

~ DAILY ~ VARSITY

TUESDAY

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honorary degree**



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**Last night's Balls
reviewed inside!**



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Pop rocks

Shoe thrower cleared by court

Beth Staton

A student protester who threw his shoe at Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has been cleared of any charge amongst claims of political interference.

Martin Jahnke, a postgraduate student at Darwin, was found not guilty of a public order offence on the grounds of lack of evidence. Prosecutor Caroline Allison claimed his behaviour caused the speaker and audience "harassment, alarm and distress" and that the act of throwing the shoe was one of aggression beyond lawful and legitimate protest.

Tom Wainwright, Jahnke's lawyer, claimed that the Chinese government had pressured authorities to send the case to court and that witnesses were encouraged to say the event had caused them distress. But Judge Ken Sheraton threw out the application. "I am looking at whether there was any political influence on the criminal prosecution", he said.

The incident took place as Mr Jiabao delivered the Rede lecture, titled 'See China in the Light of her Development', in February. Towards the end of the speech, the pathology student stood up and blew a whistle, accusing the University of "prostituting" itself by allowing a "dictator" to speak. He threw the shoe as University authorities attempted to remove him from the lecture theatre.

Jahnke told the court that he had no malicious intention and that the protest was symbolic, inspired by Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zaidi, who threw a shoe at George Bush during a press conference last December. The protest was in objection towards human rights abuses in China and an expression of annoyance toward University authorities for giving Mr Jiabao a platform.

"My aim was to show solidarity with

the Chinese people not represented", Jahnke told the court, arguing that the act of throwing a shoe had become a "symbol of defiance" against violent regimes and authorities. He said he felt the gesture of placing the shoe onstage would be "universally understood", pointing out that he could have easily taken heavier footwear had he wanted to cause harm.

William Brown, the master of Darwin, has said he is pleased at the outcome, expressing the College's respect for Jahnke's "freedom of expression" and stressing they are "happy he can continue in his studies".

After the event Vice-Chancellor Alison Richard expressed regret at Jahnke's failure "to show the level of respect that is customary for a guest at Cambridge".

The Chinese Embassy originally condemned Jahnke's actions as "despicable". But after a letter of apology from Richard and Jahnke himself they adopted a more conciliatory position. "It is hoped that the University will give the student an opportunity to continue his studies... and that this student will see his mistake and seek to understand a real and developing China", said Wen Jiabao.

Hundreds of protestors had gathered at the West Road site during Mr Jiabao's speech, which had received over 2000 ticket applications. March and April last year saw the largest protests in Tibet in over 50 years. According to Free Tibet, around 120 unarmed demonstrators were killed and a further 6,000 detained. The charges have not been acknowledged by the Chinese Government.

James Wong, President of Hong Kong and China Affairs Society, issued a statement saying "we believe the trial had been conducted fairly and properly and we respect the court's ruling."



Trinity May Ball » p5

Overcrowding at Cambridge nightclubs as exams draw to a close

Helen Mackreath

Fresh concerns have been raised over Cambridge nightclubs Ballare and Fez experiencing overcrowding.

According to the Facebook profile of Simon Burdus, managing director of Big Fish Ents, Ballare hosted 1600 people at its Jelly Baby night last Tuesday, as stu-

dents celebrated the end of exams. One clubber compared the atmosphere in the nightclub to the Hillsborough disaster. "I genuinely feared a stampede," one said.

A spokesman for Ballare strongly refuted any claim of overcrowding on the night, stating that "at no point can you physically put that number of people in the club". He confirmed that Ballare has

an official capacity of 748 and that there is a system in place to count the number of people in the club at one time.

Burdus later claimed, "We sold 600 tickets in advance for the night. After 11pm, if people didn't have tickets, we didn't let them queue". In response to the report that the club was packed with over double the maximum capacity, he said,

"People came for a couple of hours then left".

Meanwhile, Fez also experienced overcrowding this Suicide Sunday amidst reports that Wyverns' Garden Party 'gold' tickets, which included free entry to Fez, had been oversold. But Andy Johnson, managing director of Fez, maintained that they "had it managed quite beauti-

fully inside," whilst working closely with the promoters to ensure correct management of numbers.

