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# VARSITY

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

# Fletcher gets a second term as existing sabbaticals all re-elected

RICHARD POWER SAYEED  
News Editor

CUSU President Mark Fletcher has been awarded a second term in office, in a vote which saw all four of the 07/08 sabbatical officers who stood for a second year re-elected.

Turnout, which has fallen in the past two years, grew to 3,396, 17.1% of the electorate. When Varsity went to press the exact results of the presidential vote were still not known, but Fletcher is understood to have won a majority of first-choice votes.

Though 34.8% of those voting in the elections spoil their papers in the constitutional referendum, the new CUSU constitution was passed by a majority of 91.2% of valid votes. CUSU remains affiliated to NUS and UKCISA.

Fletcher told Varsity, "I'm obviously delighted with the win, and at the fact so many of the team will still be together this year. The progress we have made this year won't be wasted, and this gives us a real opportunity to build our Student Union. These elections

from Higher Education Funding Officer and left-leaning campaigner Richard Braude and libertarian conservative Hugo Hadlow, who planned to strip back CUSU's functions and funding.

After the election Braude, who has argued that CUSU needs to be political to be relevant, told Varsity, "For a long time CUSU has been failing, but there are elements within it which are attempting to ensure its survival and relevance. I have every faith in some of the newly elected officers, and that those who desire to merely maintain the status quo will look to them for the vision, strength and hope which our student body needs."

The fourth candidate, Basit Kirmani, pulled out of the race on Wednesday after complaints about an message he sent to the Queens' JCR email list which told students, "At the moment it is a three horse race between a guy from King's, the ex-president from Jesus and me. Both of those colleges traditionally have a much better turnout at voting but all of that MUST change this year if I am to win!" He requests, "PLEASE PLEASE DO VOTE FOR ME! It will take 1 minute max! and spread the word...I really need all of your support!"

The first page of CUSU's Election Rules 2008 states that "Candidates are not to advertise the election, or their candidacy by e-mail sent to a person who is not known to the candidate as a friend or on any forwarding email list".

In a letter to the Election Committee, Kirmani described the email as "an honest mistake", and said that "in the best interests of CUSU Elections 2007/08, all the other candidates running in this election, my supporters and the twenty-thousand strong student population in Cambridge that CUSU represents, I feel that the most honourable thing to do in my position is to resign. I also speak as a representative of my religion (Islam) and my ethnicity (British-Asian)."

CONTINUES ON PAGE SEVEN



» 3,396

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO VOTED IN 2008 CUSU ELECTIONS

» 16,000

NUMBER OF BALLOT PAPERS PRINTED BY CUSU ELECTION COMMITTEE

offered people the chance to see CUSU lurch wildly to the left or the right of the political spectrum, and it is now clear that this isn't where the students want CUSU to be."

Fletcher saw off competition

## Debate

Bringing back the death penalty: does capital punishment work?

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## Face Off

Clare square up to King's in a battle to see who mings

» Page 14



## Interview

Stephen Fry on wit, wisdom, and Albus Dumbledore

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**In Brief**

**Absinthe-fuelled assault**

A Cambridge student appeared in the Crown Court on Wednesday following a charge of sexual assault made against him by a fellow student last year. The woman, who cannot be indentified for legal reasons, alleged that Jack Gillet, currently a research student at the university's Shoeberg Laboratory for Quantum Matter, attacked her after a night drinking in Trinity College bar on the evening of June 4 last year. The defendant told how having returned to Gillet's room for a drink, he downed two shots of absinthe and proceeded to use force to pin her down to the floor and simulate the sexual act despite her protestations. In the hearing she alleged that 'he wasn't exactly using force, but he was kind of ignoring my resistance.' Gillett denies the charge of sexual assault and the hearing is ongoing.

**New president at Clare Hall**

Professor Sir Martin Harris, Director of University admissions body Office for Fair Access, has been appointed the seventh President of postgraduate college Clare Hall. Harris currently holds three top posts as OFFA Director, Chairman of the Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited and Chancellor of Salford University. Knighted in the Millennial Honours List, he is an Honorary Fellow of Queens' College Cambridge with honorary doctorates from the Universities of Essex, Salford, Manchester, Manchester Met, Lincoln, Queen's, Belfast, Ulster, and UMIST. "What appeals to me is the opportunity to re-immerser myself in the life of a scholarly community dominated by research and postgraduate learning", Sir Martin said. "I am honoured to have been asked to lead Clare Hall". The University said that Sir Martin will bring a "depth of experience and contacts" to the Presidency. C.H.

**Academic reality TV star**

A Cambridge academic is to star in a new science reality TV series. Dr Pete Wothers, teaching fellow in the Department of Chemistry, will be appearing in the Discovery Channel's "Big Experiment", every Thursday at 9pm for the next six weeks. The series, which will feature dramatic experiments involving lightning strikes, astronaut training and a human fireball, was designed in a bid to fast track pupils at an east London school through their science GCSE. "With the right large-scale experiments, you can't fail to be impressed. The key thing is getting the children involved", said Wothers.

# Survey ranks colleges by green credentials

MATTHEW DRAGE

A league table ranking colleges' environmental performance placed Robinson in first position. Christ's was ranked Cambridge's least green college.

The table, produced annually by the Cambridge University Environment Consultancy Society (CUECS), is designed to spur less green colleges into action. It takes into consideration college practice in nine key areas including lighting, insulation, computer and printer usage, and the extent to which green policy features in each college's decision making process.

According to the report, the high performance of Robinson and runners-up Darwin and Churchill was down to the colleges' willingness to note past failures and attempt to rectify them.

Robinson's Domestic Bursar Peter Milloy suggested that the key to his college's success was its emphasis on education: "We must try to convince people that it's best for everybody if people can be thoughtful about the way they use resources within the College, and around the University in general."

Despite its green reputation, King's ranked fourth from bottom in the table. The College's Green Officer, Sara Lyon, said that King's "environmental concerns fail to be institutionalised. There's very little continuity from one initiative to the next and no strong policy that pulls them all together."

Christ's also ranked low in the

table. When asked about Christ's performance, the college's Domestic Bursar Geoff Payne, replied, "To be honest, I'm really not interested in commenting on your green league table."

Robinson Bursar Peter Milloy believes colleges' failures to commit are temporary. The survey shows a marked improvement across the board, with the overall score achieved by top colleges up from 70 to 80 percent, and the CUECS report claims that the improved positions of colleges including St. John's and Homerton on the table "shows that the implementation of a college environmental policy can bring about great changes within a college."

His optimism is fuelled by the recent formation of the Bursars' Environmental sub-Committee, which will work within the existing structure of the Bursars' Committee. Milloy said that the move "sends out a message that the colleges are serious about this". The Committee Chairman, Caius Bursar Ian Herd, is equally confident in the scheme. He said, "It will draw together the good work that is already been done within many of the colleges, and ensure the other colleges are up to scratch." The move suggests a growing willingness amongst the University's senior management to listen to student opinion. He told Dan Chandler, CUSU Ethical Affairs Chair and leading member of the Cambridge Go Greener campaign, that student involvement with the sub-Committee, "largely a result of student and CUSU pressure", will be "significant".



Green Officer Peter Wood with fellow members of Robinson College

RICHARD POWER SAYEED

Top Five Colleges		Bottom Five Colleges	
1	Robinson		Christ's
2	Darwin		Clare Hall
3	Churchill		King's
4	Downing		Jesus
5	Clare		Queens' 

# Vice Chancellor under fire

» Senior fellows attack VC over attempts to end tradition of academic self-rule

MIKE KIELTY

The Vice Chancellor has been accused by senior academics in Cambridge of abusing her position at the head of the University's governing body and of pressuring them to end Cambridge's tradition of academic self-rule.

The accusation form part of an ongoing argument amongst the Council (the principal policy-making body of the University) between academics who defend self-rule and those who want to bring in more outsiders so as to make the university more accountable.

Currently, the Council is made up of four heads of colleges, three students, two external members and the Vice Chancellor, who has the deciding vote.

A proposal to add two more external members to the Council was brought to Regents House by Lord Richard Wilson, the

Master of Emmanuel College and a former Cabinet Secretary, who said that such a move "would be a sensible, evolutionary step forward, designed to meet the needs of the University in the best traditions of Cambridge".

A postal ballot of the 3,800 academic members of Regents House, the principal electoral constituency of the University which includes the heads and fellows of colleges, closing on 11 March, will decide whether or not to implement Lord Wilson's proposal.

But some senior academics have objected to Vice Chancellor Alison Richard's involvement in the debate. In an open letter to Master of Clare and former Council member Professor A.J. Badger, retired Cambridge geneticist and former Council member Professor Anthony Edwards mentions "the doubtful propriety of the Vice-Chancellor [in] encouraging the circulation of a paper ending Advice on Voting when she is the Returning Officer".

In a confidential letter to other fellows at Caius, Professor Edwards also wrote, "It is unacceptable that the Presiding Officer should express any opinion at all, and to do so via the machinery of the Colleges Committee and the Faculty structure beggars belief."

The Vice Chancellor declined to comment. But Professor Badger defended Richard, calling her actions as the chair of the Council "per-

fectly appropriate." He described the idea that the motion would pave the way for a potential majority of non-academic figures in control of the University as "far-fetched".

However Ross Anderson, Professor of Security Engineering and a member of the Council, recently told the Guardian that adding more external members to the Council would amount to "stuffing the governing body with retired ministers from the government of the day".

**"It is unacceptable that the Presiding Officer should express any opinion at all"**

In a statement made to Varsity he added, "Cambridge is a natural three-way marginal; we have a Lib Dem MP, and regardless of whether Labour or the Conservatives form the government of the day at Westminster, the majority of dons oppose them. So if the nominating committee is elected by us, it won't bend its knee to 10 Downing Street."

Professor Anderson and his supporters on the governing body have set up a group called the "Campaign for Cambridge Freedoms". Its web-

site asserts that "Cambridge is a self-governing community of scholars and should stay that way, despite bullying from HEFCE". The website also makes reference to similar reform proposals made at Oxford University by the Vice Chancellor John Hood in 2006. These provoked fierce opposition and were eventually voted down by academics. "Oxford eventually saw off the attempt at centralisation; so must we", the website reads.

But Professor Badger rubbished the connection with the failed reforms in Oxford. He said, "I cannot see any justification for the apocalyptic language that opponents of this reform are using."

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has been seen as pressurising both Cambridge and Oxford into having a majority of outsiders on their governing bodies. But in a letter sent to Professor Anderson last September, the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills John Denham effectively refuted the charge that the government is pushing Cambridge academics to include more external members in the governance of the University. On the subject of potential changes to the University's governing structure, Denham said, "Cambridge is and will remain an autonomous, self-governing organisation and will be free to decide for itself". The ballot's results are due on Wednesday 12th March.



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# Plane-scaling campaigning

» Cambridge alumni climb Houses of Parliament to protest against Heathrow extension

CATHERINE LOUGH  
AND TERENCE CORLESS

A former Cambridge student hit the headlines last week when she scaled the Houses of Parliament to protest against the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport.

Tamsin Omond, who graduated from Trinity in 2007, was one of five activists who handcuffed themselves to Westminster Palace for three hours last Wednesday to protest against the proposed third runway at Heathrow, before being arrested by police.

The protestors are members of Plane Stupid, a group campaigning against Heathrow's planned development and backing plans for higher taxation on short-haul flights to restrict CO2 emissions.

Theo Middleton, current King's student and member of Plane Stupid said, "The media response has been extraordinary: this week has been described as the week that environmentalism went mainstream." Middleton also highlighted the importance of Cambridge students' involvement in direct action. He said, "We've got the skills to articulate these issues well so we should use those and really apply ourselves."

The group has drawn attention to the role played by the British Airports Authority (BAA), which stands to benefit from the third runway, in the government's consultation on the expansion. Paddy Gillett, a spokesperson for Plane Stupid, called this a "complete conflict of interest", and said that the proposals "didn't even consult on climate change".

Omond said that the consultation gave the public "no opportunity to refuse" expansion plans which disregarded environmental concerns and instead focused on the financial benefits of the development. She described their figures provided as "incredibly dubious, and hugely exaggerating the numbers of jobs the expansion will provide. The research is completely contradictory; what we



Tamsin Omond with members of Plane Stupid atop the Houses of Parliament

need is some actual independent investigation. The only other research was undertaken by NGOs, and they calculated the runway would make a loss of £6 billion, while BAA have quoted a net gain of £3 billion."

Omond described the protest as a "huge success". She said, "If the media represent public opinion, everyone is behind us in blocking the third runway." However, Plane Stupid was keen to stress that campaigning against the expansion was "a very easy fight given how BAA have broken promises to local residents by expanding past the point they said they'd stop." Omond said that if the plans are given the go-ahead "we may as well run for the nuclear bunkers."

Some of the media have focused on the affluent backgrounds of the group. The Daily Mail has labelled them "posh protesters", drawing attention to the fact that Omond is the granddaughter of Dorset landowner Sir Thomas Lees. Plane Stupid claimed that this demonstrated the widespread appeal of the climate change movement. Omond said, "It's surprising that these types of people are getting involved, but also exciting. You think, I have the time, I have the resources, I have the contacts, why on earth aren't I involved?" Gillett agreed: "A massive amount of well-informed people, some from almost aristocratic backgrounds, some working class. Get involved, because ultimately climate change affects us all."

Omond did not participate in green activism as a student, and described the environmental movement at the University as "pretty poor". She spoke of being part of "the Cambridge bubble" and said, "Everything was secondary to me doing well. But climate change is such an urgent issue, its revitalising student activism. I think people realise now they can't just sit and enjoy their three years. Cambridge students definitely need to be doing more." Middleton stressed the importance for involvement in such causes. "It really is the

most fundamental issue of our time and it is the biggest issue facing humanity, so we've got to use our skills and our education to help".

Omond also spoke about the £10 billion tax breaks received by the aviation industry every year. She said, "If they were subject to the same scrutiny as other transport it would mean the demise of the low-cost airline. There are solutions out there, it just takes the political will, but while we have party politics it's all about the short term. The government needs

**"We wanted Gordon Brown to know what it's like to have an inconvenience overhead that he didn't ask for"**

to take the moral high ground; we need to be led". She said that while there are wider issues for the environmental movement to face, Plane Stupid has "a very specific agenda, that's why it works so well." Olivia Chessel also spoke of the amount of misdirected attention towards other problems. "There is too much focus on security. There needs to be more on the government's policies on climate change."

Gillett described how the expansion would counter any other efforts to be green. He said, "We could switch off every light and shut down every power station, and this runway would still undo all of that. It would emit more greenhouse gases than Kenya." When asked about the manner in which the protest was conducted, he said, "We wanted Gordon Brown to know what it's like to have an inconvenience overhead that he didn't ask for."

## King's students up in arms

MICHAEL STOTHARD

King's College came under fire from its student union this week over its refusal to give up its investments in the arms trade. KCSU has begun a fresh campaign to end what it describes as the College's "destructive" investment policies.

King's is one of 11 Cambridge colleges with shares in arms companies. In the past King's has refused to change its investment policy or allow an official committee to review its holdings. But KCSU believes that this time it can make a difference.

The campaign began in 2005 after a Cambridge Students Against the Arms Trade inquiry revealed that Cambridge University was the largest investor in the arms trade of all higher education institutes in the country. It was revealed that Cambridge had 1.6m shares in the six largest arms dealers in the UK. Trinity College alone had almost 800,000 shares in BAE Systems, although it has since reduced the number to just under 140,000.

"If you own a business, that

means you approve of what the management is doing", said the head bursar at Selwyn College, Mick Downer. Selwyn have an ethical investment policy.

Past attempts by the KCSU were stopped before they got going by the bursar and investment committee. "I've been really dis-

**"as students of King's College, we are responsible for its actions and investment policies"**

appointed about how they have not been engaging with the students on this issue," said former CUSU Ethical Investment Officer Christine Berry.

Instead of going through the bursar, a process of opposition which has failed in the past, the plan is

to set up an independent student committee which would have the potential to take papers straight to the college council.

"This may be our last chance to campaign with any credibility", said Julien Domerca, who is the joint student representative on the college council.

"They have definitely learnt from the difficulties of the past, and are going down more productive avenues", said Berry.

KUSU agreed to set up an ethical investment committee because it took the view that "as students of King's College, we are responsible for its actions and investment policies." The first step will be the setting up of a committee to look at the college's current investment scheme and how it can be changed.

According to research by the Ethical Investment Research Service, up to 20 per cent of the stock market can be excluded from investments without affecting financial performance. The British arms industry comprises only about 1.4 per cent of the market value of the FTSE.



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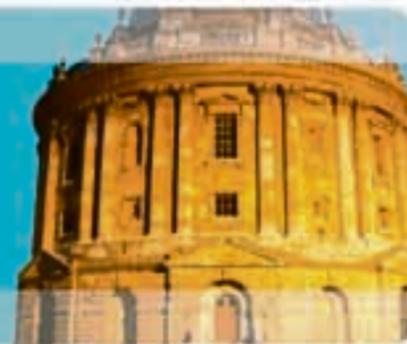
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# Varsityprofile

## » Mohammad 'Salik' Munim

ISABEL SHAPIRO

Every Wednesday, hundreds of students head to the Mahal on their social swaps for a slap-up meal and a BYO bottle of wine pre-Cindies.

Officially renamed the Bombay Brasserie several years ago, the Mahal has always been one of the most popular student eateries, renowned for rowdy, lager-fuelled dinners which often descend into food fights by 8pm.

Mohammed Munim, known by his friends as Salik, took over as proprietor of the Mahal last year. When he's not overseeing the restaurant on busier nights, he also runs a mortgage and finance company on Brick Lane.

Salik went into the job under no illusions as to the nature of the venue, but on his first night in the restaurant he was still shocked by what he found.

"It was more out of control than I'd ever expected. I used to work in an upmarket restaurant, and this is definitely a step down. I feel like I'm pretending to be something I'm not."

Since then the Mahal has seen many changes. Salik has worked hard to up the standards of the food and service in the restaurant, but top of his list of priorities was to improve the behaviour of his student diners. A list of house rules have been drawn up by staff, laminated and pinned to the bar to catch students' attention as soon as they enter the restaurant.

The seven rules include "No jumping on chairs and tables", and "No excessive drinking which might make one sick." Salik hopes his no-nonsense code of conduct will finally hit home, "There's got to be a limit. Since we've put up the rules not one person has vomited and everyone is definitely more respectful."

But the business can still be blighted by the behaviour of his student clientele. Often Salik warns other customers in advance if he knows there is a big student booking that evening. "Wednesdays and Sundays are a big student hoo-ha and sometimes it gets too much. Customers walk out if it's not their thing, but we've got to keep the students in to make a living."

"Things are really looking up but there are just a few more changes we need to make." First on his to-do list is to get rid of the heavy pile red carpets and replace it with wooden floorboards which will be "easier to scrub down and hopefully more hygienic." As it stands, on average the restaurant takes two hours to clean up after a standard student night.

"At times it gets too much, it can be an absolute nightmare and our waiters do have to be very brave." But Salik explained that once in a while, one good night can make up for all the others. "Last night we had a really good time, everyone was enjoying themselves and the food and that's all we can wish for. A few glasses were broken, sure, but ultimately that's what student life is all about."

» 15

YEARS THE MAHAL HAS BEEN SERVING CURRY TO ROWDY STUDENTS

» 98

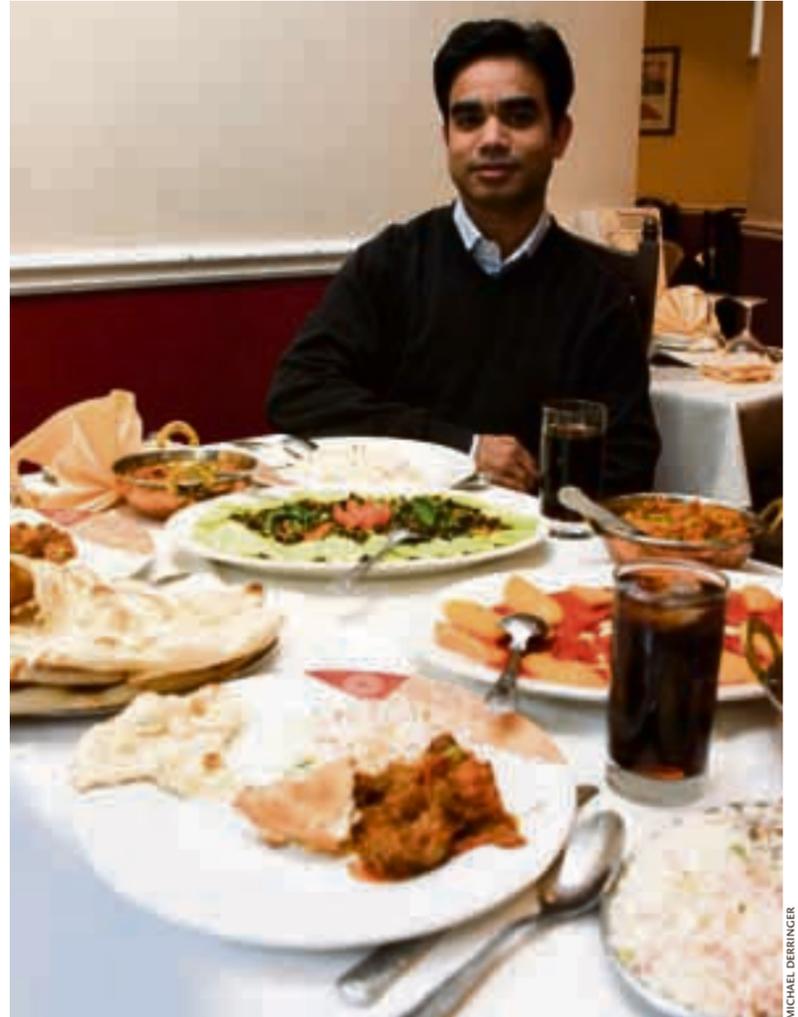
AVERAGE NUMBER OF NEW GLASSES ORDERED EACH WEEK

» 140

STUDENT SITTINGS EACH NIGHT

» 3

NUMBER OF PATRONS BARRED FROM THE RESTAURANT AFTER INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR



# Anglers battle with authorities over lowering of Cam

ROBERT CRAIG

Anglers are complaining that the lowering of the River Cam is depleting the fish population by making it easy prey to wildlife.

Cam Conservators, the authority responsible for monitoring the river between Silver Street Bridge and Bottisham Lock, have been asked by the Council to temporarily lower water levels upstream of the Mill Pond in order to facilitate maintenance work on the sluice gates at Bishop's Gate Lock, one of Cambridge's most important flood defence mechanisms.

After two weeks of lowered water levels, the river is due to be restored to its normal level today. However, anglers claim that the process has had a disastrous effect on the fish population.

