

THE ISIS NEWSLETTER

Relevant, witty, political. What are you?

ALL SOULLESS

100 word responses to All Soul's exam questions.

'If something is possible, is it necessarily possible? Discuss.

While on one hand it is an unequivocally proven fact that for some time now people have been running the distance sometimes known as 21.2 kilometres and otherwise known as 13.1 miles (that is, a half marathon) in the sense that they cannot be considered physically impossible, I could not help but think to myself last Sunday as I was exploring the depths of Summertown in ways that I did not conceive I ever would, that perhaps just because something is in theory achievable does not mean in practise you should try to achieve it, experiencing as I have since the greatest pain to my body of all my known days. ■

Holly Milton-Jefferies

LECTURE REVIEW

100 words of scathing criticism, brought to you by...?

Wednesday, 12pm, South Schools

We begin with a warning to not 'fuck around on the internet', in a rant against technology, seemingly provoked by the delay caused by JF forgetting his SSO password. Tasked with convincing a sea of PPEists that Mill is somehow important, very much preaching to the choir given his undoubted appearance on most of their personal statements, JF slices through the inevitable apathy by openly confessing that teaching utilitarianism was entirely to his own displeasure. Instead, accompanied by a cacophony of sneezes from those who contracted freshers flu in the previous week, he treats the lecture like his own personal stand-up routine. Topics covered included the morality of killing freshers and protesting Domino's Pizza. By the time his 50 minutes was up, the laugh counter stood at an impressive 11. Unorthodox, but inarguably engaging - 4/10. ■

Paul Fuary



To be continued on page 3...

MRS CHATTERBOX LEAVES THE HOUSE

An honest review of our latest event.

Goodbye Brat Summer, Hello Academic Autumn! After months of drooling over pics of rad cam and dreaming of late-night yap sessions, we've finally returned to Oxford. With grand aspirations of becoming academic weapons this year, we enter freshers bright-eyed and bushy-tailed—only to end up snoozing in the bridge queue.

Of course, your ever-dedicated Isis Team has been hard at work. You might have spotted us at the Freshers' Fair, where we became just one of many mailing lists that will haunt you like a bad ghost story (seriously, I'm still dodging those ultimate frisbee emails). In a stunning act of strategic brilliance, someone decided to place the Isis stall right across from the C***well. Naturally, we spent the day gaslighting—oops, I mean *convincing* freshers that the Isis is by far the best magazine (have you seen our magazine covers? Like if Picasso had a midlife crisis and decided to become a graphic designer!)

But wait, the fun didn't stop there! Let's not forget our first Isis meeting of the year! Like true creative geniuses, all our deputy editors introduced themselves with riveting (and slightly nauseating) tales from their summers—so much for creativity!

Naturally, we followed up this intellectual deep dive with a trip to the pub, where we engaged in profound debates about how to score the best deals on Vinted and why Park End is now at Bridge. We raised our glasses in cheers to another year of questionable decisions and academic adventures—just you wait till editor drinks! Who knows what kind of shenanigans await? Spoiler alert: it probably involves more alcohol. ■

Yours,
Mrs Chatterbox

PRESSURE POINT

A political event that's been bubbling over like the water in your kettle.

JD Vance: America's New Heartthrob?

Last week I came across a Substack article entitled "Women Across America Just fell in Love With JD Vance".



I'm relatively new to Substack (I know - late to the party!) and a pretty infrequent user, so don't fall into the same algorithm-generated echo chamber that dominates all my other forms of social media. In the post, Jessica Reed Kraus claims that "After the debate, my texts and DMs flooded with messages from suburban moms across the country newly smitten." It's a rave review. If you had asked me before reading this who the words "one of the most sensible figures in modern politics with Liz Taylor lashes as an added perk" would be written about, I think Vance would have been the last person to come to mind. A quick scroll through the comments proved that she wasn't the only one to experience this brief lapse in sanity. (Although I did appreciate one user introducing some BBC-style balance with the comment "Cute? I don't get it. He looks like a troll under the bridge.")

This opinion surely only belongs to a very small minority, but even such a niche group can prove important in an election which is panning out to be the most divided along gender lines in history. The October 2024 New York Times/Siena poll put Trump at an 11-point lead among men, and Harris at a 16-point lead among women. When it comes to personal popularity, Trump's lead amongst men increases to 13 and Harris's rating with women remains the same.

