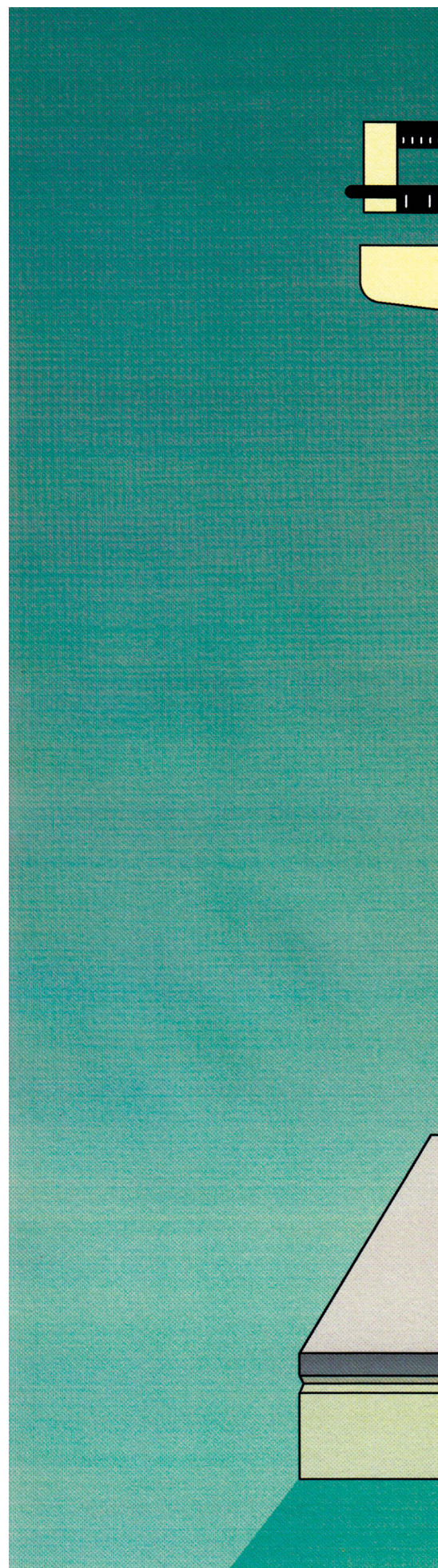
That explains why some people have larger appetites and gain weight more easily, why other people have smaller appetites, and why some people can eat what they like and they never gain

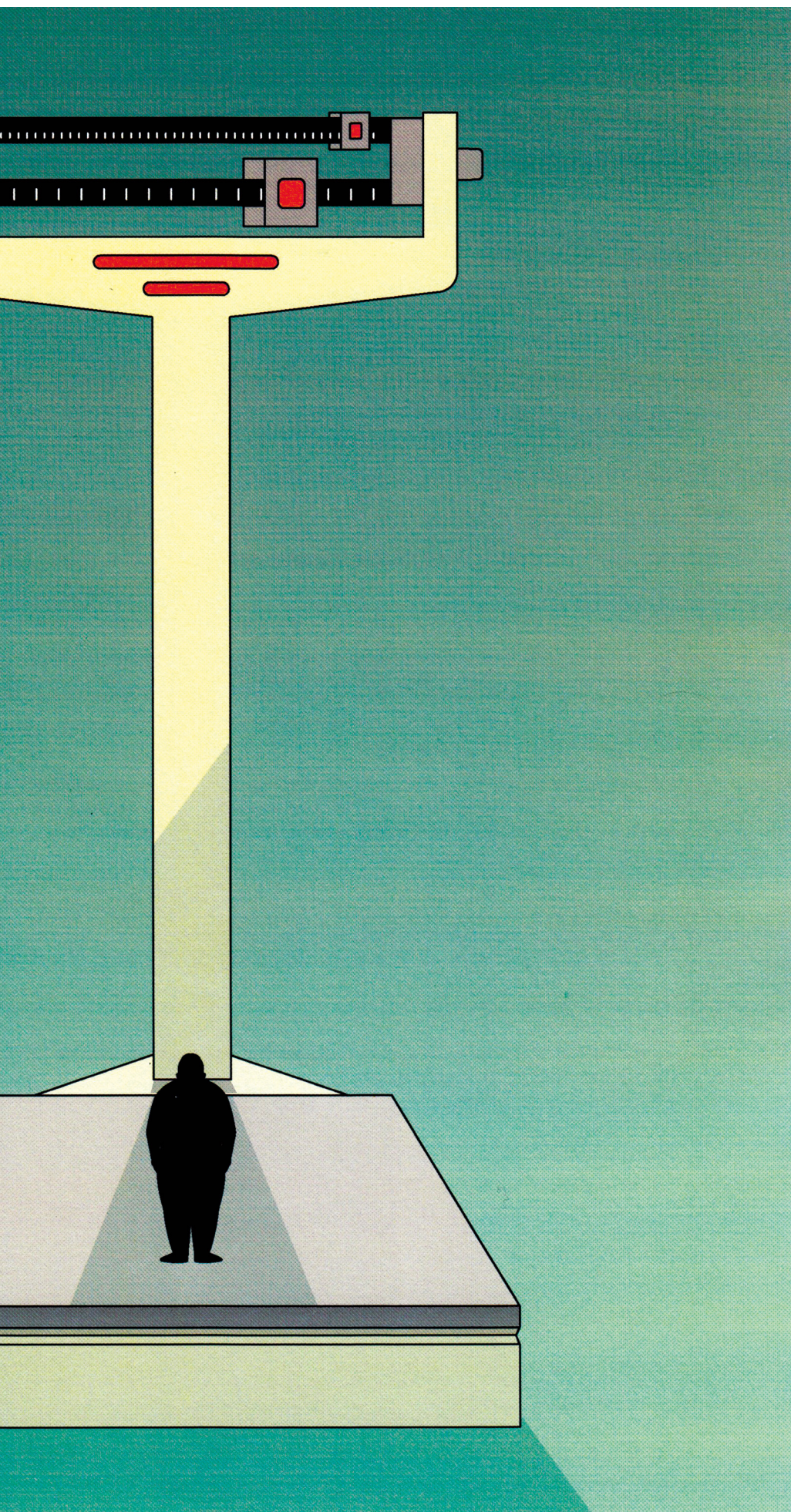
weight. That variation is strongly influenced by our genes, and those genes, in turn, act on pathways in the brain.