"The shallow waters are making it too easy for cormorants and otters to take the fish", said Robert Phillips, a local angler of over 50

years' experience. "Anglers have paid good money for their licences, but the council is making the river unfishable".

He suggested that the Council and its contractors could have better prepared for the maintenance work by placing metal sheeting in the river and isolating the area around the sluice gates.

**"The council is making the river unfishable"**

But Dr Philippa Noon, River Manager of the Cam Conservators, disagreed. "We are confident there is enough water in the river to support its fish population", she said. Dr Noon pointed out that two Fisheries teams from the Environmental Agency had already made thorough checks of the upper river,

and were "satisfied that there was enough water for the fish population to find both sufficient shelter and enough oxygen".

"We work very closely with the Environmental Agency", she added. In turn, she stressed the importance of automating and upgrading the Bishop's Mill sluice gates. "Two miles of river are impounded Bishop's Mill Sluice. If the gates fail, Cambridge will stand at risk of flooding".

Colin Sparkes, who has worked as River Foreman for Cam Conservators for thirty years, claimed that the lowering of the river was the only effective means of allowing the maintenance work to be undertaken. "Metal sheeting offers no capacity to deal with flooding, given the rainfall of this time of year", he explained. "We do need to keep use of the gates throughout the maintenance work".

The Council officer in charge of the maintenance project, however, knew nothing of the controversy. John Cowin, Head of Property Services, admitted that he "hadn't heard at all" that anglers were upset. However, he explained that the lowering of the river "takes place on an annual basis", and that Cam Conservators "always take care to minimise the period when the river level is lowered".

In response to anglers' concerns, he admitted that they were "probably right: if the fish are still in the water, it's probably easier for herons to find them". But, in light of the importance of the upgrade of the sluice, he said that any negative effect on recreational fishing "was just one of those things".

Since it was lowered two weeks ago, dozens of abandoned bikes have been retrieved from the Cam.



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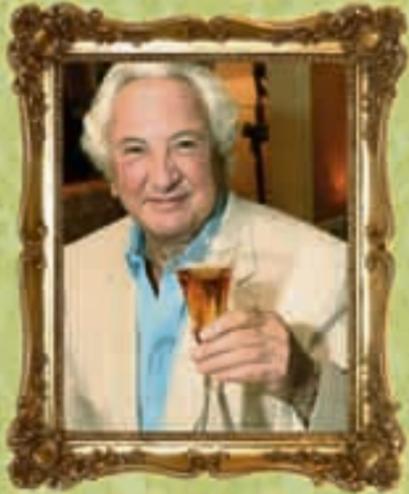
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Dying at 92, Maharishi had spent 50 years working to eradicate human suffering. Teachers trained personally by him offer his techniques via registered charities in 192 countries, a quiet revolution to increase creative intelligence, inner fulfilment and justice, and for the eradication of poverty. The media has focused on ancient slurs already retracted with apology by the Beatles while Cambridge University students and teachers, for example, took his knowledge very seriously, experiencing more mental power, tripled energy-levels, fulfilment and freedom from stress.

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# Goons in attendance as Tiddlywinks Club celebrates 50th anniversary Royal match

ELIZA APPERLY

Amid the varying sporting achievements of the past week, an important victory for the Cambridge University Tiddlywinks Club should not go unnoticed. On Saturday, after some tense competition, the team came away triumphant from its 50th anniversary Royal match. Awash with celebrity players and "plenty of wine from the early stages", the event celebrated 50 years of enthusiastic "winking" since the original 1958 contest between the University Club and Prince Philip's Royal Champions.

Three years after the Club's foundation, the first Royal Match was inspired by a slanderous article in the Observer which dared to ask "Does Prince Philip cheat at tiddlywinks?" Jumping upon such a libellous proposition, the founding fathers of CUTwC challenged Prince Philip to a match to defend his "winking honour". He duly appointed his Royal Champions as the Goons comedy troupe of Spike Milligan, Michael Bentine, Peter Sellers and Harry Secombe.

In the spirit of their ancestors, current club members decided to mark the Royal match's 50th anniversary by issuing a second competition challenge to Prince Philip. This time, he nominated the gentleman's Savage Club, of which several of the Goons were members, as his adept team.

According to the current president of CUTwC Sarah Knight the day was a fantastic success. Among around 40 spectators, six members of

the original 1958 team attended, including renowned tiddlywinker Bill Steen, the Club's founder. Though the match was tight, the prevailing spirit was one of a "jolly day out" as "competitiveness never took the edge off the fun".

Though CUTwC is one of the more select sporting communities of Cambridge with about 10 regular members, it is, as its website carefully points out, in fact the University's most successful sport, having lost the annual Varsity tiddlywinks

match on only three occasions. A mystery to many outsiders, not least with its intriguing terminology of cruds, gromps, squop-ups and squidgers, to name but a few manoeuvres, tiddlywinks is nevertheless a nationally established game, with its own website regular tournaments and its own twice-annual journal, Winking World.

Described by the English Tiddlywinks Association as "a complex game of strategy", Sarah Knight stresses how the sport

requires both "serious physical skill" and "tactical nous". However, CUTwC are not always stuck into serious competitions or gruelling training programmes. As Knight emphasises, the club is all about fun too. As outlined on the CUTwC homepage, an important mainstay of their termly fixtures is beer drinking and pub crawls and to "avoid having to talk to each other" on any such social occasion the club has also devised a "goodly range of drinking games".



Competitors take part in the 50th anniversary Royal tiddlywinks match



## Magdalen

### A winter's tale

The night was still young for one third-year Wyvern, when he decided to emulate the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet - in an attempt, we imagine, to get to know his lover in the Shakespearean sense. But tragedy ensued when, after serenade and soliloquy failed to rouse his sleeping beauty from her slumber, our budding Romeo went off script and began lobbing stones at her window. He succeeded only in waking her neighbour, however, who looked out to see a tall figure, shrouded and ominous in the early morning mist, preparing to hurl a fresh boulder. A panicked call to 999 ended this comedy of errors, but the fuzz arrived only to discover it was much ado about nothing.

## Jesus

### Horse play

A worldly-wise second-year grew tired of the authorities' "look but don't touch" policy on the Jesus pony. Intrigued by its proportions, he indulged his fantasy at his local stables, where our horse whisperer was permitted both to ride the steeds and to attend to their various needs. Lathering down a particularly vigorous and virile young stallion - who has previously been compared to Hugh Salimbenil - he began to wash the beast's fifth leg and was promptly rewarded with some extra shampoo - Come and Go.

## Corpus Christi

### A trip to Revs

After a healthy dose of mushrooms (not your common or garden variety neither) our drug-fancying protagonists decided to head to Vodka Revolutions to continue the night's merriment. Upon arrival, they swiftly set about ordering a few sticks of brightly coloured vodka shots. By this stage, the effects of their vegetable appetisers had really begun to kick in, and the rainbow-esque drink rack in front of them started to resemble something much more sinister. They took it upon themselves to curb the danger the only way they saw fit: by smashing every single one of the 12 shot glasses in front of them, much to the unamusement of the staff. They were promptly ejected, weeping, from the premises.

# Students vote for more of the same

» No surprises as experience wins over fresh faces

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Charlotte Richer remains in her post of Access Officer with the support of 56% of voters. She saw off competition from Sam Wakeford, a first year with professional access experience, James Robinson, who ran on Hadlow's "Change You Can Believe In" slate, and Owen Holland of the Socialist Workers' Party. Andrea Walko stays on as Welfare & Graduates Officer after receiving 64% of the vote, defeating LGBT Reps Co-ordinator Kaur Adamson. Adam Colligan continues unchallenged as Services Officer.

The two members of this year's

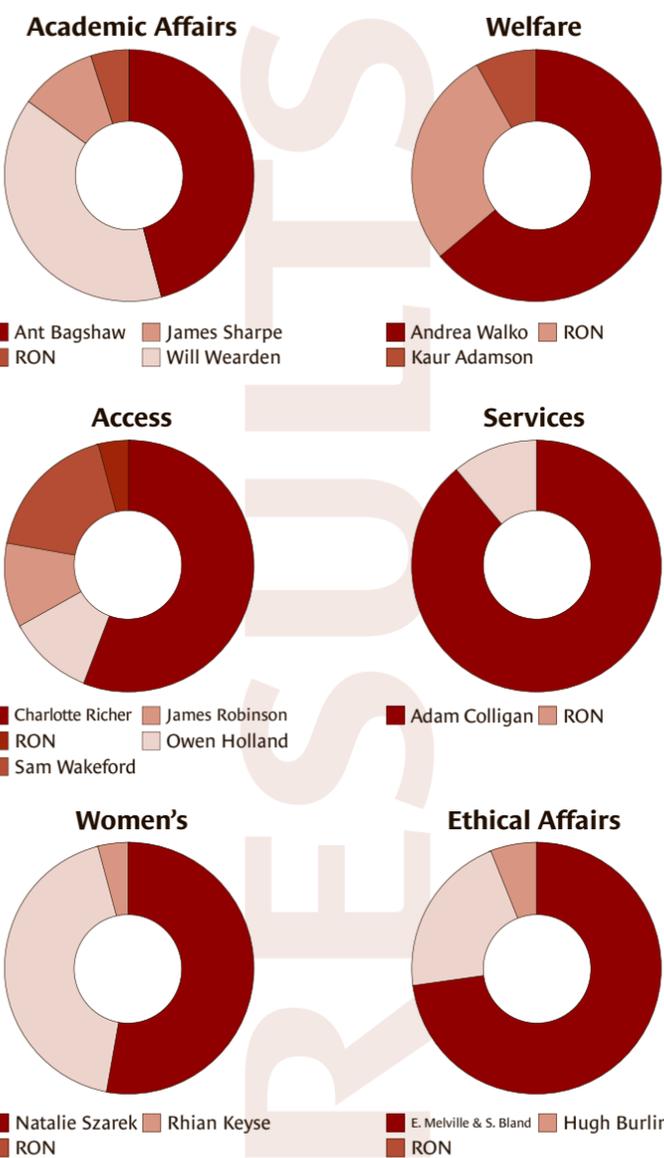
**"CUSU has no legitimacy and is a deeply undemocratic organisation"**

executive not standing for re-election were exchanged for similarly familiar CUSU faces. Women's Officer Elly Shepherd is replaced by veteran Women's Union activist Natalie Szarek, who very narrowly beat rival Rhian Keyse. Academic Affairs Officer Pete Coulthard was replaced by Ant Bagshaw, currently Chair of the CUSU Democracy and Development Team.

Emilia Melville and Steven Bland take over from Christine Berry and Dan Chandler as Ethical Affairs co-Chairs. They defeated Hugh Burling, of the "Change You Can Believe In" slate, who proposed shifting the focus of the Ethical Affairs Committee from the Green issues to "protecting the transparency and - real - ethical integrity of CUSU projects."

Few of the junior positions were contested. Emily Hamerton-Barry, Ria T.S. Hylton, Marcus King, Mark Wolfson and Fuad Musallam, all unchallenged, secured the posts of Higher Education Funding Officer, Mental Health Officer and Students, Disabilities Officer, Affiliations Officer and Student Unions Liaison Officer respectively. Kathryn Maude narrowly beat Nadia Islam to the post of Target Campaigns Officer.

Hadlow's response to the election, in which he received less than a fifth of the vote, was mixed. He said, "It's a shame that CUSU will continue to believe it can represent all students despite such low turnouts... Maybe CUSU needs some competition." Arguing that CUSU "has no legitimacy and is a deeply undemocratic organisation", Hadlow noted that CUSU Council decisions are made by JCR and MCR representatives, but not sabbatical officers. He told Varsity that CUSU members "almost certainly have no idea... that they are electing representatives when they do so", and that "this isn't publicised, and it's a scandal."



# VARSITY

ISSUE 675, 7 MARCH 2008

## Melodramatics

In the last two weeks, Varsity theatre reviews have variously been accused of being antagonistic, subjective, inaccurate, cliquy and financially damaging to the Cambridge drama scene. In particular, a particularly scathing review of Entertaining Mr Sloane stirred strong emotions on the letters page, most notably from Mr Sloane's girlfriend.

These criticisms are, in part, justifiable. It is true that any review is bound to be subjective, since it is obviously based on only one person's opinion and it is to be expected that other people will disagree. It is equally undeniable that, in such a small community with such a tiny theatre-going audience, a poor review will affect ticket sales and may therefore significantly harm the budget of a drama society. For this reason, Varsity deliberated long and hard about running such an uncomplimentary analysis of last week's ADC Clubshow. But in the end it was decided that, unlike most college drama societies, the Amateur Dramatic Club has the reputation and financial stature to withstand such criticism and that such a review would be beneficial in the long term to Cambridge's thespian bubble; it was a shame that a show which should have been the jewel in the crown of the ADC calendar was so weak, and consequently it was hoped that a strongly-worded review might in some way help to remind the ADC committee of the need to invest in plays of a higher calibre.

On a more general note, it seems hypocritical for the theatre community to react in such a hard-done-by way. Most obviously, if all reviews were accompanied by token three or four star appraisals, there would be no way of distinguishing the truly worthwhile productions. A healthy mix of positive and negative reviews is, overall, a help rather than a hindrance to Cambridge thespians. Moreover, reviews are an integral part of the publicity machine. As Ian McKellen notes in his interview on page 21, the importance of reviews are not so much in their content, but in the fact that they publicise a play much more than any poster or flyer campaign might. Every week, Varsity's reviews pages constantly draws every Cambridge play to the attention of 15,000 readers and it therefore seems duplicitous for the University's budding directors to be so vociferous in their complaints when most are also equally vociferous in inviting us to send reviewers and photographers to their productions and in asking us to publish our new online reviews. Tellingly, almost every Cambridge production in the last two weeks has immediately posted a Facebook link to our online reviews of their plays as soon as the respective articles are uploaded.

Varsity fully understands its obligation to promote the Cambridge theatrical scene. For this reason, a conscious decision was made at the start of the term to provide a critique of every university dramatic production, whether at the ADC or the Robinson Brickhouse, in a more inclusive and open way, and often at the expense of arguably more artistically worthwhile cultural performances which did not have any Cambridge connection. This goal has, for the most part, been achieved. This term's theatre section has used a much wider pool of reviewers and, uniquely for Cambridge journalism, has published, either in print or online, as many as seven theatre reviews a week. Unlike any other university publication, we also now publish online first-night reviews within hours of curtain-down. Are the reviews subjective? Unavoidably. Inaccurate? On occasion. But antagonistic? Categorically not. We are making a massive effort to nurture, rather than neglect, Cambridge theatre.

Varsity has been Cambridge's independent student newspaper since 1947, and distributes 10,000 free copies to every Cambridge college and to ARU each week.

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## LETTERS

letters@varsity.co.uk

### An accurate review...

Sir,

I would like to congratulate Imogen Walford on her many impressive achievements (Letters, Issue 674). I remain shocked that anyone would have the impertinence to question her impeccable credentials. Actually, I agree with her (despite myself) about the imbalance and general shoddiness of the production in question. Might I say, however, that this one-star show was certainly no worse than the cretinous Something/Nothing at Corpus which the paper accorded four. Some no-star reviews would more adequately reflect the dire quality of this term's productions.

Yours faithfully,

**Ned Hercock**  
Queens'

### ... a not-so-accurate review...

Sir,

I am writing in support of the contributor who, last week, had the bravery to stand up against a bad review (Letters, Issue 674). I could use this letter to have a massive egowank about how much drama and journalism I've done over my eight years here, but quite frankly I'm not that up myself.

Reviewers seldom realise how much of an influence they have over the dramatic and financial success of a show. A star can be the difference between a successful show and the



producer having to find hundreds of pounds of his or her own money to bail out a show which failed to sell. One would hope that reviewers realise this and try to ensure that their reviews are balanced and factually accurate.

Last week's review of The Medics' Revue is another example of poor reviewing. The review highlighted that there weren't \*many\* medical jokes. Actually there weren't \*any\*. A small but important difference. The reviewer took the fact that the audience were laughing at sketches to mean that the show was riddled with "in-jokes". It wasn't. It never is. That's the point of the Medics' Revue. The impression that was given was that this was a show written solely for an audience of medics, something which is off-putting to vast swathes of students. It is no wonder that the show sold out every night, until, after the Varsity review, 70 seats remained conspicuously empty.

I am not asking for nicer reviews. I am not asking for a ban on constructive criticism. All I hope for is that your team of reviewers accepts the level of responsibility placed on them by your readership and remains factually accurate.

Yours faithfully,

**Keir Shiels**  
Hughes Hall

### ... definitely a harsh review...

Sir,

I do not mean to question the credibility and authority of your theatre reviewers, but I find your review of last week's Medics Revue unnecessarily harsh. It is easy to walk into a production the theatrical roots of which are not so far removed from vaudeville and travelling minstrels, and one which on top of that is performed by a cast of non-professionals who spend more time dissecting limbs than literature, and rip it to shreds for not being as spectacular as other ADC productions helmed and staffed by armies of English students.

The Medics Revue has for many years maintained a tradition of selling out, yet this year, after selling out on Wednesday and Thursday there were still a good ten or so seats empty on Friday and Saturday, presumably due to the extreme criticism levelled at it by your good Jon Andrews. Any play is only as good as

judged by its audience, and on all nights those we talked to still had only good things to say about The Hysterectomy Boys.

Towards the end of his review Mr Andrews seems to realise that he is being unnecessarily critical of a production not meant to be taken so seriously, and this is to his credit. I do not know Jon Andrews personally, but I have heard that in real life he is much nicer than his penmanship makes him out to be, and so I bear him no grudge. All I ask is that future reviewers keep in mind the context of the shows they attend.

Yours faithfully,

**Aaron Singh**  
Jesus College

### ... a not-at-all-accurate review...

Sir,

After Mr Quaife's enthusiastic review of restaurant Albatross (Issue 674), I was confused to find no mention of the restaurant anywhere on Google, nor any hint as to the location of 132 Barry Street (its supposed address). Restaurant Hava Bana [sic] (Issue 673) appears not to exist either. Possibly Mr Quaife considers his reviews of fictitious restaurants even more amusing than the vacuous drivel of Mr Evans, but may I suggest that not all readers share the joke.

Yours faithfully

**Hugh Salimbeni**  
Christ's College

### ... a criminal review...

Sir,

I'm surprised that in James Quaife's review (Issue 674), the editorial team have not noted that the writer essentially accuses the restaurant owner of a crime with the remark "If the immigration police had sealed the place off they would have had a field day".

Mr Quaife seems to be assuming that non-British workers are synonymous with illegal workers, which is clearly not the case. He then somehow implies there is an intrinsic problem with the presence of non-British workers. He writes, "It's just a pity that the waiters are imported" - and the somewhat mysterious elaboration, "This isn't a problem per se, but it's a bit of an issue", does little to clarify his point. Moreover, the implication that the proprietor is employing illegal workers, which is presented without any evidence, is surely the kind of remark that will at least cause needless offence, and could even be considered libellous. I'm surprised so many would-be journalists would so blithely let such a thing appear in the paper, and I think at the very least, an apology to the restaurant is in order.

Yours faithfully,

**Maria Whelan**  
Graduate Union

### ...and a reviewed perspective

Sir,

Further to my previous letter, I assume that Mr Quaife's review was in fact a spoof - I'm not quite sure of what though.

Yours faithfully,

**Maria Whelan**  
Graduate Union

*Write the letter of the week and win a bottle from our friends at the Cambridge Wine Merchant*

### Corrections

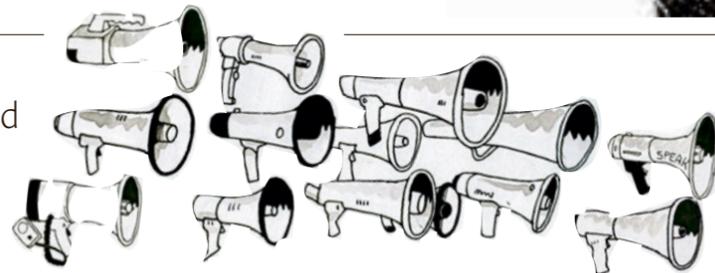
The pull-quote in last week's interview with Jane Shepherdson (Issue 674) was in fact mistakenly copied from an article published in a previous edition. The author would also like to make it clear that the interviews with both Shepherdson and Hilary Benn were provided on behalf of the Cambridge Go-Greener campaign.

DEBATE

# A debate on death



Last week, Chemical Ali, aka the Butcher of Kurdistan, the man who ran Saddam's Al-Anfal campaign, using mustard, sarin and VX gases, was sentenced to death in Iraq. At the same time, relatives of two of Steve Wright's victims have called for the reinstatement of the death penalty in the United Kingdom following his conviction for a 'campaign of murder'. Are they right?



David Staines



**YES**

Unfortunately, in any society there will be evil people. People who wish to inflict pain and suffering on other people, such as murderers, rapists and the like. It is perfectly acceptable for a civilised society to impose the death penalty for those who commit the very worst crimes. Indeed, capital punishment should form an important part of any criminal justice system.

To be specific, capital punishment should be available when a prisoner has been convicted by overwhelming evidence of multiple counts of rape and/or murder. In such cases, there are a number of practical and moral arguments in favour of using the death penalty. In the main, my case will focus on rebutting abolitionist arguments.

To begin with the moral arguments, revenge is a valid and inevitable part of the human condition. Life imprisonment can never truly satisfy any victim's desire for vengeance. Clearly, some victims can

Some people argue the death penalty is wrong because God says so. Have they ever read the Bible or the Qu'ran? The Qu'ran clearly supports the death penalty from start to finish - even moderate theologians accept this. In Christianity, St Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, lends support to Roman capital punishment. Christians are in no position to lecture against death by lethal injection, which is clearly preferable to the eternal punishment of hell, where sinners are supposedly forever condemned.

Turning to the more practical arguments, it costs much less to execute a prisoner than to keep them in jail for the rest of their life. Abolitionists often argue that imposing the death penalty is more expensive than life imprisonment because of the costs of appeals against the death penalty. This is missing the point, for there would be no need to worry about this if life imprisonment were made compulsory under all circumstances of multiple rape or multiple murder. Clemency could automatically be given for the mentally retarded.

Secondly, execution poses the most powerful deterrent possible against murder - the death penalty actually saves lives. Between 1967 and 1977, no executions took place in the United States and murder rates soared as a consequence. On a state level, the states that have performed the most executions have seen the fastest drop in the murder rate. For example, Texas has carried out by far the most executions since 1977. Its murder rate has fallen from the 2nd highest to 15th highest in the country.

To issue my final rebuttal, the lower murder rate in Europe than America does not undermine the case in favour of the death penalty. All it shows is that Europe does not have the same gang culture as America.

Finally, abolitionists often argue that the death penalty is inherently cruel because the prisoner must suffer intolerable cruelty in the execution process. This is not the case, for the prisoner can die virtually painlessly, if given the correct combination of drugs. Indeed, any suffering that they do incur will be dwarfed by the pain and suffering they inflicted upon the victims and their families.