Although worrying, none of this is really news. For a long time, we've known about Trump's appeal to a certain type of male voter. Swept up in his anger at immigration and the woke brigade, America's discontented men flock to their orange beacon of populism. But the real battle has always lain in the swing states and the mythical "middle America". A few months ago, this was why JD Vance seemed like such a ridiculous choice of running mate. An, albeit recently converted, ardent

Trump supporter from Ohio didn't seem the obvious candidate to bring undecided voters to the Republican campaign. However, despite his blatant misogyny, Vance and his smooth-talking poise might prove to be more popular with women and traditionally conservative sections of America, who are possibly put off by Trump's tirades.

Of course, I doubt that women will vote Republican because of a crush. Their bodies are, after all, on the line in this election. We've come beyond the Sex and the City days of women being painted as incapable of voting with anything but their heart—or rather eyes—and I'd avoid taking (the otherwise iconic) Samantha Jones' comment "I always vote for candidates based on their looks" to reflect real voting habits amongst women.

On the flipside, it is undeniable that beauty pays in politics, and numerous studies have linked attractiveness to electability, especially in the US where the worlds of celebrity and politics have long been intertwined. However, the politician-as-crush

seems a curiously gender-specific phenomenon: a male politician with a female following. I mean, Hugh Grant was cast as the Prime Minister in Love Actually—you don't do that if it's an unsexy job. I wonder if it's a product of celebrity crush culture. The para-social bonding of teen girls lifted up and replicated in a more "grown up" sphere. Your boy band posters can be directly replaced by a calendar of Putin or Trudeau, if that's your thing.

Female politicians are, of course, sexualised, but this seems more to take the form of online harassment than fan mail posted into a ballot box. Political power is equated with masculinity. For women, this means trouser suits and voice deepening classes à la Thatcher. In the above New York Times/Siena poll, when men were asked which of the two candidates they view as a 'strong leader', Trump came out 20 points ahead. Those words still don't seem to conjure up an image of a woman in most people's minds.

A crush is about power dynamics. It's

unserious, fun. I'd be lying—and a poor example of a French student—if I didn't say that I have at times had a somewhat guilty crush on Macron. But the opposite is the case when it comes to how female politicians are treated. When we giggle over finding a male politician attractive, we leave their authority intact. Feminine sexuality, however, is still seen as incompatible with political power.

But let's remember who we're dealing with here. JD Vance is a man who has called for a rollback of abortion rights ("100% pro-life"), endorsed an anti-IVF report, and time and time again, vilified childless women. His place on the ticket may make Trumpism more palatable for some voters, but I would place bets on Vance doing nothing to put the brakes on the Republican party's headlong rush into populism. A Trump-Vance victory in November is not only a horrifying prospect for American women, but for the whole world. Maybe a crush is not a laughing matter anymore. ■

Tilda Walker

WEDNESDAYS AT PLUSH

QUACKERS

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£1 SOURS SHOTS

4 FOR £10 JAGER BOMBS

SCAN ME

@QUACKERSOX

ICON OF THE WEEK: FOOTPRINT TOURS

Iconic places in Oxford, picked by the Features team.

As all Christ Church students, or anyone who has braved Cornmarket street at lunchtime will tell you, Oxford is a veritable tourist haven. Benjamin Franklin made the claim that nothing was certain in life apart from death and taxes. He was wrong. Weekend college brunch, a disastrously alcoholic Halloween bop, and a fight for your life during a stampede on the Bodleian steps: Franklin, take notes on the 'Oxford inevitabilities' package deal. Tourists block the pavement when you're late for a lecture; flatter you with photos on your matriculation day; grant you a derisive snort as you glimpse a punt sailing dangerously close to the Thames. But wherever they are, they are.

All those firmly aboard the distaste-for-tourists train would admire the banality of the Tourist Information Centre. It lacks any of the boisterous self-centeredness that singles out your average snail-paced dawdler, and any of the pragmatism. Tucked into the same line of shops that houses Cafe Creme and Italiamo, I wager with utmost confidence that you, like me, never took any notice of the plain little shop amidst the wafting

smells of a decently priced aubergine and falafel baguette. Until Trinity term of my second year I was unaware that nestled in the midst of this bustling street is the home of one of Oxford's most beloved staples: The Footprints Walking Tour.