Emma Cousins, of the Cambridge Fire Service, confirmed that they had also investigated reports of overcrowding at The Place over the Bank Holiday weekend; they were found to be operating within a safe capacity.

Got a good picture? Email it to mayweek@varsity.co.uk



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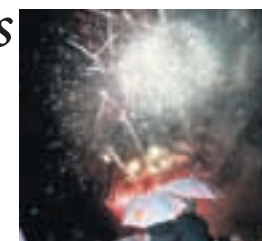


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How do you like your gossip sir? Red hot? Excellent.

Ball Reviews

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All of last night's Balls are reviewed on these pages. We haven't had any sleep!



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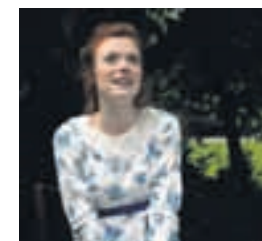


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Review of *Sense and Sensibility* hot off the press.



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Check out this exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum exploring the relationship between Darwinism and Art.

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May Week Game
What if it was all just a game?



MICHAEL DERRINGER

In Brief

Second Swine Flu case confirmed

A second student has been confirmed as suffering from Swine Flu.

The news comes several days after a male undergraduate from Caius was diagnosed with the virus. The Health Protection Agency said the student in the new case was a "close contact" of the Caian, and that both are being held in quarantine under constant medical supervision.

The first European to die from the H1N1 virus, a 38-year-old mother from Glasgow, passed away on Sunday. Officials, however, stressed that, for the majority of sufferers, symptoms were relatively mild.

The University have advised staff and students to remain vigilant and contact their GP and porter's lodge if they develop flu-like symptoms.

Monty the Python

Last Thursday, police and animal welfare officers began a search as five-foot, royal python named Monty was reported missing. The reptile belongs to a carpenter at Christ's College and escaped for the first time in 13 years just after shedding his skin. This act leaves pythons in need of energy and thus a substantial meal. Warnings went out that Monty would be seeking warmth as British weather is too chilly, slowing down its metabolism; it was expected to have sought refuge in a car or building. The owner assured officers that the snake is docile and has a small appetite. Alarm subsided early on Friday morning when the python was discovered curled up on a road in central Cambridge. The owner was ecstatic to find Monty alive and well.

Society Status

At a Members' Business Meeting yesterday afternoon, the Cambridge Union Society decided to change from being an unincorporated to an incorporated association. This followed the realization that its existence as it now stands leaves each individual member liable if legal actions are brought against the society. Attempts are being made to make this change as quickly and efficiently as possible, without the loss of the Union's valuable status as a charity. The Oxford Union notably does not have this status, although it too is currently in the process of trying to change it.

Honoris causa

Bill and Melinda Gates were among ten eminent individuals to receive honorary Doctorates from the University on Friday June 12th. Recipients of the honorary degrees were greeted by the University Chancellor, HRH Prince Philip, at the 800th Anniversary Honorary Degree Congregation, Senate House.

California lab fire leaves former student dead

Sarah Martin

A former Cambridge exchange student has died in California after a chemical lab accident.

Sheharbano 'Sheri' Sangji, 23, died on January 16th from the effects of chemical burns suffered in a lab fire eighteen days earlier.

The incident occurred in a lab at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), when the t-butyl lithium Sangji was transferring spilt, causing Sangji's clothes to catch fire.

UCLA has been fined \$31,000 for 3 "serious" violations of workplace safety, according to the Californian division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Sangji was born and raised in Pakistan, and was an undergraduate student at Pomona College in California. She studied at Jesus College for Lent and Easter terms in 2007.

Sangji participated fully in student life at Jesus, where she was a standout player on the College women's football team.

Her friends and relatives are launching a campaign for justice. Her sister Naveen has criticised the OSHA's report, saying it "sheds very little light on the incident." A public petition asks for the case to be brought in front of the District Attorney's office, with a view to the release of details relevant to Sheri's death.

Several suggestions for improving

lab safety had been put forward by an internal UCLA investigation just two months before the accident. These included the implementation of flame-retardant lab coats - the likes of which could have saved Sheri's life.

The Principal Investigator in the case has said that he "deeply mourns the death of our friend", but that he "underestimated her understanding of the care necessary" in dealing with dangerous chemicals.

