

# 125 years Cambridge Weekend News

Saturday, August 31, 2013

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## GOING FOR GOLD

The remarkable story  
of Charlotte Cox



# Is divide between two halves of Mill Road real or imagined?



**CHRIS HAVERGAL**  
Local government correspondent



THE railway line has long been seen as a cultural divide as well as a physical break in Cambridge's Mill Road, but how many of these differences are real and how many are imagined?

This is the question being investigated by a fascinating research project which has seen electronic voting devices placed in 18 shops along the cosmopolitan street – half on the Romsey side, and half at the Petersfield end.

The results are then turned into public art, with the results being sprayed onto the pavement outside participating shops.

The project is the brainchild of two academics, Lisa Koeman and Vaiva Kalnikaite, who want to know whether classic stereotypes – which sometimes see Petersfield as posh and 'Red' Romsey as being grittier – are actually true.

The pair, from University College London, picked Mill Road because Vaiva lives in the area, and want to use it as a case study which can be used to help hypothesise what perceived economic and social differences between regions – for example, between the north and south of England – mean in practice.

They also hope it will allow residents to find out more about the area they live in – which is famed for its diverse community and international shops.

Lisa said: "It seemed perfect for a study like this because, when talking to different members of the community, we noticed that people felt a strong identity about being from the Romsey side or from Petersfield, and they felt the

two parts were very different.

"We are trying to figure out if these are just perceived differences or if there are actual differences."

When people enter one of the participating shops, they are greeted by a question, and an electronic voting machine which allows them to agree, disagree, or stay undecided.

So far questions have been asked about happiness, neighbourliness, and safety.

Lisa said that, so far, differences appear to be perceived more than real, with a strong feeling of happiness, but there are some significant differences – with Romsey folk believing Petersfield is more unsafe than their own neighbourhood.

Every few days the answers are drawn on the pavement and, at the end of the project, results summing up the study will be drawn on the pavement of the bridge that connects Romsey and Petersfield.

Lisa added: "It's fascinating and people are responding very well to the study – it seems to be generating a lot of discussion."

"People will be able to draw their own conclusions and hopefully they will get an insight into their own community."

So far four questions have been asked, and it is expected that nine questions will be answered in total.

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**THE VOTES ARE IN:** From left, researchers Lisa Koeman and Vaiva Kalnikaite with Sirous and Mattia from Limoncello, where you can place your vote and see the results on the pavement. Left, Vaiva casting her vote at Limoncello.

Above, the electronic voting device which has been placed in 18 shops

Pictures: Richard Patterson



**i** Is there a Mill Road divide? Tell us at [cambridge-news.co.uk](http://cambridge-news.co.uk)