I'll forgive you, begrudgingly, if you don't immediately know what I'm referring to. Why should you? Since Oxford welcomes tourists in droves, many different walking companies elbow each other aside on the cramped pilgrimage from Balliol to the Rad Cam. But amongst the megaphones and handheld clipboards, the bleary-eyed schoolkids and the well-tipping Americans, weave the green-jacketed Footprints guides.

If you're interested in becoming a guide, there are three basic steps:

You learn a 50-page script. Whilst this might seem daunting it's actually not too bad. I even have a handy facts Quizlet if you fancy. A mere 252 flashcards... It'll be a breeze!

You shadow another guide's tour. Very useful to see how the material links together. It also can majorly backfire if you're so nervous on your first tour that you introduce yourself as Mark because you're reciting Mark's tour word-for-word.

You give a practice tour to another guide. I've performed in a lockdown zoom 'whodunnit' play and my practice tour was still the most woeful performance of my life.

Because that's what it is: a performance. It's no surprise that a number of these neon know-it-alls frequent the university's stages. Being a decent tour guide requires projection, sustained energy, a love of your own voice and an insatiable need for others' applause and approval. The only difference is that we get paid more for touring than we likely ever will as hopeful professional thespians.

It's a refreshingly practical performance too. The job comes with a fabulous number of perks: you work on your schedule; you actually learn about your new city, and this is all whilst getting your 10,000 steps in. A triple threat indeed! Whilst delivering the same material for the 100th time can grow tiresome, taking two hours out of your day to walk down the city's most renowned street is a wonderful way to remind yourself of why you came here in the first place. As students, we become so immune to the beauty of the architec-

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Kate Bansmer



ture, to the quirks of our traditions, to the weight of the university's history. In your first few days, you vow never to take this experience for granted, and yet, by Tuesday of first week, you're bustling through Rad Cam square with the nonchalance only reserved for your local chippie. Seeing the city through the fresh eyes of a tourist is the best way to refresh your gratitude.

More importantly, welcome to the segment of this Icon of the Week where I recount my best lies that tourists have believed. For your convenience, they are scaled by eccentricity: 1) I live in the room where Saltburn was filmed. As a Brasenose member, I figure I'm close enough. 2) I've been forcefully removed by security from the Duke Humphrey's library for touching an old book. 3) My tutor ripped up my personal statement before my eyes because I expressed dislike for The Tempest. 4) I stole a deer from Magdalen and let it loose inside Brasenose. 5) The Rad Cam is named after Daniel Radcliffe. 6) Emma Watson and I have struck up a blossoming friendship after meeting at an English lecture. 7) I was accepted into All Souls but turned it down to star in an upcoming Netflix show.

The last two I count more as manifestations than lies, but they still make the list. ■

Susie Weidmann



To read more scan here...

WHAT'S ON:

The best events hand picked by us.

Sunday 20th for an epic one-man staging of the infamous two-person fable: *Lost Dog's Paradise*. *Lost* (lies unopened beside me), Old Fire Station, 20:00.

Monday 21st if you like money Coinage in 7th century England: Ashmolean, 14:00-15:00.

Tuesday 22nd high camp *Heathers the Musical*: Oxford Playhouse, 19:30 (on until 26th)—the perfect pres for:

Wednesday 23rd Queerfest: Wadham, 18:00-00:00. Legendary.

Thursday 24th to lighten your hangover *Improvised Comedy* with the Awkward Actors, The Larder, 19:30.

Friday 25th to return to less improvised culture Bettina Von Zwehl in *Conversation*: Ashmolean, 14:00.

Saturday 26th for what's billed as 'Oxford's newest soul night': *Sliced Tomato*, Tap Social Movement, 20:00.

Sunday 27th British Summertime ends.

Phoenix Barnett



...From page 1
Comics by Gruffydd Price

WHAT'S IN:

My friend introduced me to the 'Lovely girl' (or boy). We all know one. They're the love child of the 'frazzled English woman' and The Last Dinner Party. There's something slightly Victorian about the 'Lovely girl': a wrinkled puffy shirt paired with a waist jacket and some corduroy trousers. They're effortlessly cool in clashing colours, dressed head to toe in 'oh, just something I found in a charity shop'. Silver rings that look homemade, an oddly shaped necklace, big earrings, and smudged mascara on an otherwise clean face. Their favourite accessories include a cigarette, a stripy scarf, and a battered leather bag overflowing with books (think Jane Birkin). **How to create the look:** don't try too hard. Being authentically yourself is the key here. After you have 'found yourself' (preferably in a country cottage rather than Bali), get a pair of loose-fitting trousers (in a funky colour, think dark burgundy or burnt orange) and a top that looks like vintage lingerie. Your coat should be from the men's section—either an oversized trench that trails on the floor or a loose-fitting velvet blazer slightly worn on the sleeves. Boots are so 'cool second year', so go get yourself a pair. Finish off the look with an English degree, and you've become a 'Lovely girl' (English degrees always dress the best... maybe it's because they have more time on their hands?).