In extreme cases the death penalty is justified: morally by the need for judicious retribution and practically by the need to provide a strong deterrent against the most violent and despicable acts. It remains popular amongst the public. Therefore, it should be reintroduced.

Emma Lough



**NO**

Capital punishment is controversial - not so much because it is divisive, but because the concept itself is inherently absurd. The notion of the "lawful infliction of death", as a state imposed punishment for heinous crime, is utterly contradictory. To put forward this logic is as fruitless as pleading the case for "sympathetic terrorism" or "humane rape" - in other words, wholly ridiculous. Chemical Ali's sentence to imminent execution forces us to reevaluate our concept of justice.

What is the purpose of capital punishment? The most substantial ball lobbed from its proponents is its role as a deterrent. Yet when arguments in favour capital punishment hinge on a complete faith in the rational thinking of potential criminals, the logic is clearly skewed. For the death penalty to have any positive impact on patterns of violent crime, it must generate a genuine climate of public fear. Were executions hauled into the public domain, inevitable media fixation would surely brutalize society, harking back to the 17th and 18th centuries when comparable spectacles boasted high levels of public entertainment. The state could, alternatively, keep this heinous punishment locked safely in Pandora's Box, eclipsing its prominence in public consciousness. Unfortunately, our "out of sight, out of mind" mentality makes it futile to expect an abstract penalty to conjure fear so intense as to deter potential criminals. Whereas the threat of jail may discourage shop-lifters from pocketing a watch, CD or phone, murder and the kinds of crimes that merit capital punishment do not conform to such reasoned judgment.

Where it claims to represent a solid commitment to criminal justice, capital punishment still emerges a counterproductive force. Chances of evading execution depend heavily on social background, ethnic origin and financial status - factors that ultimately disturb any notion of equality before the law and carry it to its most destructive extremes. Furthermore, convictions of either manslaughter or murder can be heavily dependent on the shiny faced advocates who may, or may not, have the gift of the gab.

The particular severity of the death penalty would force an inevitable series of legal precautions, clogging the court system with endless appeals and painfully slowing the course of justice. We would surely have greater faith in an efficient legal machine than one proceeding like a snail on gravel.

In the vein of equality, the notion of "an eye for an eye" raises its head, not so much in terms of moral principle, than that of legal consistency. Introducing the death penalty would skew the entire legal fabric

of Britain's judicial system; nowhere do we endorse this logic - why should we make an exception? The state, after all, does not loot from those convicted or burglary, it asserts a reasoned moral stance by enforcing a jail term on the perpetrator. If we decide it is acceptable to kill those convicted of murder, why not abuse those convicted of rape, or burn those convicted of arson? It is the very fact that the state does not resort to replicating criminal acts that separates it from the perpetrators of crime, and decks it with a higher moral authority to inflict fair and just punishment. To tarnish these robes would be to undermine the fundamental structures of liberal democracy.

The death penalty, by its nature, is irreversible. Simple point, but simply lethal. Once done, there is no compensation for this absurd miscarriage of justice. Since 1973, 121 people have been released from death row in the US after successfully proving their innocence. During the same period, over 982 people with insufficient means for appeal were executed. For every eight who met their death, one should have walked free. If a car manufacturer operated with these failure rates, it would surely be out of business.

Absolute judicial accuracy would be a necessary pretext to the reinstatement of capital punishment, yet we have no right to expect the police, the courts and the state never to make mistakes. It takes only the case of Jean Charles de Menezes to highlight the problems of police misjudgment in a system free from capital punishment. Imagine the implications of inaccuracy and accident in a nation endorsing the death penalty.

Opposition to capital punishment hinges not so much on any kind of sympathy for the convicts themselves, than the desire to uphold concrete moral principles and a consistent legal system that form the fundamental structures of British democracy, hence protecting the public at large. To remedy crime with crime is simply not very clever. If we value the legal process and respect the human life, let's uphold legality and show some humanity.

**"Capital punishment should form an important part of any criminal justice system."**

genuinely forgive the person who raped them or the person who killed their loved one. That is fine: they should have the right to issue a pardon. For most, however, only through the perpetrator losing his life can they find true and lasting peace.

The abolitionists retort that murderers and rapists have an inherent right to life. This is wrong, for human rights are inextricably linked to the responsibility to respect other people's rights. Upon killing or violating another person, a person automatically forfeits their human rights.





It was easy enough for the Beatles to wish they had 'Eight days a week' to show off their love, but eight weeks into the Cambridge term, many of us could do with an extra 24 hours in order to stop our lives becoming entirely devoted to the whims of supervisors, theatre directors, sports captains *et al.*

Oxbridge terms are well known to be intense, but that does not make the experience any easier when you have essay deadlines pending, lab tests to carry out, or dozens of lectures to attend; and that is leaving aside the fun stuff. We all know an alpha male or female who can do every 'extracurricular activity' in the book, pull epic all-nighters and still walk off with a first.

Yet the attitude of most Cambridge students when we get to the end of term is not just to dust ourselves down and find something highly alcoholic, but also to question why we cannot just have longer and less manic terms like most other British Universities. The answer is simple: it is the eight-week term, with all its pressures and intensity, which makes Cambridge the place it is.

Take the deadlines that we all complain about. Oxbridge students don't merely have to produce work that most other universities would consider outstanding as a matter of habit, but we also must do so in much shorter time. How can this be fair or productive?

The best comparison here is with diplomacy. Any meeting between nations or major political groups which is required to produce an agreement is almost always compressed into a relatively short time, normally a few days like the peace talks in Northern Ireland were. The reason is that otherwise none of the speakers would feel any pressure to move their position and would rather wait for however long it takes before someone else is ready to shift theirs. The talking would become interminable and no agreement would be reached.

Tough deadlines take you out of your comfort zone and force you to become more efficient and productive. They also require students who are quick enough on their feet to think of innovative, time-effective solutions to problems. Without this time pressure, Cambridge's academic standards would immediately start to slip.

Yet far from being just work and no play, eight week terms make the social, sporting and theatrical spheres in Cambridge far more exciting, as everything from crunch rugby matches and jazz evenings come thick and fast. As eighth week draws to a close, we might regret that we missed the odd event because of other commitments, but surely that is better than looking back on a languid 10- or 11-week term, filled with boring pauses and inactivity.

Ultimately, it is the success of Cambridge in almost every category used to judge modern universities which underlines why the eight-week term must stay. No matter on which set of rankings you read or which subject you take, this university is one of the best in the world both in terms of research and teaching. If it is really so awful, why does Cambridge have the lowest proportion of students dropping out of any of Britain's universities?

'Eight days a week'? We've no need for it.

Edd  
Mustill



## Fighting fascism

The No Platform policy is about more than free speech

Last week saw heated discussion about the invitation of Ibrahim Mousawi, a journalist connected to the Lebanese Hizbollah movement, to speak at a meeting in Cambridge. At a CUSU council meeting, a motion to get the union to campaign against the meeting by adding Hizbollah to the list of organisations to which the "No Platform" policy applies fell by six votes.

No Platform exists in most unions and is a method for stopping the spread of fascist ideas in university campuses by mandating unions to campaign against any organisation by fascist groups, particularly (at the moment) the British National Party (BNP).

The word "fascist" is, of course, thrown around far too frequently. To define fascism fully would take a work of many volumes. It is a very particular ideology which is peculiar in that it centres around violence, rather than being appropriated for violent ends. Its object is the achievement of a national unity based on persecution of people of other ethnicities and the forced crushing of the workers' movement. Despite successes in drawing in wider layers, the BNP remains at its top a fascist group. We need to be debating with the disillusioned who are attracted to them, not the dyed-in-the-wool Nazis.

In debates in Cambridge, the No Platform policy is consistently mis-

represented, and there are myths about it that must be debunked. It does not argue for the banning of organisations like the BNP, nor a restriction on their ability to stand in public elections. It does not imply a belief that all students are so gullible as to fall for an extremist ideology as soon as they hear it.

On the contrary, it argues, we know what fascist ideas are and how damaging they are, so why do we need to hear them again? To an extent, this misrepresentation is not surprising if placed in the context of a society that is constantly suffering attacks on hard-won civil liberties. Faced with a state that increasingly desires to keep watch on its citizens it is, paradoxically, easy for organisations like the BNP to portray themselves as martyrs in the cause of free speech.

Any debate is only worth having if it takes into account concrete realities rather than just abstract principles. There is more to this debate than merely a philosophical discussion over the Holy Grail of "freedom of speech".

The fact is, when fascists speak and their ideas gain influence, people get killed. In 1993 the BNP's first ever elected councillor came to office in Millwall amid an atmosphere of high racial tension, and racially motivated violence increased. And, of course, that situation itself can then increase the chances of fascist success; it is

no accident that the first electoral breakthrough of the BNP in more recent years was directly in the aftermath of the race riots of 2001.

How can we break this cycle? If the principle is anti-fascism, No Platform is a tactic that stems from this principle. It is not the be-all and end-all of anti-fascist campaigning; on the contrary it is just a small part. In the early-90s the battle was won by the mobi-



lisation of tens of thousands of members of the local community who were concerned about their future. Meetings were called in the pubs and youth clubs, and school students went on strike. Marches occurred, BNP activities were disrupted and the party forced to close down its headquarters and move out of the area. Was this an infringement of the fascists' freedom of expression? Definitely. Was

it wrong? Definitely not.

Debate must focus on how and why racist ideas have taken root and what to do about them. In the long run only tackling the economic problems and political disenfranchisement in 21st-century Britain will we stop far-right groups gaining strength; the same goes in the Middle East for organisations like Hizbollah. By no means do anti-fascists shy away from debate; when we encounter our enemy's arguments, we will oppose them. But why should we go out of our way to invite fascists into debates, for fear of feeling guilty over not conforming to liberal ideals? Should the thousands who blocked the march of Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts through Cable Street in 1936 have stayed at home? Should the Spanish people have rolled over in the face of Franco's uprising?

Fascism is a very particularly developed ideology and Hizbollah does not fit the definition. To apply No Platform to Hizbollah, given the extreme complexities of the political situation in Lebanon and the wider Middle East, would have been unwise and counter-productive. But from this it does not follow that the tactic itself is false.

There are times when the question is much more simple, when the wolf of fascism is at the door. In these times we will need strong shows of collectivism to kick them from our campuses.

Adrian  
Pascu-  
Tulbure



## An excess of outrage

Our reactions to controversial stories must be tempered

I'm reasonably surprised that somebody, somewhere, hasn't mapped out the correlation between the outrage to a particularly controversial breaking news story, and the amount of time before jokes start circulating about it.

The rule of thumb seems to be that there's a grace period of about two weeks. After this, the offence taken is very closely linked to the degree of reaction to the story. If it's really outrageous, articles will almost certainly run about stand-up comedians being booed out of their shows.

The problem is that these jokes then take on a bizarre form of notoriety as we become increasingly intrigued by their capacity to shock. We've come a long way from the 1930s American ruling that "damn" and "hell" should not be used in films: these days, when practically every anatomical and theological reference has become mainstream, it takes a Maddie joke to provoke a similarly extreme reaction.

Getting out my crystal ball, I foresee the next subject for our controversial humorists may well be the scandal engulfing Haut de la Garenne, the Jersey care home where, according to sources, scenes of horrific institutionalised violence were played out behind the grim Victorian façade.

Already, two witticisms have started doing the rounds, and although I won't offend your sensibilities here, I can tell you that Googling "Jersey orphan" should

fulfil your daily shock quota. Of course, the reactions to such jokes will be tediously predictable, with a high-minded majority labelling them "sick" and "disgusting", and a vocal minority claiming their right to shout them from the rooftops.

Both approaches are flawed. The people banging on about free speech and their right to offend generally come across as thinking that offensiveness is a duty, not a right.

**"When Joe Public latches on to a fixed idea, the results are not exactly known for accuracy or objectivity."**

I'm extremely wary of people who use such eloquence in support of spreading, for the most part, crude and unsubtle gags.

Yet we also come up against the admittedly rather clichéd notion of the "culture of hysteria". The problem is not, as most right-wing commentators would have it, about showing excessive and mawkish feeling: some cases are deeply and undeniably emotive.

Rather, such reactions, rather than amplifying the importance of the case, deflect it. For a start, they give a degree of legitimacy to the

crop of jokes: if you react so hysterically, the argument goes, I can have quite a bit of fun shocking the likes of you. Furthermore, they deaden the debate: words such as "sick" and "disgusting" are now debased to the point of being multi-purpose and slightly redundant. A quick Internet search shows "disgusting" used to refer to both Mark Dixie and a proposal for a golf course. Labelling the two as equal in any way hardly helps either.

But perhaps the biggest cause for concern is that when Joe Public latches on to a fixed idea, the results are not exactly known for accuracy or objectivity. The cause célèbre for the chattering classes is Yvette Cloete, the Welsh paediatrician who repeatedly had the word "Paedo" daubed over her house. Yet, more relevantly, we can see the same appetite for sensationalism in the claims that Haut de la Garenne was part of a nationwide circle of paedophilia stretching all the way up to several peers and government ministers.

Sadly, it does not seem as if we learn from past mistakes. In the Bryn Estyn scandal of the 1990s, amidst almost identical claims, around five thousand people throughout the country were accused, over 300 arrested, and 650 people claimed to have been abused at the children's home. At various stages, the Masons and the local police force were named as the ringleaders, in increasingly wild and frequently untrue allegations. The grand total was six convictions,

hefty lawsuits from several wrongly accused parties, and a great deal of embarrassment all round.

Of course, the situation in Jersey has the potential to be extremely serious, and this is precisely why caution is of the essence. Claiming the presence of a mass grave, a Masonic conspiracy, or ritual abuse worthy of the Marquis de Sade's imagination simply will not do at this stage, not least because people are reacting to the juiciest rumours rather than what we currently know for certain.

In dealing with this scandal, we have an important choice. We can continue along this path of knee-jerk outrage, credulous faith in conspiracy theories, and taboo creation. Alternatively, we can, without lessening the seriousness of this case, take a more balanced and measured approach.

This will first of all involve our organs of information printing fact rather than conjecture: for example, to say that sniffer dogs reacted in six places is not the same as to point to the presence of six further bodies. It will also involve expressing the strongest disapproval of any kind of vigilante action, physical or otherwise, as well as of any hint of anybody profiting from such a story.

The end results will doubtlessly be less exciting and sell fewer copies; but they will also prove that, as a society, we have found a mature and sensitive way of dealing with such issues. And – possibly, just possibly – we will have found an antidote to all those dead baby jokes.



The punctilios of the Cambridge term fail to ignite passion in my breast, but I do consider it grossly unjust that gloominess is only sanctioned during the fifth week; a miserly time frame considering the fact that the entire term is so harrowingly reminiscent of the hideous punishments described at the ten ditches of the Malebolge in Dante's eighth circle of Hell.

My miseries began in the very first week, during which I received a phone call from mother innocently asking what had tickled my first-year fancy at the fresher's fair. As I loped over Parker's Piece, dodging those temerarious troglodytes who seemed to have been playing 'Xtreme Frisbee' continuously for eight hours so every fresher could glean the full exhilarating effect of a speeding picnic plate cleaving their spinal column, my answer was despondent: "Nothing. Unfortunately they didn't have a 'Let's-all-take-narcotics-then-chain-our-limbs-to-lead-piping-and-hurl-ourselves-into-the-Cam' Society. Or at least I couldn't find their stall". I even found myself answering my Bedder's apodictic "Good Morning" with Eeyore's catchphrase: "If it is a good morning". And so I became a shit-faced bint.

During this dark time I thought it judicious to reject telephone calls from friends engaged in Fresher's Weeks at other universities. Calls from Leeds or Sheffield aroused particularly bitter feelings of injustice, whilst calls from York or Imperial, which should have had the force of redressing that balance, only served to depress me further through the grim realisation that someone somewhere had allowed Karl Kennedy an erotic tour of school-uniform foam parties throughout the United Kingdom. Such Bah-Humbug-ness has been only sporadically alleviated (last week, for example, I learned how to peel a clementine in one perfect spiral), and so I resent the curtailing of 'blues' into the traditional fifth week slot.

What, after all, is so unattractive about gloomy philistinism? Eeyore, a very gloomy donkey is, though stuffed with sawdust, a very intelligent animal - his tail is nailed into his buttocks so no wonder he is quiet most of the time and a bit depressed. He hates being 'bounced' by the unbearably optimistic Tigger (JCR president) or harangued by the pontificating Owl (DoS), whilst he contends with the constant falling-off of his tail and falling-down of his house. He is quite content to live in his 'Gloomy Place' in the One Hundred Acre Wood eating thistles. I have been perusing The Tao of Pooh, which uses A.A. Milne to illustrate Taoism. It is tempting to claim Chinese Taoist Philosophers as my Idler progenitors, and from reading up on my philosophical forefathers I have come to the conclusion that gloominess is my lot, my Cottleston pie, and that there is absolutely nowt wrong with that.

The Cottleston Pie Principle says: know your Inner Nature. Do not be alienated from yourself, forever in tension, trying to make yourself into something you are not. Accept that you are acceptable at the deepest level of your being. Come as you are. Cherish your integrity. Take time, at regular intervals, to relax into yourself and appreciate your Inner Nature. And that is exactly the reason I am sitting in the bath (having heaped contumely upon Malory for the last essay of term) appearing to fellate a revolver.



Zhiying Tsjeng

## Post-Prozac pitfalls

The drugs aren't perfect, but the surrounding debate is worse

The headlines are screaming, the big pharmaceutical companies are terrified, and your friend who tried to kill himself last year might as well have been taking sugar pills. Welcome to the post-Prozac world.

Last week, a major research study showed that certain kinds of anti-depressants, including Prozac, do not work as well as manufacturers claim. Studies like these provoke a remarkable reaction among most people: fists are shaken at deceitful Big Pharma, marketing ineffective drugs to a nation that should just pull their socks up and get on with it. The government swells with self-importance as it delegates resources towards talk therapy, all for the "good of society". People rush out with anecdotes about how they too "overcame" their depression and became better people for it.

Who's getting a raw deal here? The actual patients themselves. The media, while congratulating itself on being paragons of journalistic bravery, unafraid of big corporate lawsuits, has completely simplified the issue of depression and mental health. The headlines should not be saying that the drugs are "useless" - just that they are limited in use. The study isn't even new research; it is actually an independent assessment of studies that have already been done, including some studies that were previously unreleased. It may be true that companies like Eli Lilly, which manufactures Prozac, have kept trial findings from the public, and this would be disgraceful. But this isn't some shadowy conspiracy of businessmen scheming to dope up half the free world; this is what any normal, self-interested business would do. It doesn't make it right, but it makes it understandable.

The media shouldn't resort to black-and-white stereotypes of greedy corporations in assigning sides to this debate, because the outcome could affect the mental health, and even lives, of millions. There is already talk among the psychiatric community of a fear that already difficult patients may become more resistant to any kind of medical treatment, or that vulnerable patients may

suddenly stop their medication, influenced by irresponsible reporting that berates them for being depressed when they are actually only going through a phase.

So do anti-depressants work at all? Sometimes they do, and sometimes they don't. The same can be said of any medicine - what works to ease your sore throat might be hell on mine. It doesn't mean that the medicine that doesn't work for you is completely useless, and the drug company has been lying to you all this while. The body's interaction with medicine is more subtle and complex than that. Certain drugs are, as they always have been, only effective for a few

**"The £170m government push towards talk therapy might be completely misguided."**

people. Anybody who has ever been on the revolving carousel of anti-depressants, trying to find the right dose and the right drug, can tell you that.

Furthermore, the £170m government push towards talk therapy might be completely misguided. Talk therapy isn't as simple as just talking to any qualified therapist. If admitting you have a problem is difficult, finding the right therapist, one you feel comfortable with entrusting your mental and spiritual health to, is nigh on impossible. In the most severe cases, patients do not have years to waste on a dispiriting succession of therapists. With the NHS still plagued by administrative blundering and inefficiency, it's difficult to see how patients could be paired up with the therapists who would best suit them. On one hand, medication has been accused of being a

masquerading as a wondrous cure-all - but surely putting the same stock in talk therapy makes a similar mistake.

Medical evidence also suggests that depression has a genetic component and runs in families. In cases like these, talk therapy runs up against obvious limitations - how can you talk somebody's brain chemistry into changing its patterns? Of course, there are people for whom talk therapy works, and works very well. However, it's notable that the most effective treatment of all is still talk therapy combined with medication.

What's most telling about this debate is how little people understand depression. The government talks of "curing" depression, as if it were a disease that takes away valuable working hours from society. Depression is often chronic. Medication and therapy alleviate and ease symptoms, but depression is never truly cured. It is controlled, and whether this is done effectively or not is an entirely different story. Newspapers smugly trot out articles telling us that we aren't depressed, we're just "sad", and we should bloody well go on holiday and sort ourselves out. But real depression isn't something you can pull yourself out of with the aid of a Ryanair flight. By focusing on the medication aspect of depression, the media has neglected to understand the true crisis here: that people are being misdiagnosed with depression. This, of course, leads to over-prescription (and you only need to go online to find horror stories of five-year-olds drugged up on Paxil), but over-prescription of drugs has more to do with training doctors to recognise when medication is required, and when it is not.

The medicines may be flawed, but the real problem is the people who are handing them out. To go to the extent of suggesting all anti-depressants are completely useless is going too far, and makes the fatal mistake of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of redirecting much-needed NHS funds towards talk therapists, maybe the government should take a long hard look at itself and work with what they've already got.

