

## Mill Lane Award Report

*Taneesha Datta*

I spent the money from the Mill Lane Award on rent and food expenses for Michaelmas Term 2023. This meant that instead of undertaking paid jobs such as tutoring over the summer, I was able to devote my time to extracurricular interests and professional activities as listed below.

Receiving the award enabled me to take up the role of Editor-in-Chief at Varsity, Cambridge's oldest and largest student newspaper (July to December 2023). The experience of working with a team of 190 students to produce biweekly print editions and online daily content has greatly improved my leadership skills and ability to work in teams. In addition, it expanded my knowledge of the publishing and journalism industries and allowed me to better engage with Cambridge's diverse community of students and scholars.

Over the summer, the award allowed me to undertake an unpaid internship in environmental consulting, where I worked to design a launch strategy for a new plastic credits scheme and assess India's public-sector plastic recycling technologies. I was also able to work in a low-paid position at a New York-based political risk firm, where I specialised in studying the political and regulatory environment in South Asian countries. These experiences provided valuable insights into policy implementation in developing countries and provided useful real-world context for my academic interests in economic development and political economy.

In the months during which my living costs were funded by the award, I was also able to release two issues of Sepia, an online literary & arts journal that I edited until December 2023. These issues showcased the work of close to thirty writers and artists from across the world. In addition, I worked independently on various informal writing and musical endeavours, which were useful in developing my creative interests.

In relieving me of the strain incurred by living expenses for the second half of last year, the Mill Lane Award freed up a significant amount of my time to pursue each of the activities listed above. It allowed me to do justice to my extracurricular commitments without having to worry over the summer about seeking paid positions to fund expenses during term. I am grateful and honoured to have received the award. It has truly made a real difference to my experience of Cambridge's rich cultural life during my last year as an undergraduate.