WHAT'S OUT:

The 'clean girl' aesthetic just isn't Oxford. My reading list is too long for me to wake up every morning with a fresh face and a perfect slicked-back bun. No amount of concealer is going to cover the bags under my eyes. ■ **Antonia Rogers**

EDITORS' NOTE

Wow. It's been a busy four months. We've spent the summer on Google Meets discussing this very newsletter from the most unassuming places (Ananya in India with her wonderful grandmother in the background; Bella on her way to a Polish-Jewish wedding in California). So, what is this thing? Our aim is to bring a bit of *je ne sais quoi* into Oxford in whatever way we can. This city can feel like such a serious place—one that's simply begging for some satire—for a bit of looseness amidst all the talk of firsts and I'll-never-make-it-on-time-essay-deadlines. Back to the newsletter. It's been carefully put together and written by our non fiction and features team—thanks, guys. Major shout out to Reuben Meadows, our utterly fantastic non fic-

deputy editor and to good friend Bertie Low for oozing with brilliant newsletter-related ideas. We want this to be funny; to be a bit mischievous; hell, even a little provocative. Hope we made you smile. Grab five copies for your friends. ■

Bella Gerber-Johnstone and Ananya Saraf

DATING ADVERT

Looking for someone? Advertise here.
Email isiseditor@gmail.com.

Wealthy woman seeking common man.

Having arrived in Oxford after a year of study at Saint Martin's College. I find myself in need of a partner to show me around. My ex was utterly deluded, he lived in a house, a very big house, in the country. I'm looking for the opposite in Oxford. Someone with roaches climbing their walls, who can't call their Dad to stop it all.

My ideal first date is at the pub, somewhere down to earth, like the Union bar. Just somewhere to smoke some fags and play some pool. ■

Harry Buller

AGONY AUNT

Got problems? We got 'em too.

"My boyfriend wants to go to the library with me every day, but I simply can't focus on my work when he's there, making those eyes at me. How do I tell him to stop joining me on my study breaks, without making him feel rejected?"

From,

A very worried girlfriend"

First of all—don't be very worried. Your boyfriend is clearly besotted, which is a nice problem to have. What I'm interested in here is that you don't feel you can have a perfectly normal conversation with your partner ('please could I have a little time alone to focus on my work instead of you, my love, with a view to spending more quality time together at another point?' 'Of course, darling! You should have said!') without him feeling "rejected". He sounds quite clingy—are you okay with this? Do you mind the staring thing, or does it make you feel loved? If you don't feel you're able to assert your need for time apart just to get your work done, it doesn't sound like you have much room to manoeuvre in the relationship.

He may not realise the consternation he's causing you, in which case sitting him down for a straightforward conversation is probably your best bet. It's important not to baby your boyfriend—he is (I presume) an adult who should be able to handle a reasonable and kindly-worded request, even if it hurts his feelings a little bit. An excellent complaint tactic is the 'criticism sandwich', the bread being niceties.

You could mention "those eyes" – which, incidentally, he might want to make at a few problem sheets himself. You might also express it as a joint venture, because it certainly doesn't sound like he's getting much done either.

If I were in your position, I'd dump him; I can't stand a man who won't leave me alone. No need to copy me, but it's always an option.

Yours in agony,

Isis Nosebest ■

OXFORD MEDIA SOCIETY x **THE GEDDES TRUST**
FREE EVENT
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US ELECTION CONVENTION

CORPUS CHRISTI | 24TH OCTOBER | 2PM

RAINOLDS ROOM AND AUDITORIUM

Keynote speech from Sir Peter Westmacott, former Ambassador to the US
Panels on Tech and, Disinformation and, the Special Relationship.
Speechwriting workshop from Phil Collins, Tony Blair's former speech writer

SPEAKERS Max Foster, Patrick Wintour, Tom Fletcher, Kiran Stacey, Laura Wright, Greg Miller, Ciaran Martin, Lewis Goodall and Phil Collins

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