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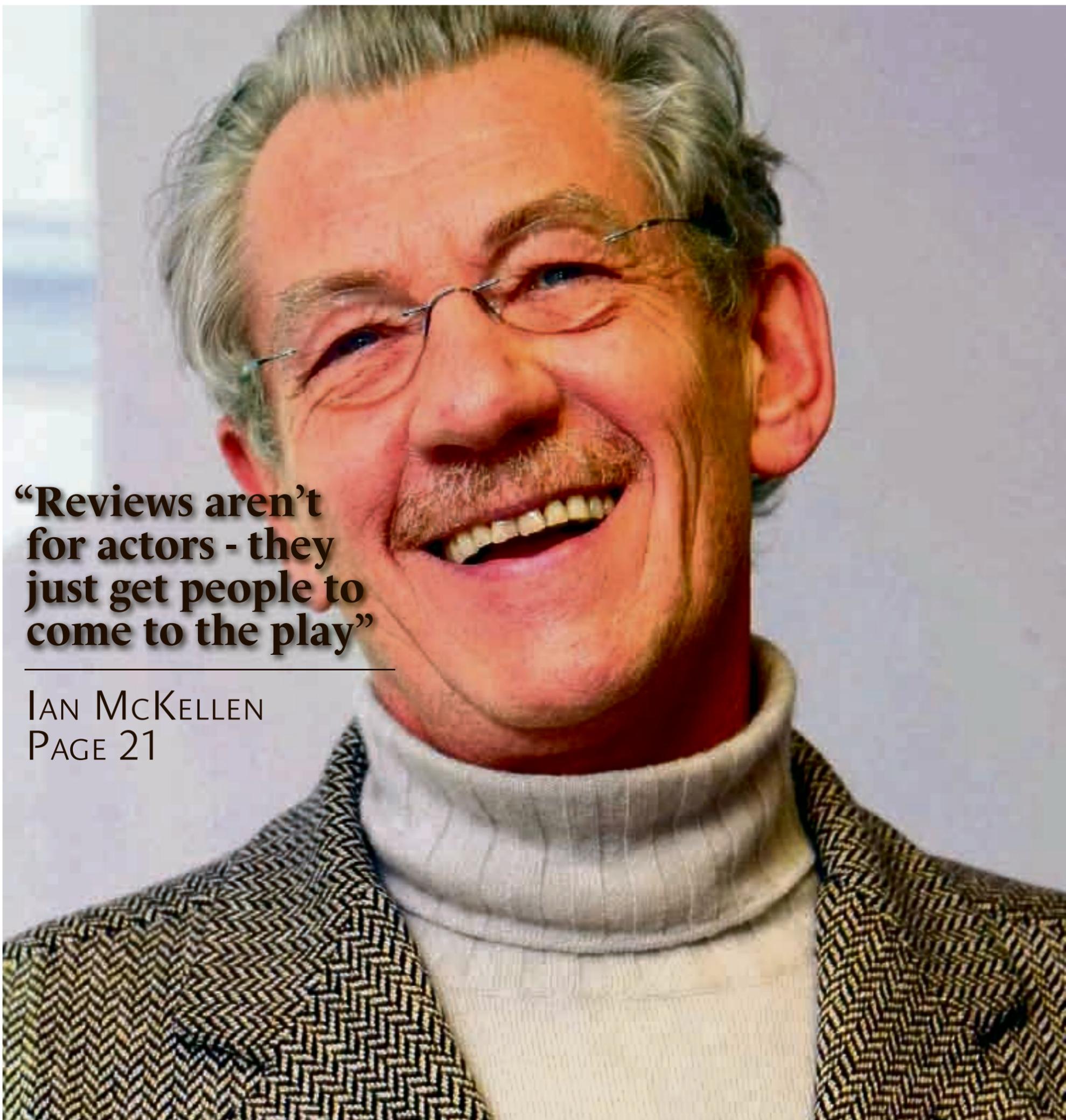
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**“Reviews aren’t  
for actors - they  
just get people to  
come to the play”**

**IAN MCKELLEN**  
**PAGE 21**

**Stephen Fry Page 15**

**Peter Stringfellow Page 18**

**Crisis at Cinecam Page 20**

**Nick Broomfield Page 22**

# VIEW

# Shackleton and Scott's ECCENTRIC EVENINGS

## An overview by Guy Stagg



Libraries, Oxbridge colleges and small prep schools on the Shropshire/Cheshire border are the last refuges of the eccentric. That fine English tradition of extraordinary moustache topiary and marriage to farmyard animals was all but driven out by Cool Britannia. Fortunately eccentricity not only survives, but thrives amongst the courtyards and cloisters of this particular ivory tower. It is protected by years of tweed suits with suede patches and parades of penny-farthings cycling down the high street.

The Freshers' Fair is a good place to first identify and foster the nascent eccentric. Often a bearded type wearing a T-shirt with pictures of an orc from Lord of the Rings will be drawn towards a pony-tail type wearing a T-shirt with a picture of an orc from Warcraft III. Together they will join the Live Action Role Playing Association and then disappear back to the realms of Neolithic Archaeology and Norse Kings. Their next sighting of one another will be at the break of dawn on the fields outside Granchester, wrapped in chainmail, wielding a mace and preparing to re-enact the battles of yore.

A similar story exists for the bespectacled types with pictures of rooks and pawns adorning their hoodies; it is only a matter of time before they are snapped up by the Corpus Christi College Chess, Checkers and Chinese Checkers Club. For more hardcore athletes there are the Table Football and Pub Quiz Machine teams, but for the real pinnacle of fringe sporting prowess then little can compare to the Ultimate Frisbee Squad.

By contrast the Assassins' Guild keep their pupils grated for a figure decked out in a black jumpsuit and masquerading as a pillar, whilst clutching a large 1960s Batman style sign emblazoned with the word 'KAPOW!' Membership of this exclusive league ensures complete detachment from the emotion shame, a rapidly dwindling number of friends and an increasing sense of paranoia, and thus seems perfect training for a career in the secret service or as a celebrity.



The town abounds with eccentric activities to fill the idle hours between supervisions and Cindy's. Step into Queens' Old Hall on the wrong evening and you will find it festooned with jangling minstrels and frolicking jesters, whilst the quiet girl who conventionally sits in the corner of the Library engrossed in Chaucer has suddenly become a medieval damsel. And of course no one normal has ever sat in the UL Rare Books Room or dined in the University Centre of their own volition. Finally Bohemian cafes provide a hotbed for those favourite student eccentricities: communism, petition-writing and conversations involving the phrase post-ironic.

If ever Cambridge wanted to prove its commitment to creating a liberal, diverse and accepting atmosphere then it need only look to the world of undergraduate dance clubs. Neither the charlestoning 1920s Society, nor the reassuringly unghetto Break Boogying Crew, but the Cambridge Morris Men: an eccentricity that no amount of tradition or inbreeding will ever explain.

## Cumming On The Boards



There are loads of plays on this week, and all forms of theatre are rubbish, so it has not been a good week. Of all the performance art forms, the theatre is the most singularly terrible, as agreed by people all over the world. In fact it is very easy to prove its worthlessness simply by describing it, much as it is possible to prove to people how much they dislike seagulls, simply by mentioning them. The experience of watching a play goes as follows:

Beforehand: Purchase tickets, potentially from the internet, necessitating a pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey style selection of seats, from a map which invariably ignores important details, like how much the paunch of the lady next to you will spill tsunamiesque over your own thigh, and how close you are to the ice-cream chappo for half-time. The two are potentially connected.

Then for the next ten months, or week, you fret furiously over the tickets, for which you have already exchanged your money. There's no going back. You're not in Kansas anymore. Will it be fun? What will the people say? With whom should I go? These are just some of the questions racing through your mind, and there are many more.

The dilemma about whom to take is acutely felt. In theory it should be the perfect platform for crafting a cheeky chirpse, as the outing encompasses all of the elements essential to a date; specifically disproportionate expenditure, long periods of silence, feeble wordplay, and a suicidally wistful sense of anticlimax. And that's before you start excusing yourself with puns based around the theatrical uses of the words 'performance' and 'wooden', as in:

Nathalie: Did you see 'Harry Potter' in 'Equus'?

Ed: Yes, I thought his performance was a bit wooden.\*

Nathalie: Well, in some ways, I don't think your performance was wooden enough.

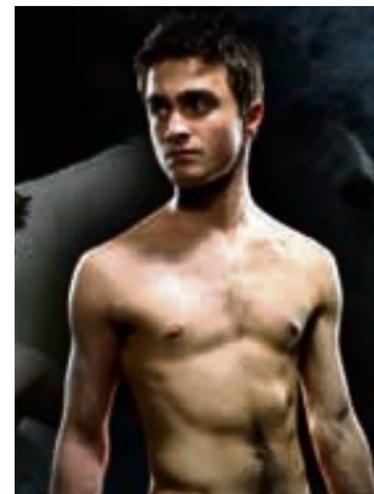
Ed: I'm sorry. I couldn't see the wood for the tease.

But if one doesn't take a girl, whom does one take? Going with a male friend, jovial as it might be in theory, runs the risk of making you look like an uglier(much) version of televised homosexuals Jake Gyllenhal and Heath Ledger (pbob), happy to embrace their love in the documentary 'Brokeback Mountain', but uncomfortable displaying their mutual affection on the red carpet.

Taking one's mother is also out of the question, for fear of

her suspicions that you have fallen into either of the traps above, and are taking her in fear and shame. The most sensible option is probably to fly solo, perhaps selling the spare ticket to a tout at the door, like this:

Tout: Mary Poppins, buy or sell.



Harry Potter: buff

Ed: I've got one to sell, I paid £50 for it, but I'll let you have it for £30.\*\*

Tout: (rustling his leather jacket, with a rustling sound only possible with leather) I'll give you a tenner.

Ed: Right you are, sir.

The zenith of the evening's misery, of course, doesn't happen until you've sat down, expecting to be entertained, when all of a sudden all the lights go out and two people (sometimes more) wearing face-paint and fancy dress wander on and start talking, and then don't stop talking for hours and hours, almost literally never stopping. They often don't even talk about fun things like videogames and football, but instead about how they're not shagging the people they want to shag, and how they want to kill so-and-so because he makes them so cross. It's a bit like being muted and strapped to a chair in a dark pub whilst Iain Duncan-Smith talks to a cadaver about tax law, at a volume just loud enough to prevent coma but just too quiet to understand.

Then, when they do finally stop, after autumn has set in and all your library books are overdue, you give a little celebratory clap and leave the room to drink some gin and set fire to yourself. But you only get out for about a minute before somebody announces that it is, in fact, only half-time. At least you can stop reading a newspaper.

\*Some of the names have been changed.

\*\*Still changed.

## Face Off

Fitter, Happier, More Productive ...

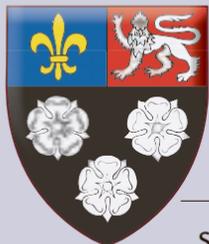
### Round 7: King's vs Caius



James is a 1st year Theologian and Anna is a 1st year SPS



Daniel is a 3rd year Economist and Kate is a 3rd year Economist



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### LAST WEEK'S RESULT:

New Hall 17%

Newnham 83%



# A little bit of Fry

Footlights' finest **Stephen Fry** talks to **Rosie Powell-Tuck** about his time as a felon, a funny man, a director and a depressive

What on earth do you ask Stephen Fry in an interview? Good question. I asked him that. His suggestion was: "When would you like this arsing interview and these impertinent blasted questions to come to a sod-mothering end?" Stephen Fry started his career with a double expulsion, first from Uppingham School and subsequently from the Paston School. His next escape was even more dramatic. Using a credit card stolen from a family friend he ran away from Norfolk College of Arts and Technology. Upon capture he was sent to Pucklechurch Prison, serving three months for fraud. Stephen Fry was not – you might think – the most likely candidate for a place at our beloved and prestigious University but, nevertheless, spent three happy years studying English at Queen's College. And what have been the effects of his imprisonment? To this he replies, "It is hard for me to be serious. I think the experience of being banged up (and more importantly of living with people who had been banged up for most of their lives and would be continue to be so) firmed my resolve to get on with life and throw myself into as much as I could."

He certainly kept himself well occupied during his three year stint in Cambridge. Involved heavily in Footlights he starred alongside Emma Thompson and his future comedy double-act and life long friend, Hugh Laurie in the 1981 Footlights Revue catching the eye of Granada Television for whom he then worked. Stephen Fry paints a determined but fun-filled picture of these early days. Impressively, whilst at Cambridge he found time to take part in over thirty productions. "You will never again be able to be in front of paying audiences," he explains.

Acting was perhaps Stephen Fry's first passion and he gushes with advice for the wannabe actor. "Do as much as you possibly can and don't get bogged down in trying to be professional," he advises. "Cambridge is a time when you can play characters three times your age (in the professional world there is a ready supply of sixty year olds) and experiment and live up to the Elizabethan word for "actor" which was "player". Play, my children, play. Play gracefully and play disgracefully." He sadly denies any involvement in scandal at Cambridge: "Good gracious. What a question. As if my three years were marred by even the faintest whisper of scandal. There was an occasion when I ate soup with the spoon moving towards me instead of away from me. I

believe they still talk of that day." His later career has not been concentrated on any one form of artistic expression. Indeed, one of his current projects, a documentary, has even taken him into the realms of zoology, "chasing down vanishing species for the BBC".

**"What character do you most identify with?... 'Dumbledore... distinguished, wise, gay and dead. No, hang on. Scratch the dead'"**

In 2003 he made his directing debut with an adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's "Vile Bodies". "Bright Young Things", whilst not popular amongst the press nor a box office hit, thankfully has not discouraged Mr Fry from directing in the future. "Yes, I do plan to direct again. I never had so much fun. I don't read the papers, haven't for years and don't intend to start now." He has also acted in many films. Amongst numerous others, he has played an incompetent inspector in Gosford Park (2001) and Oscar in the 1997 film "Wilde". Here, Fry was playing a role

he was "born to play", a character he has named as someone he would like to identify himself with. "I would dearly love to say Oscar, but it would be hubris beyond what is acceptable". Modest affability seems characteristic of Stephen Fry. He is renowned for his intelligence and wit and yet manages to remain unpretentious. And he takes compliment very graciously, apparently unaware of the inspiration that he is to other people. "My, aren't you a poppet, though? Am I really? Shucks and simper and giggle and blush."

It hasn't all been "giggle and blush". In 1995, following a nervous breakdown, Stephen Fry walked out of his production, "Cell Mates". Later, in 2006, he presented the Emmy Award winning documentary, "Stephen Fry: the Secret Life of the Manic Depressive," by way of explanation. In it he described what it was like to live and work with bipolar disorder. The public response was very favourable. "I have certainly found without one single exception, that people have been positive, kind and often grateful, which has pleased me more than I can say."

Stephen Fry is not a talent readily defined or restrained to a box. His skills are undeniable and wide ranging. In his own words pigeon-holing is "like saying to someone, 'I notice you breathe, you go to the lavatory, you shed epithelial layers and you eat. Which of those is most important to you?' I simply try to be myself". But how about if he was at Hogwarts, I ask? What character do you most identify with there? Imaginary worlds are easier it seems. "Hmm... Dumbledore I suppose," says Stephen Fry. "Distinguished, wise, gay and dead. No, hang on. Scratch the dead."

Incidentally, I asked him: "when would you like this arsing interview and these impertinent blasted questions to come to a sod-mothering end?"



## Restaurant Review Hugo Saddleback

### Tatties Cafe Restaurant

Trinity Street



James Quaife is away  
 and Tom Evans is ill



As I tenderly approached the warming threshold of Tatties Cafe Restaurant (make your mind up you silly billy - are you a cafe or a restaurant?!) I have a bit of a secret to confess with you, readers. That secret is this: I was hungry. Bloody hungry. Bloody hungry for potatoes. Bloody hungry for baked potatoes. Bloody damn hungry for baked potatoes from Tatties Cafe Restaurant. So there was no real way I could be disappointed. (The thing is, reader, is that the word "tatties" means "potatoes" in a foreign language called Scottish. And yes - you guessed it reader - Tatties Cafe Restaurant sells potatoes, in a manner of cooking called baking. I thought I'd make that clear before I carried on with the review.)

Now it may surprise you readers to know that I have a girlfriend (sorry girls!!!). Her name is Lindy, and it was with Lindy that I went to Tatties Cafe Restaurant. She can be a bloody picky bugger at the best of times, so it was damned good luck that Tatties Cafe Restaurant has a monstrous selection of ruddy good grub. And when I say monstrous, I mean very monstrous. There was literally so much choice on that menu that Lindy needed to go to the girls toilets for a quick wee, and I just slumped back lifeless on the comfortable seats. There could not have been more choices on a single menu anywhere else in the world, readers - I'm not kidding you, really I'm not.

I went for a 'tatty' which was literally completely chock a bloody block with chilli con carne, and slathered with golden melting cheese. The potato was light and fluffy, like a towel just out of the tumble dryer, though without the soapy warm smell. The

meat itself was beef meat. The beans were little exploding morsels of healthy spicy goodness - I'll be honest with you, readers: they were ruddy yumsky. I don't often say that things are that nice but those beans were just mmmmm. That's the only word to describe them! They were nice.

As if that bloody tatty wasn't enough, what did the chefs at Tatties Cafe Restaurant do? They only went and gave me some bread and butter with it! And my god. That bread was so crusty and warm, it could have melted Professor Severus Snape's cold heart (before we found out he was a goody (the bit before he died trying to save Harry Potter in Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows)). In fact that bread is probably what they would have served at Hogwarts for one of the special occasion feast days (sorry readers - I've just been reading a lot of HP recently!) like the sort of thing they might have had when Harry saved the school again. Lindy had a glass of Diet Coke, which she said was fairly nice, but since I didn't taste it I'm going to keep shtum about that particular aspect of my meal.

In conclusion, dear readers: very very good beans and bloody good bread, crusty and warm. But if there's one thing you should take away with you from reading this column, good reader, it's this (I'm going to put it in red so you don't go and miss it!!!): **bloody good grub doesn't come cheap; if food is good, it's probably expensive.** Tatties Cafe Restaurant serves heapy, large food with lots of things on, and you'll be looking north of the £5 mark for the privilege. But what more than a tatty could you ask for after a hard-ass morning's shopping with your girlfriend?

**Baked potatoes cost around £5**



# A COSTUME DRAMA

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Rob Thornton wears: Dress shirt, Marks & Spencer, £35; High-waisted Georgian Cavalry Trousers, The Costume Studio, £45; Scarf, Stylist's own; Cardigan, Dixie's market stall, £15; Boots, Model's own  
Caroline Organ wears: Polo-neck, Petit Bateau, £30; Sequined top, Oxfam, £3.50; Skirt, Stylist's own; Tights, Topshop, £7; Snakeskin shoes, Dune, £60  
Vicky Sedgwick wears: Dress, Monsoon, £55; Cardigan, Stylist's own; Tights, as before; Fur collar, Stylist's own; Shoes, Prada in Giulio Sale, £65

Photographer: Hermione Hasell-McCosh

# String theory



**Peter Stringfellow**, owner of the world-famous Stringfellow's strip clubs, speaks to **Tash Lennard** and **Tom Bird** about strippers, professionalism and, above all, philosophy

**T**here is occasionally a counter-intuitive contrast between an artist and his works. Stringfellow's club is loud, loaded, and louche, yet the man behind the world-famous strip-club is self-aware, sharp, and at times even philosophical.

Stephen Hawking's books overflow with scientific complexities, yet when the great physicist visited Stringfellow's, he was not there to indulge in the higher pleasures. Desperate for a discussion, the owner approached his erudite guest: "Would you like to talk about life and the universe, or would you just like to look at the girls?" he asked hopefully. Hawking opted for the girls.

And in the words of Peter, "It was one of the saddest moments of my life".

Peter Stringfellow is a man who embodies contradictions. He is not only a flamboyant playboy, engaged to a 25-year-old beauty, who makes his millions from girls taking their clothes off. He is also a consummate professional, a fierce supporter of higher education, and a self-taught businessman.

The walk up to his office might lead you to think otherwise. Photos of past 'angels of the month' – the dancers from his 'heavenly' club – line the walls in topless poses. But Stringfellow's office itself is surprisingly tame: the most prominent items on display

are a photograph of his granddaughter, a large portrait of a possible relative - an eighteenth

**"I think the future is secular- it has to be. That's not to say there aren't amazing things out there in the universe"**

century pastor named William Stringfellow - and a picture of himself in hair rollers.

It soon becomes clear that Peter is rarely passive. He enters and immediately puts us on the spot. "You're interviewing me on what?" he asks, before continuing, without a pause, "I go in eras and each period is a book and a film".

We decide to start at the beginning. Stringfellow grew up in Sheffield, and left school at 15 to join the merchant navy. "I had no choice. I had a form of dyslexia, which was totally unrecognised in those days. I couldn't spell... I still can't spell 'entrepreneur', but I can spell 'success': S-E-, sorry, S-U-C-C-E-S-S." After a brief stint as a salesman - which also landed him a brief stint At Her Majesty's Pleasure - Peter put on his

first club-night in 1962.

He points out a poster on the wall that was the original advertisement for the night: "It looks like it was painted by some kind of mentally retarded nine-year-old," he laughs, "I was 21 when I painted that." In the bottom corner of the poster is a crude drawing of a cloud with the number seven inside it. Peter had intended it to allude to Cloud Nine.

Despite humble beginnings, Stringfellow's career as a music promoter boasts some impressive bookings, particularly considering the venue for his first gigs was a local church hall. The artists he hosted during these early days include The Beatles and Screaming Lord

Sutch (best known to us as the former leader of the Monster Raving Looney Party; best known to Peter as “a fucking hard-nosed rocker”).

The conversation then reaches a brief interlude while Peter pauses to take a phone call, nonchalantly discussing the sale of a yacht.

Although a lack of formal education served as no limiting factor on his subsequent success - initially as the promoter of

**“Unfortunately your fat friend behind you ain’t gonna get in... But she’s wonderful, really lovely... I don’t care”**

music club nights, and later as a strip club owner - Stringfellow is a firm believer in education, and has spoken at both the Oxford and Cambridge Unions. Which one did he like best? “I prefer speaking in Cambridge”, he says, “but food for food you’re both crap, so don’t worry.”

It is no small task getting the garrulous Stringfellow to move from one topic of conversation to the next, but eventually we coax him onto the subject he is most commonly associated with: strippers and strip clubs.

Stringfellow’s was the first venue in Britain to gain a licence for tableside dancing, though the battle to secure it was long and hard-fought. Peter remembers the censorious male judges, scared by the very concept: “Oh God, naked girls, no - are they Christians?” he parodies. It was a “beautiful female magistrate” who finally gave him the go-ahead. One newspaper advert, two weeks and 360 auditions later, Stringfellow’s opened its doors to the public.

Since then, the club has received criticism from certain quarters. Is stripping something which exploits women? “No”, Peter quickly retorts, “all my girls are self-employed; they want to work here,” an answer he is undoubtedly used to delivering. “Two feminists were even prepared to help me make the case for opening

Stringfellow’s”, he continues. And would he be happy for his granddaughter to work as a tableside dancer? “Yes, if that’s what she wants to do”.

If anything, he gives the impression that the women are exploiting the men. They financially appraise the punters - coldly referred to as “customers” - by their watches and shoes. And the pay is good: it is not uncommon for a dancer to make thousands of pounds in one night; the current record stands at £50,000. Nor is the attitude towards women particularly sexist. Stringfellow describes how one of his old managers entered his office after addressing his secretaries as “darling, darling, sweetheart”. Peter’s response was firm: “Shut the door and sit down. These aren’t darlings, sweethearts, babies. They’re Pat, Chrissie, Angela - these are my staff.”

What frustrates Stringfellow is that sex remains “the final taboo”. He cannot understand why a naked woman can advertise shampoo on the side of a taxi, but the head-and-shoulders of a female body is banned when accompanied by an advert for a strip-club. While you can have “a chef going f\*ck you, you c\*nt” - part of Peter’s charm is his ability to voice obscenities with phonic asterisks - on television, Stringfellow tells how his idea of a pole-dancing version of X-Factor had the producers running. “Sex frightens people worldwide,” he says.