When I did my PhD at Trinity 25 years ago, we identified the gene that makes leptin. And then we explored the fact that the children who were lacking that gene and, consequently, leptin, had an incredibly strong desire to eat and had gained a lot of weight. We ran the first clinical trial giving these children injections of leptin, the missing hormone. It dramatically normalised their appetite. They would then turn away food and eat normal amounts, and they lost a dramatic amount of weight. We proved that leptin as a hormone is a critical regulator of appetite. Subsequently, we and others have found several different genes that are part of this system that regulates appetite and weight. If any of those genes are faulty, then people are more likely to gain weight.

We can now test for those faulty genes, and this can be a big help because obese people are often blamed by their doctors, and others, for being heavy. One of the most important outcomes of our research has been to challenge the idea that this is all someone's fault – because we can prove that it's not. We can prove that there is biology at play here.

As a doctor, it is never helpful to blame people for something that is difficult to control or difficult to manage, telling them





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it is entirely in their hands to sort it out. That often damages the relationship and makes people much less likely to seek help. And when people are stigmatised or discriminated against because of their weight, it has a massive impact on their lives. We see the impact on children from a very young age. There is very good evidence that what we call weight stigma impacts on people's educational performance, on their interactions with healthcare professionals, and on their life opportunities.

In fact, the discourse around obese people reminds me of how, centuries ago, people used to think that people with epilepsy were possessed by spirits. There were so many areas of medicine we didn't understand. And because we didn't understand them, we would blame something else. It has been very easy to blame people and, interestingly, often the blame comes from people who have never struggled with their weight. But our work has shown, by studying a cohort of thin people, that thin people are thin because they have fewer genes that increase their chance of obesity, and additional genes that are keeping them thin. So, if you are thin, remember: you are not morally superior – just lucky.

Professor Sadaf Farooqi is the Wellcome Trust Principal Research Fellow and Professor of Metabolism and Medicine.

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Mr. Eames

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Mark via Trustpilot



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Mrs. K, April 2023

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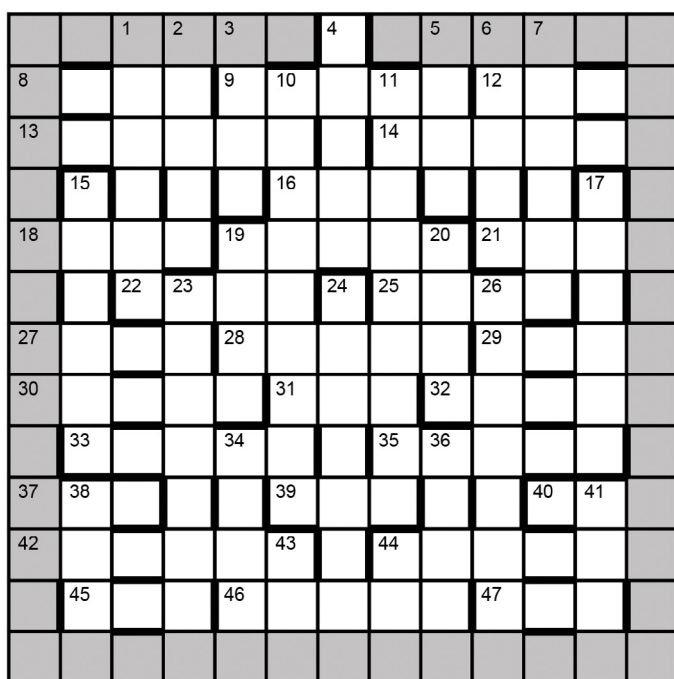
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"DON'T STOP ME NOW" by Nimrod