Peter’s own ethics are economic. He has no moral objection, for instance, to prostitution, even though a girl is fired if she is caught going home with a client from his club. His reason? “It’s not business. Where’s my business in a girl going home?”

The same hard-nosed attitude has got him into trouble. In 1994 he banned fat girls from his club. The story made the front-page of the Sun, but Peter defends his decision. People come to Stringfellow’s to see beautiful people, to bask in the glamour and glitz. Obesity is not good for business. He launches into a one-man role-play: “Unfortunately your fat friend behind you ain’t gonna get in... But she’s wonderful, really lovely... I don’t care.”

It’s all about business, yes. But is it all about money? Certainly not. Although the op-

portunity has arisen countless times, Peter has always refused to franchise Stringfellow’s as a brand. He refuses to establish Stringfellow’s PLC, and does not want to be a spokesman for his whole industry. Despite his moniker, “King of Clubs”, Peter’s involvement is with his clubs alone, and it is a deeply personal involvement: “Sadly I’m a loner. I enjoy immensely what I do and have done. All the enjoyment has held me back. There’s been a thing in my head about personal ownership - it stops me being a PLC, a Richard Branson. He’s smarter than me. I will delegate jobs, but not responsibility. I keep responsibility.”

An uncompromising rationality defines his philosophy of life. Peter speaks of his contemporary Cliff Richard, whom he admires for releasing the first true British rock song, “but his simplistic view of God - oh God!” he exclaims, “he thinks he’s doing God’s bidding... what? Go to the middle of the Iraq battlefields and see what God’s telling you to do there... I think the future is secular- it has to be. But that’s not to say there aren’t amazing things out there in the universe.”

It is nigh on impossible to give an overall impression of Peter Stringfellow after spending

**“I prefer speaking in Cambridge... but food for food you’re both crap”**

two hours with him. We imagine it would be even harder to do so after more time with him: every minute reveals another facet, another contrast.

He does, however, leave a lasting impression of extreme generosity: that night at Peter’s clubs (he is keen that we see both his London establishments), we are treated to dinner, flowing champagne, and private dances from the club’s glamorous girls - all completely on Peter.

Stringfellow is a natural celebrity, in love with the media only slightly less than he is enamoured with youth; a student journalist’s delight. He might struggle to spell “success”, but his selling-point is pragmatism.



## Peter’s pearls of wisdom

“If you’re a barman you can work anywhere in the world. If you’re a pole dancer it’s the same”

“I don’t throw a Christmas party, not even for my staff. They might have a few drinks and start saying what they really think of each other”

“Strippers don’t pretend to have sex. Actresses do”

“Experience tells me there is always something around the corner”

# Lights, Camera, Inaction

**Cinecam** used to be at the forefront of Cambridge filmmaking. **Ravi Amaratunga** wonders what went wrong

I met Joanna Hogg, one of Britain's new and upcoming directors, at the London Film Festival last year. On learning that I was both a hopeful film-maker and at Cambridge, she proclaimed, "you're pretty sorted, aren't you? All that equipment, all those connections!" "What equipment?" I replied gloomily; "What connections?"

It's not as if she didn't have a basis for her assumption; Cambridge is a pretty creative place and certainly has produced some of the country's, if not the world's, greatest film-related alumni, including Rachel Weisz, Sam Mendes and John Cleese. Yet

**Cinecam, in failing to create a community, or even to provide cinematic opportunities for beginners, has reached crisis point**

most actors, directors, cinematographers and editors who used to grace our halls most likely didn't get involved in film-making during their time at Cambridge. The university may have a thriving classical music and theatre scene – decades of ADC line-ups provided this country with scores of talented and artistic individuals – but why isn't there any kind of comparable environment for film enthusiasts?

But what about Cinecam? Whatever happened to the revered Cambridge Film Making Society, the output of which has been modest at the best of times during my three years here? It seems to have hit crisis point. The Cinecam Film Festival usually showcases the various shorts and projects that members of the University have produced. They're by no means masterpieces, but they are fun and give a platform to even the most amateur of amateur film-makers, giving a faint breath of life into a withering, pallid, filmic community.

This year, however, that life support machine has now been withdrawn and this signals, perhaps, the final nail in the coffin for Cinecam. As a film-maker hoping to enter London Film School after I graduate, it's really disconcerting. Before my arrival, I expected to meet others who loved film and had an innate compulsion to create and watch film. Indeed, I met many of the people I hoped I'd meet, and was even luckier to meet those I could never have envisaged beforehand. College film societies offer great value cinema nights, and various colleges show a wonderful array of films which leave any film-maker salivating at the mouth. But it all leads to a terrible anti-climax. All that I've seen Cinecam produce this year is two rather half-hearted '48-Hour Film Challenges' in which various teams compete with each other, using one camera and two days to create a five-minute film.

You get the idea: for me and many other film-makers, potential film-makers and even those who just like films, Cinecam has failed to create a community, or even to provide cinematic opportunities for beginners. At least under ex-president Brian Lavery's tenure last year we did have a Super 8 competition, a film festival, and a chance to meet other like-minded people. But under the diktat of current president Lisa Wong, Cinecam finally seems to have taken its last sharp intake of air before plunging into the depths of the abyss.

I know I sound like a grumpy bastard, but wouldn't you be in my shoes? It is a travesty that we cannot harness the University's talent and focus it on the most popular cultural medium of our times. I am not alone. I spoke to 'veteran' Cambridge film-maker Anton Yavorsky, who hopes to shoot his first full-length feature film *Between a Killer and a Psychic* in the next few years by raising his own

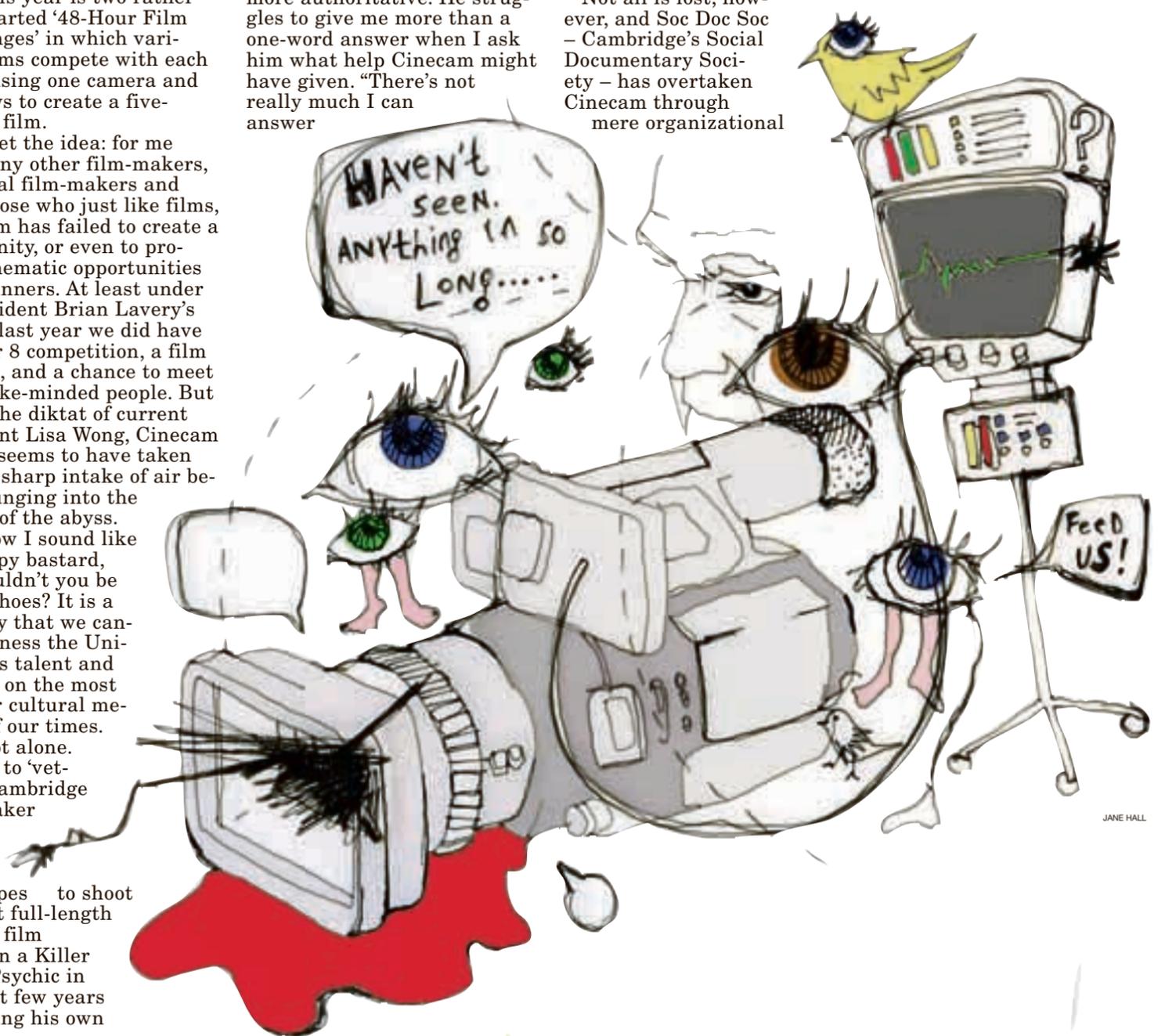
private funds (following the footsteps of Harvard alumnus Darren Aronofsky, of *Requiem for a Dream* and *The Fountain* fame, who funded his first, critically acclaimed feature *Pi* entirely off his own back). Anton and I had worked together on many Cinecam film challenges before; in fact we met each other through one of them. I asked him about his experience of Cinecam over the duration of his stay in Cambridge, and how it had helped his film-making, if at all. He tells me he didn't first hear of Cinecam through advertising or through the Freshers' Fair, but rather by chance: when trying to entice Werner Herzog to give him an interview, he used Google to find a Cambridge-related film institution to make him look more authoritative. He struggles to give me more than a one-word answer when I ask him what help Cinecam might have given. "There's not really much I can answer

that question with other than 'nothing'." Anton actually worked on Cinecam's annual short film in 2006 – another feature to disappear this year. "It was ridiculous", he tells me, "How on earth can you have executive producers and producers for a student short film?" The film (*Change the World*) never got screened.

I did try to contact Cinecam's Lisa Wong to provide the other side of the argument, but to no avail. The purpose of this piece is to try and rouse Cinecam and get it back on its feet, and I urge Miss Wong to put me right if she thinks I'm wrong (which she probably will). But even the most subjective observer will find it hard to account for the massive failure of the society to fill its purpose this year.

Not all is lost, however, and Soc Doc Soc – Cambridge's Social Documentary Society – has overtaken Cinecam through mere organizational

superiority, inviting various speakers from Channel 4 and several prominent documentary makers for screenings, Q&As and Careers Service events. Its audience may remain small, but it is certainly better to have a jester than no jester at all. With the opening of XVIII Jesus Lane, and promises of student run film screenings of student shorts, disaster certainly doesn't loom large for Cambridge's hidden film-making community. But without someone stepping up either nurse the ailing Cinecam back to health, or better yet, follow the example of Soc Doc Soc and create a new, more representative, and better-organised film-making society, this University might well simply turn into a nursery for Deloitte.



JANE HALL

# 'I do hope Germaine Greer isn't behind all of this'

**Ian McKellen** is one of Britain's best-loved actors. But why is he so disparaging about female writers, questions **Alex Reza**?

**S**ir Ian McKellen is launching a new book about the Marlowe Society, of which he was President whilst reading English at Cambridge in the Sixties. He's written the foreword, and now he wants to talk. The voice on the other end of the telephone line is eerily familiar, and terribly grand. McKellen is keen to discuss the book: "It is important for wider

**"Shakespeare analysed the feminine condition better than any woman"**

readership because of the influence the Marlowe Society has had on the professional theatre world," he observes – an influence largely to do with their "shared approach" to the Elizabethan dramatic verse that is their area of interest. He identifies this approach as to do with a "close attention" to, even academic "dissection" of, the way the plays are written. Dramatic verse, he explains, "is to do with how you speak it." He is sceptical of those "wackier" dons who don't think Shakespeare should be put on at all; the academics don't know best: it is only "in performance" that you can "analyse what is dramatic about a play." He displays a certain weariness with an overly academic approach to Shakespeare: "My heart used to sink when I was asked questions like 'Is Coriolanus a tragedy: discuss.' It's about politics, how a society can be organised – but if it fits to being a 'tragedy', I don't know, and frankly, I don't care."

Does he read critical material when preparing a role? Less now than before; as an actor in a play, he doesn't need to understand the whole play, he says; he is, after all, merely "a channel, an interpreter" for one part of it. It is his job to communicate the role "out of my head, through my body, to the audience. It is a process of discovery." Those at this university that have protested about the nature of the reviewing system can take heart in McKellen's disparaging opinion: "reviews are merely part of the publicity machine...they're not for actors but to just get people to come to the play." What is more, he says he has "scarcely ever read a comment that was helpful"; they are mostly "not very good," even "nonsensical". He describes instances when he has written to reviewers to explain or defend

points he felt were unjust. Without fail, he says, they have immediately backed down.

In light of some recent debate here about whether Shakespeare should be put on so often, considering the disproportionate number of male roles as well as the plethora of other writers who remain neglected as a result of this preference, I ask him if he thinks it is right that Shakespeare be thus privileged. "He is the greatest writer that ever lived," and indeed, he's "all for" women playing men's parts; after all, "there's no more reason why a woman shouldn't play Hamlet than an old man." He rather thinks women should embrace the parts he wrote for them as Shakespeare "analysed the feminine condition better than any woman who's ever written." This assertion is a little bewildering, since Sir Ian has surely never experienced the 'feminine condition'. He says he only speaks on subjects about which he is "expert", namely "acting" and "being a gay man". Not being a woman then. "I do hope Germaine Greer isn't behind all of this..." I press on. Should theatre be provocative? "Well, I've never known theatre not to be provocative. Even a farce like Boeing Boeing challenges our views of stereotypes." Indeed, for McKellen, this is a "definition of what art is", be it painting, music, or theatre: something that "aims to have the mind readjusted"; people go to the theatre, he thinks, "hoping to lean forward". In this it differs from film, which often "has no such pretensions", and performs a different function in that people tend to "go to the cinema to relax". Maybe this has something to do with a sense, especially in the younger audience, of alienation from the theatre? "It's just the ticket prices", he observes. In fact, price obstructions aside, theatre "is actually much more available than film", as the audience is actually "in the presence of the people telling the story."

The chance to be in the presence of this particular storyteller presents itself this Monday. He will be reminiscing at The Octagon, St Chad's, at 8.30pm, and is prepared to "answer any question as long

as it is not slanderous or filthy." It will be a rare opportunity to hear one of Cambridge's most illustrious theatrical alumni speak at close quarters, and it certainly should not be missed.



## Classical Preview **Collegium Musicum** *A Musical Soirée in Georgian London*

Recently founded by the Faculty of Music to encourage practical music-making on period instruments, Collegium Musicum has enlisted a startling array of professionals to teach the members. The quartet whom I met last week talked in awed terms of a rehearsal the next day with Margaret Faultless, leader of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment since 1989 and now an artistic director of Collegium Musicum. Faultless' relentless concentration on the place of individual notes within the wider context of the music is present even when she is not: during the rehearsal each member had something to say in an urgent quest to get to grips with the intricacies of baroque music.

Despite mixing with the stars of the baroque world, the group maintain a refreshing stance on the music they perform. They are aware that, if played without enough well-placed verve and zest, even the best baroque music can become deeply monotonous, and so much of this awareness derives from and is reflected in the tone of their rehearsals. Sitting in on one was in itself a bit like a *soirée* in Georgian England. I had always imagined good chamber groups should exemplify the idea of 'music among friends', and the rehearsal embodied this thoroughly. Throwing ideas around like a pub debate, there was none of the fear to explore the music and challenge the composer's intentions which seems to dumb down so much musical interpretation.

And then they started playing. For a group of young players still coming to terms with the vagaries of baroque instruments, they were remarkable. What lacked in polish, inevitably left dulled by a rehearsal atmosphere, was more than made up for by an excitement of interpretation. They were playing the Corelli, whose quicker movement was a breathless and breath-taking display of passion; at the end of it a moment of reverent silence seemed to be appropriate. But no such pause was provided and the discussion resumed immediately. This concert promises to be, at the very least, a thorough explanation of just why baroque chamber music should be performed and heard: more than any other musical form it has the ability, when played with sensitivity, to break down the audience-performer divide.

**Toby Chadd**

Tuesday 11th March, 7.30 pm: Emma Old Library, £2 for students, advanced booking from [avj1000@cam.ac.uk](mailto:avj1000@cam.ac.uk)



# Interviewing the interviewer

**Nick Broomfield** is one of the most influential documentary filmmakers of all time. **Imogen Walford** talks to him about his latest masterpiece, *Battle for Haditha*

**N**ick Broomfield's voice is distinctive. As the documentary maker who popularised the director-as-subject style, it's immediately familiar to anyone who's seen his earlier films. His influence on documentaries continues to be writ large. The Louis Theroux/Michael Moore school of jumping around in front of the camera is vintage Broomfield. His signature style was the hand-held camera and boom as he pursued his subjects, by turns cajoling or bullying figures from Courtney Love to Aileen Wuornos into compelling film moments.

He talks in a cynical, laconic drawl and seems distracted in a friendly, busy kind of way – until he decides to zone in on a question, when he's entirely sharp. This is a man who's spent his career interviewing and being interviewed.

Broomfield is one of the most maverick documentary makers around. His oeuvre has spanned a large variety of subjects – everything from his Kurt & Courtney documentary, through to interviewing prostitutes on Sunset Boulevard, to more overtly 'political' pieces on slum clearance. As he puts it, "documentary is incredibly important for our knowledge of the world." He always tries "to deal with subjects related to my country or my culture in a country where I can speak the language."

Right now there are two subjects that Broomfield sees as the 'big issues' of the world around us today. One is "slave labour and mass migration" – the subject-matter of his last film, *Ghosts*, which recreated events surrounding the deaths of Chinese

illegal immigrants trying to earn money by cockle-picking in Morecambe Bay. The other is "the whole situation in the Middle East, the issue of sovereignty", the question of "what we're doing there". And it's this topic he's picked up in *The Battle for Haditha*, his latest film, currently showing at the Cambridge Arts Picturehouse.

The Times has already hailed *The Battle for Haditha* as "Iraq's *Apocalypse Now*" and – for once – this comparison doesn't feel like pure hype. Perhaps a better comparison to the film itself would be Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, which inspired Broomfield. Both films focus on small groups of people trapped on opposing sides of a messy and ideologically bankrupt war. Broomfield's is based on the events in Haditha, a name that has gained infamy in America. In November 2005 a roadside bomb blew up an American humvee, killing a Marine and injuring two. The Marines responded by killing 24 Iraqi civilians. The resulting cover-up was reported in *Time* magazine, where Broomfield first came across it. So politically charged is the story that the film can't find a distributor in America: Broomfield's keen to stress that "it's just being very difficult, but I'm sure we will get it." The end product is an anti-war film that just leaves you with an overwhelming sense of Iraq as a hell-hole. In telling the story from the perspectives of the Marines, the terrorists and the Iraqis trapped in the middle, *The Battle for Haditha* captures the suffering on all sides of the conflict.

Part of the film's power lies in the use of 'real' people rather

than actors; they "had been affected by the war directly, they weren't just acting." Broomfield cheerfully admits that he was expecting that he would really dislike the ex-Marines who took on the American parts, but how affected he was by the war stories of "these seventeen-year-old kids". When Elliot Ruiz, playing the central Marine in the film, breaks down in a bathroom and smashes up a mirror, it's clear it's more than just acting. And the barracks and houses in the film aren't just sets either – Broomfield got all his cast to live in surroundings similar to those in Iraq throughout the filming. He talks about the filming of the women's mourning over their massacred friends and family; this was done in one shot, a genuine capturing of their grief. The only concession to circumstance was making the film in Jordan, trips to Iraq being too dangerous to contemplate. Broomfield tells me about one Iraqi journalist who ventured into Haditha itself "and said he was lucky to survive a cup of tea there." He talks very honestly about the dangers and difficulties of finding the Iraqi refugees from the war in Jordan: "it was very tricky – one bus of Iraqis coming to be auditioned got caught" and, being illegal, deported back into Iraq.

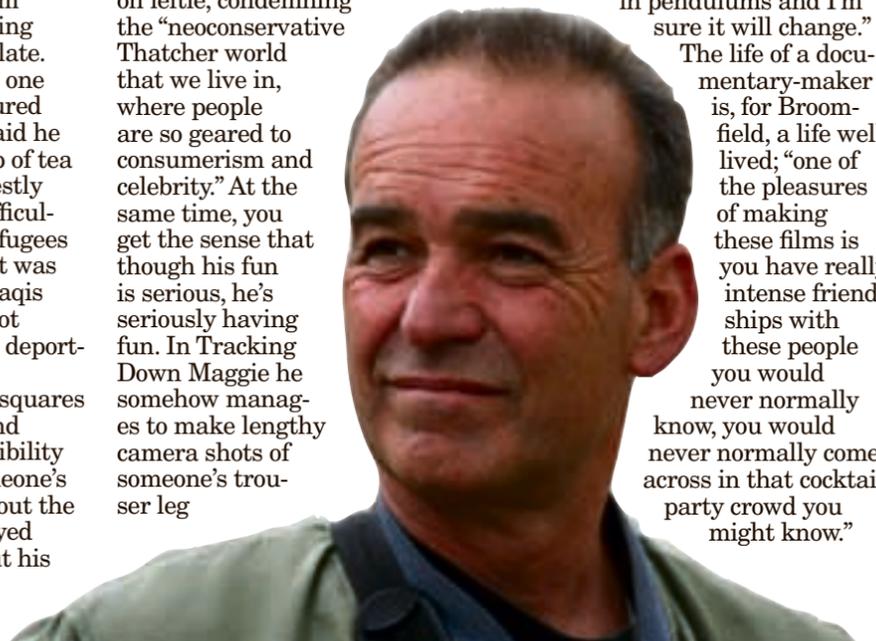
When I ask him how this squares with being a journalist, and whether there's a responsibility that goes with telling someone's story, Broomfield talks about the number of people he's stayed in contact with throughout his career. He also cites the Morecambe Bay trust fund he set up in the

wake of *Ghosts*, "for the families of the victims who are still paying off their debts. We've raised £70,000 to go to China – with no charity charge at all, it goes straight to the families so that was a real commitment." But in typical Broomfield style, it's said in a low-key, slightly deprecating way – "that was a very specific thing."

Broomfield's got a brilliantly maverick eye and style. And despite being so politically informed, he traces his career back to stills photography: "when I was about sixteen, I went on exchange to France, the guy I was staying with was always working so I went out and did a lot of still photography – you know, I sort of discovered that I was good at it." And it's this odd mixture that makes the films work. On one hand, Broomfield's a switched-on leftie, condemning the "neoconservative Thatcher world that we live in, where people are so geared to consumerism and celebrity." At the same time, you get the sense that though his fun is serious, he's seriously having fun. In *Tracking Down Maggie* he somehow manages to make lengthy camera shots of someone's trouser leg

compelling as you hear "no, you can't film here". So desperate do they get waiting around to speak to her Press Secretary, they're reduced to filming passing dogs. In both *Ghosts* and *The Battle for Haditha*, Broomfield is moving away from the traditional documentary. But he is clear that his shift in genre is not a judgement on the documentary form itself; he gets most animated when talking about the capacity for documentaries to capture the world around us. I suggest YouTube might be crowding out the market, but he worries more that "reality TV has taken over to such an extent, it's much cheaper to make than documentaries and it's much easier to control in that it's generally nothing to do with politics and it's just superficial and stupid." But for him it's far from being a dying art: "things go in pendulums and I'm sure it will change."

The life of a documentary-maker is, for Broomfield, a life well lived; "one of the pleasures of making these films is you have really intense friendships with these people you would never normally know, you would never normally come across in that cocktail party crowd you might know."



# Feminine Focus



Our literary canon notoriously contains all too few works by women. At least the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize looks to redress this imbalance, write **Eliza Apperly** and **Emilie Ferguson**

Who would you immediately think of if you had to name three famous playwrights? Ask the average Cambridge student and the answers display little variation: Shakespeare, Stoppard, Pinter, Miller, Marlowe. A few more individual responses might include Molière and Tennessee Williams, or other non-Anglophones such as Brecht or Chekhov. But what none would acknowledge is the significance – or even the existence – of an established female dramatist. And such a bias does not appear limited to the Cambridge psyche. Google ‘Famous Playwrights’ and the same names crop up, only with a bonus Greek contingent. On Wikipedia, a search for ‘Women Playwrights’ could only proffer a particularly insightful list of ‘Lesbian Writers’.

For the founders of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, such a gendered history and perception of the theatre is of particular pertinence. Now in its thirtieth-anniversary year, the prize was set up to recognise and celebrate female theatrical writing. Administered between Houston, London and New York, the prize receives around thirty submissions a year and, in the words of Abigail Gonda, literary manager of the Bush Theatre and a long-standing reader for the prize, “has no agenda other than rewarding the finest new plays by women from the English-speaking world”.

Plays are accepted regardless of whether or not they have already been produced, and each script submitted is read by at least three members of the international reading committee in order to select ten to twelve finalists. All final nominations are then read by six judges, three from the UK and three from the US. Caroline Keeley, UK administrator for the prize, stresses the “balance of professions and sexes” which make up the judging panel each year. Past judges have included

figures as diverse and dynamic as Edward Albee, Ralph Fiennes, Glenn Close, James Fenton and Imogen Stubbs.

Abigail Gonda celebrates the particular democracy at the heart of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, whereby any female playwright at any stage of her career may submit a work. Recognition through the prize is an accolade which she hopes can only put a writer in good standing amidst the international theatre community – a hope which has been fulfilled for many of the prize finalists, several of whom have subsequently grants and public recognition. Six have gone on to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama. With its international scope, the prize has also fostered the interchange of plays between the US, Britain, Ireland, and other English-speaking countries.

Having read for the prize for five years, Gonda remarks upon the extraordinary diversity of themes brought up by women playwrights. Although certain contemporary topics crop up regularly, such as the war in Iraq, terrorism, and the environment, an incredible range of work is received and read annually, both stylistically and thematically: “we get monologues, classic three-act structures, period dramas, plays set in Northern Ireland and Turkey – it’s always a rich mixture,” she comments. In selecting finalists, Abigail identifies the “gut reaction” as a defining factor. She says “I never approach a play with any intention other than reading it. I’m not searching for anything whilst I’m doing this. It’s the feeling I have afterwards which I’m interested in.”

If a play catches her imagination, it is then a question of asking why – there can be a multitude of reasons, from “huge scope and ambition, to a compelling plot or intriguing characters.” She adds “it’s about vitality, originality and ability – but mostly about being

taken by surprise, that there is yet another way to see the world by being shown it through a writer’s eyes.” Thus the 2005 finalist Gurpreet Bhatti struck the prize readers with her play *Bhezti* (Dis-honour) with its extraordinary thematic diversity, provocatively confronting social status, mixed race marriage, sexual abuse and murder in the setting of a Sikh temple.

With its exclusively feminine focus, the prize calls into consideration the state of women’s writing today. Though Gonda personally believes this is a cause for real optimism, citing writers such as Caryl Churchill and Bryony Lavery, and the many women in “important decision making roles in new-writing theatres”, Polly Stenham, a finalist in 2007, believes that the importance of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize lies precisely in its recognition of women in a profession “dominated by men”.

Stenham’s first play, written aged nineteen, debuted last year to the overwhelming acclaim of reviewers. *That Face*, directed by Jeremy Herrin, presented a passionate and visceral examination of profoundly troubled parent-child relationships in an upper-middle-class family. In its rapturous reception by established commentators, the play also surely represents quite what a fertile and exciting sphere of women’s writing the Susan Smith Blackburn Award is seeking to acknowledge. For the Daily Telegraph’s Charles Spencer, *That Face* marked “one of the most astonishing debuts I have seen in more than 30 years of theatre reviewing; a play that sent me reeling into the night. In every respect a remarkable and unforgettable piece of theatre.”

As well as personal acknowledgement, for Stenham the prize crucially represents “some sort of international recognition for female playwrights”. Although

The average Cambridge student will not acknowledge the significance – or even the existence – of an established female dramatist

she does not believe that there are any issues particularly relevant to women dramatists, she considers her position as a contemporary female playwright to be a struggle against both a historically masculine industry and the mass immediacy of modern communication.

Likened by cultural critic Andrew Haydon to Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *That Face* certainly shocked with a fascinating, sexual and violent mother figure juxtaposed against young characters allowed an almost heroic vulnerability and integrity. As Polly comments, “provocation is a weapon to get noticed” throughout the modern art world. “I think that is a sign of the times rather than a sign of taste or diminishing quality. The arts have to compete against other parts of our culture to survive.” In spite of the explicit class context of *That Face*, Stenham insists that what she is interested in above all is “mental health and addiction, and the effect that has on family”. For her, “those issues are deeply human and transcend any class bullshit.”

Women’s theatre writing today asserts itself as a realm of endless possibility, striking variety and tremendous dynamism. Far from the exclusively ‘women’s issues’ that reductive views of female writing might presuppose, the bright young things of women’s playwriting are wholeheartedly transcending the clichéd boundaries of tampons and tit-tape. In avoiding these stereotypes and in identifying itself with all the great themes and issues of modern experience, contemporary women’s theatre is surely something to watch – and something to celebrate. And with the encouragement that awards such as the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize offer, perhaps in twenty, or even ten, years’ time, established female names will spring to mind amongst – and equal to – Miller, Marlowe and Molière.

Varsity now publishes extended first-night reviews of every play in Cambridge at [varsity.co.uk/reviews](http://varsity.co.uk/reviews)

## view from the groundlings



It must be a sign of the times that all the comedy is selling out. As we drag ourselves, pale and wan, to the end of term, it seems we're not up to much else. The RAG stand-up final was packed and the kids are snapping up tickets to Snippets like nobody's business. Maybe it's something to do with the fact that laughing tones your stomach muscles: who can be bothered with the gym when you can sit around with a drink instead? It's called time efficiency. It's like writing an essay at Cindies.

Though how does that explain the fact that last week's admittedly outstanding *Romeo and Juliet* sold out as well? Tear-jerker: fine; but on the abs front: nothing. Hang on! ANOTHER sell-out? *Sacre bleu!* The ADC must be making so much money that they can lower ticket prices again! Now now. Let's not be silly.

But what does it all mean? Because now I come to think of it, this has been going on all term: one need only think of the Fitzpatrick Hall in February, brimming to the edges and turning the masses away at the door, to be filled with tingles of excitement. Could it be that, in spite of weeks and months of deeply set cynicism from all quarters about Cambridge theatre, the cloud is finally lifting and the crowds are flocking back, blooming with enthusiasm like the daffodils on the riverbank? Are we about to see the Robinson Auditorium flowing with happy punters, and blockbuster musicals at the Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio? I think we just might, and by God, it's beautiful.

It's not all over yet: next week brings not only the latest Harry Porter prize winner, but also the much-awaited *Into the Woods*, a show tipped (by its producer) to be the best thing probably in living memory. So. SO. Enough said really. You'd be a fool to miss either. It has been a corker of a term: let's keep the aspidochelone flying, to coin an almost certainly irrelevant, quite possibly jingoist, but nevertheless rousing tag line from modern literature.

Finally, as I sign off, a requisite disclaimer: apologies go out to all those who felt short-changed, underappreciated or simply bewildered as a result of any of our reviews; we tried to be fair, but as Chekhov said "subjectivity is a terrible thing". Anyway, Ian McKellen says reviews are basically a load of nonsense. I'm tempted to agree.

Alex Reza

## Snippets: The Footlights Spring Revue ADC

Theatre  
★★★★★

I don't really like the Footlights. I hate the smug self-entitlement, as though being able to say "I have no fingers" in a high-pitched voice on the ADC stage makes you the next Fry, Laurie, or (God help you) Greer. I also don't like the equation 'fresh comedy = weird and edgy comedy'. So, when the 125th Spring Revue, billed as a suitably-wacky "occasionally true history of stuff", started with a sketch about internet forum users, the Holocaust ("Edgy? Check!"), terrorism ("Double check!"), and Aristotle ("Weird dead guy with a beard? Check!"), I was ready to give it a good kicking.

But I can't. After that dud first sketch, the pace increases and produces some genuinely funny ideas. The ideas flow, the writers' focus on historical events revealing their strengths: Dinosaur Top Trumps segues into the assassination of Thomas Becket and an inspired reimagining of the slave trade's origins. The first half concludes with two songs, one an attempt to fit all 267 popes into the Beach Boys' Barbara Ann. The second half starts with similar energy, in a song imagining Jesus as a Brooklyn rapper. Whilst the rest of the show doesn't match this, it does give the

consistently-excellent Lucy Evans room to show what she could do. Why no more stars? In truth, it felt slightly shoddy. Regular technical faults undermined the actors and made it seem under-rehearsed. Whilst many of the ideas in the show are good, the execution fails; the audience is regularly left waiting for a punchline that never came.

If you're not bothered by these technicalities, add another star. And go; in parts, this really is a very funny and clever show. It's just those other parts that leave you wanting more, and better.

George Reynolds



## The Cement Garden Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio

Dir: Dave Brown  
Theatre  
★★★★★

Ian McEwan's exploration of the isolation and anxiety of four orphaned children is successfully transferred from the novel to the stage in this inaugural adaptation of *The Cement Garden*.

As sand, water, and snooker balls are thrown across the stage, it becomes clear that this is a play which thrives on mess and destruction. Indeed, the production's strength is in its physicality: the inspired and dynamic set, involving the cross-section of a house, positions the characters on different horizontal planes and cleverly visualises the relationships between family members.

The distances created by the different levels are juxtaposed with moments of intense and intimate physical contact: every physical interaction between the characters appears to be carefully choreographed, and

even hand-holding is performed in an isolated, uneasy manner in order to disturb the audience. The body language of the child characters is perfectly mastered; Kate O'Connor is superb as the infant Tom and Jack Monaghan's performance gawky teenage protagonist is particularly striking. Indeed, the play's physical side is most obviously shown by Monaghan as he somehow manically balances on the edge of a bathtub that is elevated onto a high platform. Abigail Rokison also has to be commended for her brave performance as the corpse that is chillingly buried on stage.

*The Cement Garden* is a daring production, in both its subject choice and its artistic direction, and this daring is what makes FallOut Theatre's work so engrossing to watch.

Daisy Boughtflower

Whether sparring over cold toast or venting anger on empty plates, Alan Ayckbourn's horrific family express the scope of their emotions via their eating habits. Never has a play relied so rewardingly on the dramatic potential of food. From the single water-biscuit munched ruminatively by the disengaged Tom and the barrage of them flung (a moment later) by the frenzied Sarah at her husband Reg, to the turgid lettuce and cocktail of tinned soups on which this discordant bunch dine, it is over a smear of bleak food stuffs that this cast let their sparks fly.

Disruptive, chaotic, flamboyant and hopeless, Laurence Doering's fresh performance as the lecherous Norman is consistently captivating and the slight crackle in his voice, like that of his puffer puffer rice, gives the role a certain scrumpled ebullience.

If you have an aversion to a smidge of over-acting then this might not be the show for you. But was Alan Ayckbourn ever one for the subtle eyebrow-twitch? Probably not. Lizzie Barber as Sarah certainly isn't, crowing out her nervous crises. Nor, for the majority of the play, is Dom Horsfall as Tom, whose

cogitative old-man-little-boy thing is endearing and engaging. His momentary outburst where we glimpse a more complex depth to his smiling awkwardness comes unexpectedly and is both comic and very touching. Both Annie (Lauren Juster) and Ruth (Amelia Viney) give nuanced and subtle performances.

So, if you feel like a gentle rollick of an evening, this is one to see. It isn't complex. They haven't fussed about with lighting, or gimmicky casting, or fancy costuming. This is a fun piece for an uplifting night in the cellars.

Phoebe Dickerson

## Table Manners Pembroke New Cellars

Dir: Alex  
Winterbotham  
Theatre  
★★★★★

## Indivisible Pembroke New Cellars

Dir: Freddy Syborn  
Theatre  
★★★★★

*Indivisible* is a new play by Freddy Syborn, the latest offering from the man responsible for last term's *Flesh Eating Jacobean Zombies*. This play, based upon an account of the interrogation of a famous war criminal, is, needless to say, rather different. That said, Syborn's penchant for "off-the-wall" humour, wordplay and David Isaacs is unchanged.

Isaacs plays a Nazi war criminal being interrogated by Israeli secret police shortly before his trial in 1961. His two interrogators (Hannah Lowe and Rob Peal) attempt to provoke an emotive reaction in their infantile

interviewee. In response, Isaacs' character continually spouts clichés, useless facts, and pop-philosophy.

The childishness of Isaacs' character works well in comparison to the stony-faced interrogators. One brilliantly-timed slurp on his cup of water from Isaacs is enough to dramatise a particularly lengthy speech from his Jewish interrogator. The male interrogator tells jokes, but these are nasty jokes ("what has eight legs and screams a lot...") which undermine the comedy in a subtle way.

The play raises the question

as to how it is possible to provide justice for someone who is clearly guilty, and whom everyone wants to see executed. Towards the end of the play, evidence of his humanity does come, and it is striking that such a wordy speech should command so much intensity. The dramatic climax is slightly unconvincing, but fails to detract from this clever exposition of a complex character. Despite the play's several failures as a piece of theatre, the predictably brilliant Isaacs and moving conclusion means that this deserves to be seen.

Orlando Reade

## The Re-Up Gang

### We Got It 4 Cheap Volume 3

Music

★★★★★

Hip-hop mixtapes are usually best avoided. Rappers collate uninspired freestyles and posse cuts, while DJs yell infuriating catchphrases (like “GAAYNGSTA GRIZZILZ”) over tracks, marking their territory with obnoxious sound effects. Occasionally, however, a group transcends this: the Re-Up Gang’s We Got It 4 Cheap Volume 2 was one such example. The Clipse, accompanied by rappers Sandman and Ab-Liva, sounded livid, even frightening, and on banger after banger they merked the competition.

It’s fitting that this third instalment blows in just after Varsity’s

drug investigation. The Re-Up Gang may throw around different words – keys, snow, bricks – but their central topic is cocaine. ‘Coke rap’ has made a return in recent times, but unlike most of their peers, the Gang still claim to be pushing. When Jay-Z described the lifestyle of Roc Boys, he was looking back at his past; over the same beat, Pusha T says that he “still live this shit”. There are plenty of entertaining boasts (“more powder than Maybelline”), and materialism in abundance, with comparisons made to King Tut. The group is not averse to beef, a mixtape staple. On Show

You How to Hustle, they go after Lil Wayne, their main competitor: “The wind blow, it come and go, I’m hurricane/listen again, I hurry caine/don’t make me come to Miami, and bury Wayne.”

The group occasionally hints at being capable of much more than this sloppy collection. They have a playful self awareness – it’s hard to imagine any other rappers saying: “I’m so nouveau riche, lord knows I’m a damn shame”. More of this would be welcome, but it seems unlikely. Like any good hustlers, the Re-Up Gang are just catering to the customer. **Daniel Cohen**

## films

every right-minded person should see



## The Consequences of Love

Dir: Paolo Sorrentino

There’s an eight-minute-long shot at the end of Antonioni’s *The Passenger* where the camera scans over a ponderous Jack Nicholson, through a barred window, tracks past a surreal street scene and returns to its starting point to find Nicholson now dead. It’s regarded by many as the greatest cinematic mind-fuck ever.

It’s quite a compliment, then, to suggest that Antonioni’s coup-de-gras has now been usurped by a mesmerising scene halfway through Paolo Sorrentino’s 2004 masterpiece, *The Consequences of Love*. Titta Di Girolamo, an otherwise perfectly presentable businessman staying at an upmarket Swiss hotel, injects himself with heroin; the focus turns soft; the camera pans 180° over his falling body towards the floor where Di Girolamo’s prostrate face is inexplicably already in shot; the viewer is left utterly disorientated.

Its shots like these – and the film is peppered with them – that make *The Consequences of Love* the slickest filmic work of the twenty-first century. On a fatuous level, it’s a film for cinematographers, for graphic designers, or for those who are, like me, simply fond of sharp, angular compositions, bamboozling camera tricks and millisecond-perfect editing, all entwined with a minimal, mournful soundtrack.

Yet *Consequences* contains more than just a fickle sense of style; Sorrentino isn’t just Antonioni’s cinematographical successor – like his older compatriot, his main talents lie in expertly depicting the loneliness of the human condition. Just as Antonioni’s *Locke* and *Thomas* – in, respectively, *The Passenger* and *Blow Up* – are fundamentally loners, so too are Sorrentino’s protagonists, all of whom live in what is perhaps cinema’s most lonely setting: a hotel. Di Girolamo is a man who, forced to spend the rest of his days in seclusion in the hotel as a Mafia lackey, has forgotten how to interact; Sofia is the beautiful hotel waitress who, stranded behind her bar, cannot maintain a relationship. Together, they all slowly start to rediscover a faith in humanity before Mafia mischief contrives to render them almost as alone and unhappy as before.

I dearly love this film – I even wrote the Wikipedia page for it – and I feel, with all sincerity, that *everyone* should see it. *The Consequences of Love* is a film about anyone who’s ever felt alone, ever been abandoned, or ever, for any reason, felt friendless. It’s a film about what it is to be human. **Patrick Kingsley**

## Hercules and Love Affair

### Hercules and Love Affair

Music

★★★★★



The binary-LED watches bleep as they flash 4am on the wrists of NY scene-monsters in a Brooklyn basement club. In one corner, a beautiful androgynous girl explains the engraving on her latest smelting, in another, a subtle transsexual is surrounded by an infatuated mixed-sex, mixed-race hoard. Elsewhere a silhouetted figure stands against a graffiti-scrawled wall, enclawed in shadow, with only a dim bluish glow showing select facial contours. Hephaistos’ heart has spat out a few licks onto the head of another man sitting alone watching a large celibate creature roll through the back door helplessly nodding to people on the way. These characters have a lot more in common than the natural comfort they experience in these surroundings; they are also collectively responsible for the album of the year.

Over four years ago, before releasing *I Am A Bird Now*, Antony Hegarty penned a song called *Blind* in the hope that some day his lyrics dealing with childhood memory would be

heard by music lovers. Today, after a few years and a few songs with some Johnsons, Antony’s song flows out of every other speaker in the 5 Boroughs. Laced with delicate disco high-hats, it makes up one tenth of Andy Butler’s sublime *Hercules & Love Affair* project. In the ancient myth, Hercules’ love for another man presented the strongest man alive at his most vulnerable. This collective venture, made up of ten of New York’s finest and most respected individuals on the underground scene, represents the vulnerability of disco, a genre which at one point was even rejected by the gay community, a large contingent of its most devoted fans, and demonstrates all its qualities in 21st-century splendour.

The songs on this album present dance music in its most pared-down, human form. Sensual words accompany solid rhythms and a perfect stabbing brass section, with the song *Easy* seemingly sampling the screeches of the soles of ballers’ high-tops across Brooklyn, as well as their compulsive sidewalk dribbling: the pulse of New York City throbs through-out.

At one of Andy’s first childhood birthday parties, all guests were obliged to dress as a Greek God; Andy was Apollo, one of the most multi-faceted and multi-talented Olympians. In adulthood, Andy’s self-demotion to the demi-god Hercules is not self-deprecating, it is simply realistic.

**Andrew Spyrou**

## Momentary Momentum: Part 2

### Kettle’s Yard

Exhibition

★★★★★



If Part One of *Momentary Momentum* was wistful and dreamlike, Part Two is hurled headfirst into the realm of nightmares. We are warned that some films shown are unsuitable for younger children, and even I was a little disturbed. As yet I have never dreamt of a silhouetted slave engaging in oral sex with a potbellied, bearded slave-owner with a protruding tongue and a terrifying silent cackle. My first companion called Kara Walker’s work the “biggest piece of wank” he’d ever seen. But the second murmured “how beautifully imaginative!” Divided into old fashioned cinematic chapters, with overtones of jazz and melancholy hymns, flickering photographic montages, speech, charcoal landscapes and trembling puppet silhouettes, the work exudes an overwhelming eeriness which makes it almost too intense to

watch in one sitting.

Michael Dudok de Wit’s *Father and Daughter* was my favourite animation. It is a tale of oversized coats and tiny feet, trembling reeds and uphill bicycle journeys. The seasons pass as a girl grows older and searches for the father that sailed away across the sea. It is a beautiful film, with piano music tinkling behind black-and-white drawings, flashes of water-colour and an auburn wash.

At the bottom of a wall in the main space, Francis Alys’ projection shows a man trailing a stick along a railing. You watch it for a while, strangely mesmerized by the identical images and initially synchronized sound. Then you realise it is a loop, and then you read the title, ‘Time is a Trick of the Mind’. And that is the message of all these animations: time is a trick of the mind, and in that trick anything can happen.

**Anna Trench**

Delays caused an earthquake in Hull on Tuesday night. At least that’s what keyboarder Aaron Gilbert claims: “we played an awesome show, and can’t but feel partly responsible.” Back with a third album of sun-drenched melodic pop hooks, and a testicle-shrivellingly-good falsetto, they’ve always been on the cusp of not-quite-stardom. So what is it about this album that will mean they hit the big time? “Twelve incredible songs,” comes the answer, “it sounds fucking massive – it gives you goosebumps”. Certainly, three albums on, their energy and en-

thusiasm is still infectious. Too many bands become jaded and stale when they haven’t hit the big time by this point, but even after years of endless touring, up to 200 gigs a year, “you can never get bored of people singing your songs back to you.”