The thematic answer to one clue is represented in the completed grid in three ways: (a) skipping cell 4, the clockwise perimeter contains four phrases (11 words) whose corner and unchecked cells could make you GASP – URGE HIGH-CWT FAD; (b) five clue answers are identically modified before entry; (c) 14 cells (two separate blocks, appropriately oriented) in the final grid must be highlighted. All final grid entries are real words, phrases or proper nouns. All clues and non-thematic entries are normal. One clue answer is the colloquial derivation (in *SOED*) of a common word.



Across

- 8 Island Inn in use – regulars refused entry (4)
- 9 A sufficient amount duo moved in jails (5)
- 12 Opening something to promote vermouth (4)
- 13 More agreeable taking a spin with you downhill in winter (6, 2 words)
- 14 Guttled, I return to catch Greek (6)
- 16 Harass hill horse (3)
- 18 A female from Frankfurt eyes antique (4)
- 19 In florist's make a move and soak counter (5)
- 21 Old judge is powerful enough to track son (4)
- 22 Not completely protect gum (4)
- 25 Randy Aussie still withdrawn about love (4)
- 27 What binocular vision uses when picking out wee gadgets? (4)
- 28 Iniquitous haunts opened from the rear with a handle (5)
- 29 One in a series of Christian names (4)
- 30 No hospital in Scottish city's over infection (5)
- 31 The last to go to grass (3)
- 32 Dead contemptible person? On reflection, Victoria's much the same (5)
- 33 English neo-impressionist's rejected inferior object (5)
- 35 Illuminated dusty entrance after vocal exchange (5)
- 37 It's cold-blooded – one's partner blinded, according to report? (3)
- 39 Such characters in Alice in Wonderland! (3)
- 40 Hugged by each other with passion (3)
- 42 Country gate passes out of view (6)
- 44 Peer? A voyeur, finally, will (6)
- 45 Movement seen having gone off radiation band (3)
- 46 Tailor's repairs to these coverings (5)
- 47 Was Model T, when reversing? (3)

Down

- 1 Sorry what's used to fill meringue is nuts (6)
- 2 Weird giving me beer and wine alternately (5)
- 3 Water is weedkiller in part (4)
- 4 Madcap joke books from the south (5)
- 5 Folk would be honoured to wear these neat crosses (4)
- 6 One leading lament sadly intones syllables (5)
- 7 I clean walls in chilling folly (6)
- 10 I'm not sure this man's going to fire lost feeling (9)
- 11 Old school boards set off (9)
- 15 Spikes and another thing to pack bats into (6)
- 17 Division Two clubs answer news about banning women (6)
- 19 Make top of tor with this tool (4)
- 20 In contact with theologian who made living from Fleet Street cuttings? (4)
- 23 Sort of measure that protects one's core ID (8)
- 24 Marine being lifted is, without a hitch, no good (8, 2 words)
- 26 Lear's Uncle is coming into *what* rather soon? (8)
- 34 In morning's first sign of light, I see girl dancing (5)
- 36 Man at home in Madrid maybe cycled here from Oslo? (5)
- 38 Political extremists cutting 37's cake? (4)
- 41 Oil buttocks (central region only) (4)
- 43 Engaged in comprehending – say – reading, sculpture or painting? (3)
- 44 Total load, or just a third? (3)

All entries to be received by 9 February 2024. Send your entry:

- **by post to:** CAM 100 Prize Crossword, University of Cambridge, 1 Quayside, Bridge Street, Cambridge CB5 8AB
- **online at:** magazine.alumni.cam.ac.uk/crossword
- **by email to:** cameditor@alumni.cam.ac.uk



The first correct entry drawn will receive a £75 CUP book token and a copy of the catalogue that accompanies the exhibition, *Real Families: Stories of Change*, which runs until 7 January 2024 at the Fitzwilliam Museum. Two runners-up will receive a £50 CUP book token. Solutions and winners will be published in CAM 101 and online on 1 March 2024 at: magazine.alumni.cam.ac.uk/crossword

Solution to CAM 99 Crossword

Action Stations

Churchill's famous defiant speech of 4 June 1940 includes '... we shall fight on the SEAS and OCEANS, ... in the AIR, [... on the BEACHES], ... on the LANDING GROUNDS, ... in the FIELDS and in the STREETS, ... in the HILLS ...'. The codenames of the beaches, west to east (UTAH, OMAHA, GOLD, JUNO and SWORD), the occasion (D-DAY) and the codename of the operation (NEPTUNE) were highlighted.