On stage, they exude the same enthusiasm and confidence, but you can’t help but feel their singalong hooks are better suited to an outdoors festival than the dingy interior of the Barfly. Lead singer Greg Gilbert abstemiously sips from a bottle of water, and asks for the lights to be turned turn because it’s getting too hot on

stage. Very rock ‘n’ roll. But at their best, songs like *Valentine* combine the best of the La’s with a thumping electro beat and a hint of the Stone Roses. The dreamy exuberance of their songs would be irresistible at festivals, but when the fat git in front of you is pouring with sweat and trying to sing along in a falsetto while he spills his pint over you, it’s slightly less appealing. So why is it going to be their year? “We played a lot of gigs and we’re fucking amazing,” they reply. Hold the press on that one, but expect to see them at a festival near you.

**Henry Donati**

## Delays

### The Graduate

Gig

★★★★★

# Vettriano vitriol

**Ned Hercock** thinks that **Jack Vettriano** is not a good artist

The job of literary editor does not only involve holding boozy lunches at The Gay Hussar, smoking Gauloises and not submitting any copy. Oh no. A large part of my job is receiving e-mails from a nice woman called Suzanne Jones who works for Heffers (I can't afford real cigarettes anyway). Every week or so she sends me a PDF with the details of forthcoming 'instore events', which my computer fails to open. I think my PC is right to refuse, because they mostly advertise a nobody reading from, and signing, an overpriced nothing. My laptop loves a good PDF, though, so I cheerfully clicked and waited. I expected to read some enthusiastic PR-speak, but honestly I did not imagine that I would be confronted with a blurb of outright lies. "Come and meet" it urged, "the artist Jack Vettriano." Hold on, I thought, what can Suzanne possibly mean? There is no artist Jack Vettriano. Perhaps she means the talentless hack Jack Vettriano; the charlatan fraud Jack Vettriano. But surely he has not started calling himself an artist. (You can see where this is going. It's a school-boy's exercise, really, not a sophisticated or literary one.)

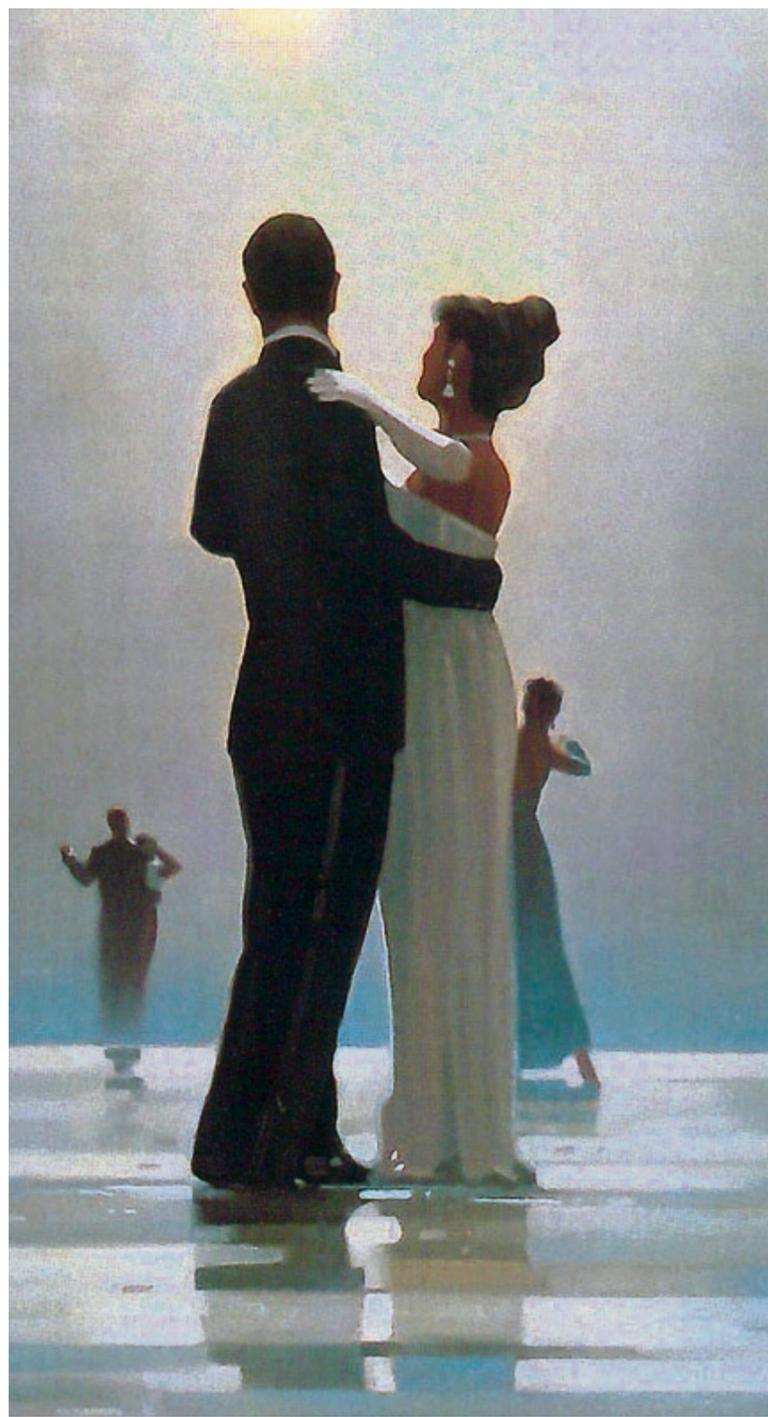
That 'Jack Vettriano' does not equal 'artist' should be a mathematical proof. It should be an effortless exercise, in fact, like stealing candy from fish in a barrel. I should spare you the exposition, then, since you are all frightfully clever, but the strat-

egy of ignoring the problem – of not refuting publicly the claim that is made every time someone pays £750,000 for a painting or £6.99 for a poster; every time two optimistic minds try to have a conversation about the bleak vacuity Jack presents us with – just has not worked. I am not offended that the man is coming to our town in particular. That Cambridge is no bastion of good contemporary art is immediately obvious from the postcards in the gallery opposite Caius and the map-dresses in the window of the one next to Barclays. Kettle's Yard is a paean to the weird idea of a gallery as a tasteful assembly of objets. The permanent collection is a passable monument to the bourgeois-bohemian lives of the original inhabitants, but compared to the public modern art at Yale or in Oxford it is a shameful nothing.

But why is this man being invited anywhere? Vettriano is a painter in the same way that the man who wrote *The Da Vinci Code* is a writer – only just. Perhaps a better analogy is between the 'artist' and the computer which so obviously composed Harry Potter. Harry Potter made a huge amount of money for the ailing publishing house Bloomsbury, and almost as much for its lovely smoking socialist front-woman, J.K. Rowling. Vettriano is estimated to earn £500,000 a year from prints alone. Actually, I'm wrong again, for each Harry Potter at least looks and feels like a book,

whereas *The Singing Butler* does not look or feel like a painting; it looks like a still from an 80s advert which someone has put through a 'watercolour' filter on a pirated version of Paintshop Pro.

In fact, this makes it sound more interesting – because more palimpsestic – than it truly is. If you are lucky enough not to have seen it, just imagine what a painter whose favourite film is *Perfume* might produce. In interviews he sounds like a leech, and reminds people that he has funded a bursary to allow a young person "who could not otherwise afford to attend university" to go the 'University of St Andrews, Scotland's oldest – and quite possibly worst – institute of higher education. There is a beach in St Andrews which looks a bit like the one in his paintings, on which his figures eat dinner or dance in the wind, aping the little people who inhabit architects' serving-suggestion sketches of regeneration schemes. The most famous incidence of his plagiarism, though, came to light two years ago, when someone noticed that his bodies were indistinguishable from those in *The Illustrator's Figure Reference Manual*. So don't ignore the problem, because it won't go away. Go down to Heffers and heckle him; ask him what his work means. Ask him the source of the strange illness in the culture of which his work is a garish symptom. Ask him what we should do to make him give up his 'art'.



## Great Works of Art in Cambridge #8: *Two Mugs* Ben Nicholson *Kettle's Yard*

There is a particular corner of Kettle's Yard I love: a rocking chair, nestling amongst an array of pot plants and a huge magnifying glass suspended from the ceiling. Next to these is a painting completed in 1944 by one of Britain's best twentieth-century artists, Ben Nicholson. Nicholson was a friend of the house's owner, Jim Ede, and taught Ede that everything had a meaning and an importance; that the traffic of Piccadilly was throbbing with the same rhythm of a ballet, the motorcars dancing along the road as slight women pirouette across a stage. This painting, one of the forty-four by Nicholson in Kettle's Yard, similarly sees the beauty in the mundane and the everyday. *Two Mugs* captures not just two pieces of ordinary kitchen china, but a way of seeing the world. The two mugs become abstracted, their interlocking curves and lines echoing the figures of lovers, hands and limbs entwined. The curved shape of a handle is obsessively repeated, spooning its predecessor, evoking the act of drinking a cup of coffee, putting down and then again automatically taking up the cup, sipping and feeling but not registering the

simple handle which becomes in this painting an integral aesthetic motif. Nicholson takes an ordinary object and startles us with its beauty: his gentle pencil and the bold blocks of colour make the shapes float, changing texture and hue as the light from the near window skates over them. He uses subtle, unconventional colours of mustard yellow and off-white, making the painting seem aged and loved, like an old newspaper cutting that has become bleached and frayed in the sunlight.

This small painting, tucked away in the labyrinth of Kettle's Yard, is not one that will leap out and physically strike you with its intensity at first glance. Indeed it could be easy to walk by on your way to the further rooms of the house, over worn oriental carpets and bare wooden floors. But, sitting in Ede's rocking chair, next to the blistered white paint of the window frame, looking out onto another world far removed from the one you are now in, beside the pot plants creeping over the shelves, the ivy winding itself in among stones, shells and, incongruously, an animal skull, you can sit and think, staring at this piece in silence, in sheer delight.

Emma Hogan



	film	theatre	music	other	going out
<p><b>pick of the week</b></p> <p><b>friday 7</b></p> <p><b>saturday 8</b></p> <p><b>sunday 9</b></p> <p><b>monday 10</b></p> <p><b>tuesday 11</b></p> <p><b>wednesday 12</b></p> <p><b>thursday 13</b></p>	<p><b>There Will be Blood</b> Arts Picturehouse, Friday 7th, 11.50, 15.00, 20.40</p>  <p>Proving to be a storm at the Oscars, Director Paul Thomas Anderson brings to the screen an epic tale of an oil tycoon's obsession with power and greed. Daniel-Day-Lewis's remarkable performance shows the downfalls of power and a murderous ambition.</p>	<p><b>The Cement Garden</b> Tues 6th - Sun 9th Mar, Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, 19.45</p> <p>FallOut Theatre's second offering is an adaptation of Ian McEwan's first novel. In the relentless summer heat, four abruptly orphaned children retreat into a shadowy, isolated world, and find their own strange and unsettling ways of fending for themselves. There are claims that the company will create a response to the work, finding the possibilities inherent in the literature that can be unlocked by the workings of the stage. Should be excellent.</p>	<p><b>Gary Numan</b> Mon 3rd, The Graduate, 19.30, £6.50</p> <p>Gary Numan has been termed the 'Godfather of Electronic' music. Whether or not you agree with this rather sweeping statement it is hard to deny his impact. Although his big hits 'Cars' and 'Are friends Electric?' appeared in the late 70s, he has been slogging away ever since. Given the recent penchant for 80s synths this might hit the mark. Alternatively it might be a little bit sad. Like watching your grandma dance.</p>	<p><b>Wolfson Howler</b> Mon 10th March, Wolfson College Bar, 20.00, £6/free for Wolfson students</p>  <p>More funny business. The Canadian Glenn Wool headlines. He has had a show on Channel 4, and is known for mixing the silly with the political. Support comes from four Cambridge comedians, and Ed Gamble.</p>	<p><b>Fee Fi Fo Fum</b> Wed 12 March, Soul Tree, 21.00-03.00, £5 advance/£7 on the door</p> <p>The Pins 'n' Needles crew, responsible for many a great night at Kamarbar this year, graduate to bigger things. They've got much-hyped electro band Metronomy and the post-ironic Man Like Me playing live sets. Support comes from Cambridge favourites like Castle Greyskull, Mr Duplo, I-Jambi, and Pick 'n' Mix. There will even be live visuals and VDJing. Advance tickets can be bought from the charmingly named <a href="http://www.smelltheblood.com">www.smelltheblood.com</a></p>
	<p><b>There Will be Blood</b> Arts Picturehouse, 11.50, 15.00, 20.40</p> <p><b>Vantage Point</b> Vue, 12.10, 14.20, 16.30, 18.40, 21.00, 23.10</p>	<p><b>Snippets: the 2008 Footlights Spring Revue</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45</p> <p><b>Table Manners</b> Pembroke New Cellars, 19.45</p> <p><b>The Physicists</b> Corpus Playroom, 21.30</p>	<p><b>Devilish Presley, Holywood Suicide and Compact Pussycat</b> Man on the Moon, 20.00, £5</p> <p>A collection of fine names. I would like a compact pussycat. I would keep it in my pocket.</p>	<p><b>Desert Island Discs</b> The Cafe Project, 22 Jesus Lane, 19.30, free</p> <p><b>Ian Shaw Duo</b> Kettle's Yard, 19.00, £12-£15</p>	<p><b>HorsePlay Records Showcase</b> De Luca, St Andrew's St, 23.00-02.00, free</p> <p>Cambridge techno/house label shows off some of its artists: Sam I Am, Anthony Reckitt, and Andy Hunter.</p>
	<p><b>Lightning Over Water</b> Arts Picturehouse, 16.15</p> <p><b>The Million Dollar Hotel</b> Old Labs, Newnham, 20.00</p> <p><b>The Conformist</b> Arts Picturehouse 16.00, 21.00</p>	<p><b>Dulcitus</b> ADC Theatre, 23.00</p> <p><b>Indivisible</b> Pembroke New Cellars, 22.00</p> <p><b>Endgame</b> Friends of Peterhouse Theatre, 19.30</p>	<p><b>Panic Cell</b> The Graduate, 19.30, £7.00</p> <p>The sort of music you listen to whilst slaughtering your parents and eating a rotting corpse of a cat.</p>	<p><b>Momentary Momentum: animated drawings</b> Fitzwilliam Museum, 10.00-17.00, free</p>	<p>Chill, Winston. Big times are around the corner.</p>
	<p><b>The Edge of Heaven</b> Arts Picturehouse, 13.30, 18.10</p> <p><b>The Man Without A Past</b> Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens', 20.00, free</p>	<p><b>Oliver</b> McCrum Theatre, Corpus Christi, 19.30</p> <p><b>The Cement Garden</b> Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, 19.45</p>	<p><b>The Grandmothers</b> The Junction, 19.00, £17.50</p> <p>The Grandmothers are not actual grandmothers. More's the pity.</p>	<p><b>New Music Morning</b> Kettle's Yard, 12.00-13.00, free</p> <p><b>An Evening in Italy</b> Newnham, 20.00-22.00, free</p> <p>The Raleigh Music Society perform Italian classics</p>	<p><b>Disc-o-la</b> Fez, 22.00-03.00, £3/£4</p> <p>A new night from Jono Cary, formerly of Fat Poppadaddys. Expect 80s classics alongside contemporary electro.</p>
	<p><b>Vantage Point</b> Vue, 12.10, 14.20, 16.30, 18.40, 21.00</p> <p><b>Four Minutes</b> Arts Picture House, 18.30</p>	<p><b>Oliver</b> McCrum Theatre, Corpus Christi, 19.30</p> <p><b>Anatol</b> Pembroke New Cellars, 20.00 (play entirely in German)</p>	<p><b>Swing Jazz</b> Man on the moon</p> <p>No further details given. Lessons in frottage perhaps?</p>	<p><b>Wolfson Howler</b> Wolfson College Bar, 20.00, £6/free for Wolfson students</p> <p>See pick of the week</p>	<p><b>Fat Poppadaddys</b> Fez, 22.00-03.30, £3 before 11, £4 after</p>
	<p><b>Wings of Desire</b> Arts Picturehouse, 15.45</p> <p><b>The Other Boleyn Girl</b> Vue, 12.40, 15.20, 18.00, 20.45</p> <p><b>Rambo</b> Vue, 21.30</p>	<p><b>Into the Woods</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45</p> <p><b>Oklahoma!</b> Mumford Theatre, 19.35</p> <p><b>The Glass Menagerie</b> Corpus Playroom, 19.00</p>	<p><b>Gary Numan</b> The Junction, 19.30, £19</p> <p>See pick of the week.</p>	<p><b>David Levering Lewis</b> Master's Lodge, Clare College, 17.00</p> <p>A professor at NYU, he will discuss his new book, God's Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570-1215.</p>	<p><b>Kinki</b> Ballare, 22.00-03.00, £3</p>
	<p><b>Semi-Pro</b> Vue, 21.40</p> <p><b>There Will Be Blood</b> Arts Picturehouse, 15.00, 20.40</p> <p><b>Wings of Desire</b> Arts Picture House, 21.00</p>	<p><b>The Harry Potter Prize Winner: Dad</b> ADC Theatre, 23.00</p> <p><b>Into the Woods</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45</p> <p><b>The Glass Menagerie</b> Corpus Playroom, 19.00</p>	<p><b>Endellion String Quartet</b> West Road Concert Hall, 19:30, £19.00</p> <p>Four people playing stringed instruments unless I am very much mistaken.</p>	<p><b>Queens' Contemporary Dance Society Annual Dance Show, Ballet through to Breakdancing</b> Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens', 20.00, £3</p> <p>Also on Tuesday 11th</p>	<p><b>Fee Fi Fo Fum</b> Soul Tree, 21.00-03.00, £7/£5 advance</p> <p>See pick of the week</p>
<p><b>The Other Boleyn Girl</b> Arts Picturehouse, 13.00, 15.30, 18.00, 20.30</p> <p><b>Bank Job</b> Vue, 13.00, 15.50, 18.30, 21.20</p>	<p><b>The Harry Potter Prize Winner: Dad</b> ADC Theatre, 23.00</p> <p><b>David &amp; Goliath</b> Queens' College Chapel, 20.00</p>	<p><b>Supergrass</b> The Junction, 19.00, £16.50</p> <p>Remember when these guys were good? Those were the days.</p>	<p><b>This House believes the best state is that which governs least</b> Cambridge Union, 19.30-21.30, members</p>	<p><b>The Voodoo Rave</b> Kamarbar, 22.00-04.00, £3</p> <p>Quality electronic music from Microwave, Sample &amp; MC Mumbly, and many of Cambridge's best student DJs.</p>	

# More...

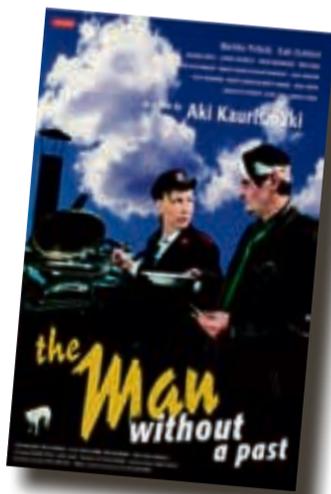
## Other

### Desert Island Discs

Thur 6th March

22 Jesus Lane  
19:30

Bring a song/piece of music you like, some words about why it's special to you, to share with whoever turns up.



## Film

### The Man Without a Past

Sunday 9th March

Fitzpat Hall 8:00

A film by Aki Kaurismaki. Its free but we couldn't fit it in the 'Free Stuff' box. Do not use that as an excuse not to go.



## Comedy

### Jesterlarf - March

Fri 7th March

The Junction,  
20:00

Daniel Kitson exists. Unfortunately for aspiring comedians, this sets the benchmark so high that most performers seem utterly talentless. I suspect this night will confirm my theory. But I may be wrong.

## Free Stuff

### The Million Dollar Hotel

Free Film, Sat 8th  
Newnham Old Labs  
8pm

**Kettle's Yard New Music Morning**  
Free Music, Sun 9th,  
Kettles Yard 12pm

**Songs In The Dark**  
Clown's, Sun 9th,  
20.00



# Lax blues storm the Oxford castle

» Too easy as Varsity match win maintains unbeaten competitive record

<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	<b>8</b>

**HENRY STANNARD**  
Sports Editor

A Varsity match is, as is so often and so obviously stated by most Blues sportsmen, a one-off fixture, where form means absolutely nothing. The rugby boys had been worse than the George Michael Invitational XV at times over their season, but nobody will ever remember because they made a collective decision to play properly at Twickenham in December, when the up to that point incredibly successful Oxford played as though they were being managed by Kevin Keegan and Mr. Magoo. Contrariwise, the undefeated Blues Lacrosse team have had their most successful season in living memory (by which I mean I can't be bothered to research anything beyond the last four years), but still went into their Varsity match with everything to lose against an Oxford side who have made a habit of snatching it at the last.

To win 8-4, therefore, showed an enormous amount of bottle, especially considering the potentially Take That-esque Oxford comeback from 6-1 down in the second half. For a while it looked as though the Dark Blues had found their Gary Barlow in vice-captain Olivia Valner, who, whilst she may have looked as docile as a lamb, played like a Viking berserker, as Cambridge seemed to lack an outlet whenever they did recover possession. With the score at 7-4, however, the Light Blue defence,



Another Oxford attack mauled

weathered the storm, out-muscling and out-thinking the Oxford attackers in a rearguard action led by bulwark Gen Gotla and inspired by several instinctive saves by Alex Carnegie-Brown. When Emily Knight picked up a loose ball on the edge of the fan with five minutes to go and drove forward before thrashing a humdinger of a shot past the statuesque Oxford keeper, the home side and their supporters knew the game was as good as over. It was this defiance in the face of overbearing pressure that gave Cambridge the win, rather than the first half fireworks.

And fireworks there were. Oxford, having painful memories of being put to the sword by Kate Morland earlier in the season, set out to stop the

## Oxford were blunt as a spoon if ever they made it into the final third

mercurial attacker at all costs, a tactic that they assumed would, by corollary, all but sabotage Cambridge's

chances of scoring. How wrong they were. Even Sitting Bull would have had trouble tracking Morland's movements, and she was instrumental in setting up the first goal with a laser-beam pass converted by German international Adele Fauvet before scoring the second herself, eluding her marker to pick up a loose ball on the edge of the fan before immediately lashing it home.

With the score at 2-1 Cambridge brought out their A-game and the Dark Blues were overrun by a sea of green, as they seemed incapable of putting together two passes and

their attack as blunt as a spoon if ever they did make it into the final third. Georgie Hurt scored twice from two sustained periods of dominance. A tremendous counter-attack was converted by a long-shot from Josie Baum and Varsity woman-of-the-match Rosalind Lloyd, whose interceptions and pin-point passing in the midfield had been a regular starting-point for the Cambridge attackers, got one of her own with a close range slam-dunk so powerful that it would probably have passed straight through keeper Sobczyk's outstretched paw had she been quicker to the react. With the score at 6-1 at half time, Cambridge were cruising and held off the second half comeback to win convincingly.