Winner: Joshua Dalby (King's 2004)
Runners-up: Lisa Sadie (Homerton 1983) and David Beamish (St John's 1970)



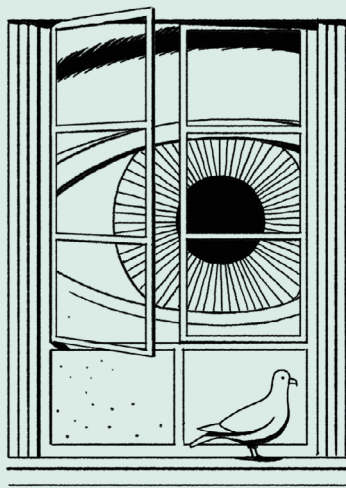
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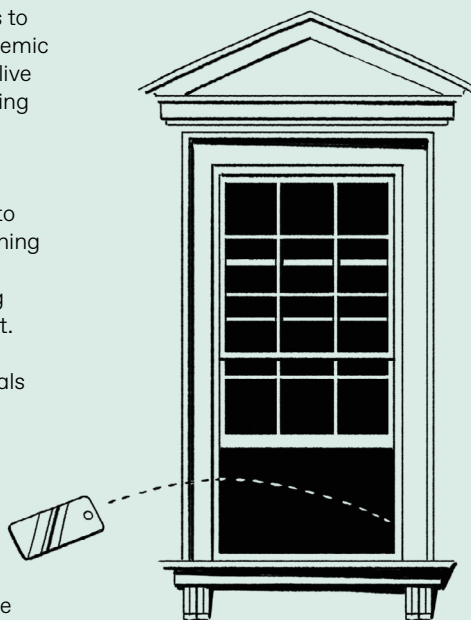
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Upcoming alumni events

Alongside an exciting programme of online and in-person events for 2023-24, and as part of our Global Cambridge events series, Professor Deborah Prentice, the new Vice-Chancellor, is looking forward to meeting alumni in San Francisco and New York in December and in London on 24 January. Keep an eye on alumni.cam.ac.uk/events and your alumni newsletters for further details.

Alumni bookshelf

Read recently published titles from the Cambridge community, as well as books with a link to the University or Cambridge. alumni.cam.ac.uk/benefits/book-shelf

Alumni Book Club

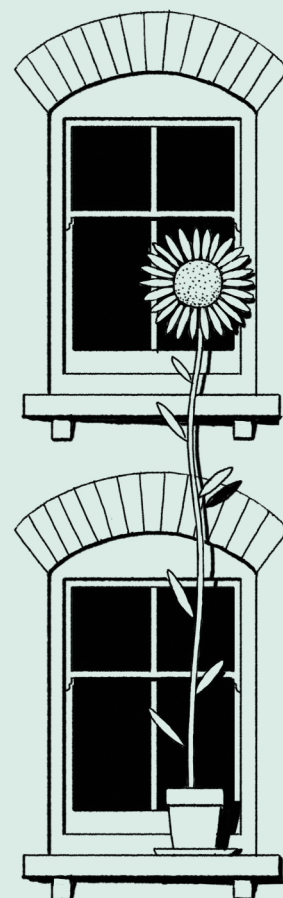
Join the debate with your fellow alumni at the bi-monthly virtual Alumni Book Club, now with dedicated College forums and virtual author talks. Members vote during each reading period to choose the next book, and participation is free for alumni. Find out more at alumni.cam.ac.uk/benefits/alumni-book-club

Alumni Festival 2024

Next year's Alumni Festival will run from 27 to 29 September. As well as delving into the transformational ideas created at the University and hearing from its leading academics, you can reconnect with fellow alumni and collegiate Cambridge to discover how they are developing solutions to worldwide challenges. Find out more by visiting: alumni.cam.ac.uk/festival

On-demand content

Missed an event or Festival session? Check out our collection of recorded sessions from past events, including the Alumni Festival and Cambridge Conversations, at youtube.com/@YoursCambridge/playlists





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