Earlier in the day, the seconds had scored eight unanswered goals against a shambolic Oxford Swifts side who looked like they had only just met. Both men's teams were out-Americanized by their obnoxious counterparts, and a titanic struggle in the mixed led to a last-gasp Oxford victory by a single goal. Throughout the day the Oxford teams sported what can only be described as dark blue war paint, presumably so that they would scare their opponents into submission, but merely succeeded in making them resemble fifteen year old goth girls with a predilection for eye make-up and genital piercing. On Wednesday, the Blues compounded Oxford's despair, thrashing them 12-4 in the BUSA cup semi-final to reach their first ever final against Birmingham next Thursday. Varsity wishes them luck with bringing home a trophy that will hopefully get the university out of its own arse and give them enough money to train on a proper pitch.

# Rugby ladies come back from dead

<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b> TRIES: BRADLEY, POPHAM PENALTY: REITMAIER	<b>13</b>

**JAMIE PTASZYNSKI**  
Sports Reporter

It is rare that a game of sports comes so close to the wire but for it also to contain so many points of intrigue is almost incredible. The occasion itself was enough to draw a sizeable crowd, with a good number of travelling fans, but the standard of rugby and the thrilling climax were deserving

## Passing improved, running lines straightened and ball was won at the breakdown

of still more attention.

Arriving fairly early to get a feel for the weather and make some pre-judgements based on the warm-up routines, I was confronted with a number of aggrieved families discussing some serious ill doing. Apparently the Cambridge Tigers had stolen the seconds' match by a three point margin after watching Oxford dominate all afternoon. It didn't take long for me to work out that these were the families of Oxford sportswomen, and that they were already angry.

With this vociferous support behind them, Oxford had the better of the first half and jogged in at the break with a 12-0 lead. Although Cambridge had looked more alert in the warm-up, it was the Dark Blues who came out fir-

by every pass. Meanwhile, Oxford's danger players were starting to make their mark. Line-breaks from captain Granger-Clemson and some lovely wide play between Abdulai and Blakeborough caused early con-

meanwhile, had little response. Big tackles from the second rows twice saved them from the charging number eight, Jess Wynter-Bee, who was eventually named player of the match. Meanwhile Captain Britton's

they mustered another good attack but Oxford turned it over with some ferocious defending directly under their own posts. It did not look like Cambridge's day.

When full back Kate Robson was carried off after putting in two huge try-saving tackles, things looked even bleaker. This, however, seemed to be the catalyst that finally brought about a reaction. Passing improved, running lines straightened more ball was won at the breakdown and following a bursting run and precise offload from the ever more influential Laura Britton, Joanna Bradley touched down to bring Cambridge to within one score of their nemeses.

With little time left on the clock, they needed inspiration, fast, and they found it in every squad member. With the forwards supporting well, the backs kept coming and, suddenly, found themselves with a penalty on only five metres. It was taken quickly and Popham drove over for the try. The Cambridge support, which had grown considerably in volume over the previous ten minutes, erupted.

The game achieved parity with some of the most exciting sports matches I have ever watched as the brave Oxford wing, Gallagher, stepped forward to take a last-second penalty from the twenty-two. As the ball glided in slow motion past the posts, the final whistle brought tears or cheers to the faces of the thirty bruised sportswomen left on the pitch. Jess Wynter-Bee, barely able to speak through a tidal wave of tiredness and emotion, could only say "gutted, truly gutted," on how she felt. I did not need to ask the Cambridge side.



Cambridge surge forward

ing. They were organised and supportive in the forwards, who drove their lacklustre opponents off the ball over and over again. Cambridge, losing too much possession at the breakdown, appeared desperate and were penalised frequently at the breakdown.

Out in the line the story was very similar; Cambridge were making the mistakes. Their well-trained backs spent the first half wondering why the ball was a funny shape, being tricked by every kick and flummoxed

cern and after a promising burst from the Cambridge number twelve came to nothing, Oxford span the ball out wide where Abdulai charged past the over-committed Cambridge line before switching back inside to Blakeborough to score. The conversion made it through the posts, skidding off the bar on the way.

They did not ease off. They held their territory and continued to press the Cambridge defence, probing and driving at the gaps. Cambridge,

kicking was too often relied upon to escape from tight spots. When Abdulai jogged over for the second try, heads started to drop.

Suddenly, though, they were handed a lifeline: Oxford, already down to fourteen for one yellow card, had their hooker sin-binned for persistently offending in the ruck. But the ladies in light blue, despite gaining some good ground, could only muster three points before the numbers were evened again. Shortly afterwards

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## Gamblers Unanimous

ED PEACE &  
NIALL RAFFERTY



As hardened football followers, very little surprises us these days. We hardly twitched when Birmingham stuffed Spurs on Saturday or Arsenal beat Milan in mid-week. But since when did Derby learn to show resilience at the back? We're still struggling to come terms with this rare phenomenon, which capped off a truly miserable week. Fortunately, we've got some tasty Easter surprises lined up that should cap off a profitable term.

Whether you're into the horses or not, you won't be able to escape the hype surrounding next Friday's Cheltenham Gold Cup. The race is the highlight of the winter racing calendar, and this year's contest puts two of the sports greatest talents against each other. Kauto Star and Denman have destroyed everything put in front of them this season, so it's just a case of deciding which one to back on Friday. Though Denman probably represents better value, it should pay to side with Kauto Star, who won this race last year and still looks to be improving.

Readers may be concerned to learn that there will be no column in the run up to the Grand National in April. There's no need to panic, however, as we're prepared to stick our neck out and tip up Cloudy Lane to land the spoils at 7-1.

In the Premier League this weekend, smart money is on Man City to pick up a point at Reading. The Royals were 12-1 to go down at the start of the season, and this has shortened to 5-2, showing the type of season they've had. Meanwhile, despite a flying start to the season and completing the double over arch-rivals Man United, City have struggled for form as of late. Reading away could be the ideal tie to re-ignite their season, but the loss of key defender Micah Richards and their poor away record suggests that City and Reading will share the spoils.

In our final football bet this term, we'll be looking ahead to the UEFA Cup final. Although Spurs have struggled in the Premier League this season, the arrival of Ramos has propelled them to new heights. We tipped Tottenham to triumph over Chelsea in the League Cup, and their poor performance against Birmingham on Saturday is a sign that they aren't taking the League particularly seriously. Spurs face a tricky tie with PSV in the last 16, but those who doubt their consistency will do well to remember that they have already proved they have what it takes to go all the way and win a cup. Ramos has already won the UEFA Cup twice with Sevilla and who's to say he can't transform Spurs into real contenders for European glory.

**THE BANKER** Evens  
KAUTO STAR TO WIN  
CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP £4

**PREDICTION** 11-5  
READING TO DRAW WITH MAN  
CITY £3

**THE LONG SHOT** 6-1  
TOTTENHAM TO WIN UEFA  
CUP £2

**GRAND NATIONAL** 13-2  
CLOUDY LANE £1.5 e/w

**RUNNING TOTAL: £47.38**

# The Big Boat Race

>> From tight finishes to Bertie Wooster stealing Policemen's places along the river to enjoy it from...

### THE DOVE

PINT: £2.85

VIEW: ★★



Offers a commanding view of the river if you're lucky enough to get a place on the balcony. Otherwise, the interior is a bit cramped and the tiny bar ain't going to be quick serving. Don't be put off, but get there early. Like, really early. Probably like, today.

### THE RUTLAND ARMS

PINT: £2.80

VIEW: ★



Re-opening tomorrow after a £750k refurbishment, this spacious joint will be "probably the best pub on the river" according to landlord Peter. View obscured by the people standing on the street, but a good one to dive into once the boats have gone by.

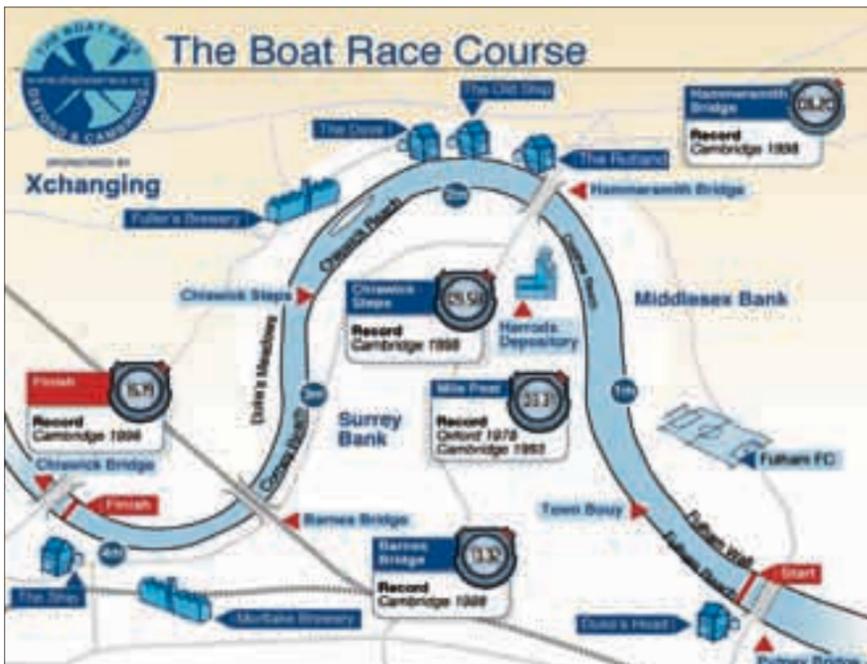
### THE LARRICK

PINT: £2.90

VIEW: -



Huge pub next to the Putney bridge. No view of the river, but always popular and will be packed. BBQ, offer on Jaegermeister and two live bands. The barman gave us free drinks so it must be a good place, although the Aussies may be a problem.



### THE OLD SHIP

PINT: £2.80

VIEW: ★★★



Normally swanky restaurant-bar is clearing out tables, putting up a marquee, DJ included, and chucking in a BBQ. Great views all around the Hammersmith bridge bend and slightly set apart from the other pubs, in the area this is our place to be on the day.

### THE DUKE'S HEAD

PINT: £3.50

VIEW: ★★



Large pub with commanding view of the start line. In readiness for their "biggest event of the year" they've got a Corona bar and BBQ, as well as a live band and big screens to watch the rest of race after you've seen the first 20 seconds. They've cleared out the tables, but it'll be rammed come race time. Get there by one to ensure space.

### THE SHIP

PINT: £2.90

VIEW: ★★



The only establishment with a decent view of the finish line, the Old Ship nestles alongside the monstrous Budweiser brewery on the Surrey bank. Grab your pint and stand on the wall outside to see the crews race past.

# and Pub Preview

helmets, Boat Race Day is always a great event. *Varsity* gives you the best

## SPENCER GRIFFIN-HUNSBERGER AND CHUMS PREVIEW THE BIG RACE



**SPENCER GRIFFIN-HUNSBERGER**  
The Pepys of the River

For the past six months I have had the pleasure of writing this article. Even in the depths of winter when training is at its most bleak and uninspiring, I have managed to find something to write about. Strangely, now, with the race looming in the immediate future and fixtures presenting themselves on a near weekly basis, I lack for the first time motivation for the piece. This could be a reflection of the whirlwind week we have just completed - travelling back and forth to London twice while simultaneously trying to tie up all loose ends for the academic term - and suppose it is actually the result of having far too much on my mind than nothing at all.

**"I think it would be best to tackle this dilemma in a manner analogous to any we have come across as a team"**

So in response I think it would be best to tackle this dilemma in a manner analogous to any we have come across throughout the year: as a team. I am sure you have heard my opinions plenty for one year, and will thus turn the floor - or rather page - over to my teammates so that in this last opportunity they may offer any thoughts, views or worries relating to our final buildup.

I have enjoyed seeing what four guys on the team chose to write about given the opportunity, and I hope you do to. I would like to finish by thanking the editors and staff of the *Varsity* for supporting this column all year; the experience has been great and I hope the result in some way embodies my desire to prove that the members of this squad do, contrary to public opinion, actually take advantage of some of the myriad experiences Cambridge has to offer.



**RUSS GLENN**

DoB: 3/2/82 WEIGHT: 55KG  
HEIGHT: 1.67M COLLEGE: DARWIN

30 metres. Four strokes on the erg, five seconds on the water, .004% of the Thames Tideway course; 30 meters is roughly one-half length of open water in the boat race. That distance means control, domination, and near certain victory. The race as a whole is much, much longer of course - 'four-and-a-quarter miles,' or about 17 minutes of flat-stick racing on a good day - but if one crew can achieve thirty meters of margin over the other, the distance almost certainly no longer matters.

Rowing, and the boat race in particular, is commonly presented as a grueling test of physical and mental endurance. The television

broadcast shows this, marketing the race with photos proclaiming 'Death Row' and odd statistics about how it is equivalent to "lifting a sack of potatoes over your head 660 times." While the closest thing that most of the athletes get to lifting a sack of potatoes is the occasional cheese and chips after a night out, it is true that the Boat Race is almost unparalleled in the world of rowing for being such an intense and long duel race. The squad trains 37 hours a week for seven months for just that reason - to provide ourselves with the physical base necessary to attack the four-and-a-quarter miles to a high physical and technical level.



**JOHN HEDER**

DoB: 16/11/71 WEIGHT: 98KG  
HEIGHT: 1.91M COLLEGE: ST EDMUND'S

On Wednesday March 5th the crews were announced and the private selection process of the past five months became public knowledge. Now Oxford knows our crew and we know theirs and the pundits begin the imprecise science of predicting the winner of the race. Like all elite level athletics, simply making the team is so arduous that the final decision comes as a relief for both those selected and those not. We can now focus our full attention on the ultimate reason for being here, crossing the line on March 29th as far ahead of Oxford as possible.

The Blue Boat can now gel as an unassailable unit and ingrain a rhythm and pattern that will be

their sword and armor as they enter the 4 ¼ mile battle with dark blue enemy. Goldie will now fill their role as mock-adversary to the Blue Boat, constantly testing them and goading them to be harder, faster and stronger each row. Individual triumph and disappointment are subsumed by the ultimate goal of team victory. In a way that sentiment sums up what rowing is all about, the sum of the parts is invariably greater than the individuals themselves.

This year our crew may not have the Olympians, the physical monsters, or the experience of the past; but we do have unassailable trust and belief in each other, and a commitment to the ethic of excellence.



**REBECCA DOWBIGGIN**

DoB: 11/04/83 WEIGHT: 50KG  
HEIGHT: 1.50M COLLEGE: EMMANUEL

On race day the coxswain is crucial. Most importantly, I steer the boat - and on the Tideway, that's no easy task. The stream is very fast and very narrow, so I have to ensure that we are in that stream as much as possible throughout the race, and that Oxford is out of it. At the same time, I talk to the crew about various things. I tell them where we are in the race (how many minutes have elapsed, or how much distance) and where we are in relation to Oxford. I also have to think about how we're rowing: are we in a good rhythm? Are we efficient? What do we need to change to row better? When I've made a decision about that, I com-

municate it clearly and succinctly to the crew. And finally, I am the tactician of the boat. I decide when we need to move and how we're going to do it.

You think all that sounds simple? Add in the fact that there are 250,000 people on the bank shouting - not to mention millions of people watching on TV - an umpire behind you yelling about your steering, and the pressure of knowing that you have all trained for six months for this one race, and that one false movement of the rudder, or one bad call, could cost you victory. Sometimes I wish that all I had to do was put my blade in the water and pull...



**TOM EDWARDS**

DoB: 26/05/77 WEIGHT: 87KG  
HEIGHT: 1.91M COLLEGE: CAIUS

On race day the coxswain is next to useless. Least importantly, I steer the boat (often in circles) - and on the Tideway, that's a piece of piss. The stream is very fast and very narrow, so I have to ensure that we are run aground as much as possible throughout the race. At the same time, I talk to the crew about various personal issues. I tell them where I buy shoes, how many minutes have elapsed on my menstrual clock, or how much distance I'm prepared to go (ie first base, second base or all the way) and where we are in relation to Oxford. I also have to think about how we're rowing: does my bum look big in this? What do we need to change about my body to look better? When I've made a decision about that, I communicate

it clearly and succinctly to the crew. And finally, I am the dead weight of the boat. I decide when we need to move and how we're going to do it (long and slow, or fast and furious).

You think all that sounds simple? You're right. Add in the fact that there are 250,000 hot men on the bank shouting my name - not to mention millions of eligible bachelors watching me on TV - an umpire behind me yelling my name, and the pressure of knowing that I have done my hair for six months for this one race, and that one false movement of the rudder, or one bad call, could ruin the perfect photo. Sometimes I wish that all I had to do was put my blade in the water and pull (my 2k erg personal best is 9 minutes 30 seconds after all).



### THE BOAT RACE FOR DUMMIES: A MUGGINS' GUIDE TO THE TIDEWAY

If you don't care that much about rowing, and heaven knows there are enough of you, there is still no excuse to miss the Boat Race. South West London, usually populated by intonationally-challenged moronic antipodean layabouts and their media-prick hangers-on who can't afford to live in an upmarket SW postcode drinking watered down foreign lager in gastropubs becomes, for one day a year, the best place to be in Britain. With rowing chat still not tolerated despite the day's main event, Boat Race day is really an almighty piss up punctuated with some opportunities to have a good shout.

Obviously, the usual away-day rules apply. Tinnies and hip-flasks on the way are an essential part of the race-day experience, as is lumping a tenner on Cambridge at the bookie's. With about a quarter of a million people flooding the banks, it will be beneficial to get there early, although the British gift of sharp elbows will mean that it is quite easy to get to the front of the crowd if you arrive late.

This year especially, we should

remember the purpose of the day for the rowers. For once in rowing it is not the winning that counts, but the taking apart of an Oxford boat filled with the biggest, flappest vaginas in the history of the Boat Race. Led by their midget President, who has of late acquired the questionable habit of mouthing off to the press that the Cambridge boat don't have to do any work - an absurd suggestion considering that 6 of their's were

considered to thick to come here, they are quite frankly some of the most despicable people in sport. When not spit-roasting some poor bedder they spend their time digging up the bodies in the hope that their rowing powers of dead former blues will be transferred to them by eating their withered cores. With the dark blues having sworn mass hara-kiri should they lose, *Varsity* backs our boys to stick the oar in come the 29th.



# SPORT



**Rowing**  
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**Boat Race**  
**Preview**

## Hockey honours shared

» Men run out deserved winners but women just pipped to the post

<b>MEN'S:</b>	<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WOMEN'S:</b>	<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>OXFORD</b>	<b>2</b>

BECCA LANGTON  
Sports Reporter

In the 109th Varsity hockey match the Cambridge Blue teams travelled to London to compete in the highlight of their sporting season and take on dark blue Oxford. Watched by hundreds of spectators the hockey at Southgate pitches reached a new level with an exhilarating exhibition of all that is best in the game, amazing pace, logic-defying flair and a nail biting score line which kept the spectators guessing until the final whistle.

The men's Blues were first to take to the pitch and were impressive from the start. Although the opening minutes were characterised by nervous play as both sides tried to take measure of their opponents, it was ultimately Cambridge who were able to assert their authority; Simon Ashton left the Oxford defence for dust with silky skills in and around the circle and sending a lightening strike at the goal was thwarted only by a lucky pick off the line. In reply Oxford were shoddy on the first touch, passes slipped off the sidelines and there was little that could threaten the strong defensive partnership of David Saunders and Jez Hansell.

It was the light blues who inevitably capitalised on their opportunities and, in the twelfth minute, Nick McLaren was the one to convert Ashton's pulled back pass from the back line struck the keeper and clipped the ground, the midfielder definitive in his strike, the team ecstatic in taking the lead. Cambridge, with confidence growing, were happy to send their opponents chasing long balls around the defence and through the midfield, teasing the dark blues with almost total possession and continued pressure on the opposition goal.

The second half started with Cambridge continuing to press their opposition, Man of the Match Dave Saunders surged through the midfield to play nifty balls into the opposition corners and it seemed only a matter of waiting until Cambridge were able to consolidate on



their lead. Unexpectedly, however, it was Oxford who took the next goal, a sacrificial foul by James Goldsmith sent him to the sin bin and the resulting penalty corner gave Oxford Captain David Cresswell the chance to level the score

**With Cambridge back on top it was only a matter of time until victory**

with a drag flick sent flying into the top left hand corner of the goal.

But Cambridge were not to be defeated and Christopher Kurwie, tacti-

cally taking the ball off the back line and onto a defender's foot won a light blue penalty corner. Slipped left to Jez Hansell, the defender scored a stunner in his last ever Varsity Match and demonstrated resoundingly how much the team will miss his presence in games to come. With Cambridge back on top it was only a matter of time until victory could be claimed and this was made all the sweeter with a stroke awarded ten minutes from time. Captain Stuart Penman converted from the penalty spot, sending a confused keeper the wrong way and the ball into the net. Cambridge were majestic and deserving in victory, retaining the Varsity cup and demonstrating superiority in every aspect of the game.

Following this performance the

pressure was on for the women, and, having been resoundingly beaten in the previous week, the girls were determined to demonstrate their capability of competing with the strong Oxford side. Both teams came out strong, with Cambridge making a positive start, Alexandra Workman left Oxford frustrated at the top of the circle and Cambridge were unfortunate to go down 1-0 in the first half when a great save by keeper Lucy Stapleton was followed by a quick pick at the post, Captain Beth Wild placing Oxford firmly on the score board. Oxford had asked questions of the Cambridge defence but the light blues bounced back, determined to make their mark on the game. Lisa Noble, terrific in midfield sent a perfectly placed pass to Hall who, weav-

ing between a desperate dark blue defence, placed a neatly lifted shot past the keeper from an impossible angle levelling the scores at half time.

The second half continued to see great Cambridge possession, Rosie Evans was resilient at every turn, impressive in grit and resolve, and with the midfield controlling the pace and play Oxford were forced to play a long game. It was against the tide that the dark blue midfielder Alice Cook touched in a loose ball at the far post to put Oxford back into the lead and ultimately win them the game. Cambridge were unfortunate not to have stolen the game early on, but were commendable in their endeavour and were unquestionably equal to Oxford in almost every area of the game.

SUAD presents... **Electro - Synth Pop - 80s - Disco - Dance**

# Disc-o-la

**Sunday March 9th, Fez Club, 10pm - 3am.**

Students/NUS Card Holders - £3 before 11pm / £4 after. Others - £4 before 11pm / £5 after  
E-mail [guestlist@disc-o-la.com](mailto:guestlist@disc-o-la.com) for queue jump and discounted entry. £2.50 entry each for groups over 20.