Harry J. Elston, editor of the *Journal of Chemical Health and Safety*, has said that Sangji's death is a "harbinger of things to come" and reflects general poor safety standards in academic laboratories.



University forced to relinquish property

Helen Mackreath

The University of Cambridge has been forced to give up some of its property for the first time since the 13th Century.

The University has been beaten by a group of determined pensioners in a David-and-Goliath case resulting in the University being forced to give up £15 million worth of flats.

The pensioners exploited a legal loophole during a three-year legal battle to ob-

tain the full ownership rights of flats which they had previously been leasing from the university. Each paid £10,000 to obtain the original freehold on their apartments, which are now worth between £350,000 and £700,000 on the open market.

The 41 tenants began their legal battle with the University in 2006, after fears were sparked that the flats' market value would decrease as their 100-year leases expired. They employed a legal move of 'collective enfranchisement' which allows freehold rights to be brought from the owner if a block of flats contains at

least two thirds of individual leaseholders.

The flats are located in one of the most desirable locations in Cambridge, minutes away from the Botanical Gardens. Set in five blocks, they have communal tennis courts and a landscaped garden.

Peter Hodgson, 83, who paid £178,000 for a 95-year lease to his three-bed apartment 18 years ago, made it clear that many of the residents were motivated by a desire to have an inheritance for their children and grandchildren. "We glared at the University over the barricades", said 70 year old Peter Tingley.

This is believed to be the first instance in the University's 800-year history when it has been forced to release property. It controls a substantial amount of land spread across the United Kingdom.

Alison Barr, who represented the pensioners, said the case was the most complicated she had ever managed. She stressed that the University was "understandably not enthusiastic" about giving up the land.

"While most people plan for the next ten years, the institution plans in a time frame of hundreds of years," she said.



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on presentation of this voucher
and proof of student status

Cambridge Spies



Oxford in Cambridge

How the Other Half Live

Descending on our territory on Suicide Sunday, a group of ruggers lads from that other place proceeded to make their presence known to the disapproval of a number of watering hole proprietors. Given the ultimatum of having to pull or sleep on the street the boys were working their charms with such japes as relieving themselves against the bar, swapping clothes with the saintliest of ladies and sex-position re-enactment. A number being denied entry and the rest unsuccessful by the time Cindies closed, the visitors decided to try their luck around the Van of life causing chaos as one lay down and tried to pop a squat in the middle of the queue and then tried to make love to a passing taxi. Unsurprisingly, they then retreated, tails between their legs, and spent the rest of the night on the floor together, most aware of their bad luck.

Anstey Hall

Sour Grapes Jelly

Still gleaming with the glory of winning her jelly battle the previous year, our protagonist, whose barely-clad picture acted as the face of 'Shamebridge', decided to try her luck again and entered for the big-money prize. Not one to lose gracefully she questioned the judge's decision that another wrestler should win, claiming he just didn't want to seem to be favouring her. We can only hope she returns from her year-long holiday next year to reclaim her crown and glory.

Trumpington

Unhappy Cabby

The Soviet - length queuing for lavatories at the aristocratic venue for one Garden Party this Sunday was no deterrent for one party-goer. This cunning chappy wisely decided not to squat in the bushes, as is standard by this later stage of the day and instead hailed a cab, thinking he could make it back to Cambridge in suitable time and with dignity preserved. Alas, he couldn't.

Cambridge City Council election results

- » Churchill alumna wins City Council seat
- » Two student candidates unsuccessful in bids

Gemma Oke

Current and former students had mixed success as candidates in the Cambridge City Council elections, which took place on June 4th across the county.

The final county results saw the Conservatives retain 42 seats, the Liberal Democrats retain 23 seats and the Labour Party lose one seat to the Green Party, who won their first seat in the Abbey division of Cambridge City. The city itself returned a majority of Liberal Democrat councillors, with the Conservative Party failing to gain a single seat.

A former student of Churchill College, Belinda Brooks-Gordon, now a University Reader in Psychology and Social Policy at Birkbeck, University of London, won the Castle division for the Liberal Democrats with a 43 percent share of the vote. A current Churchill student, John Buckingham, also contested the Castle division for the Labour Party.

Brooks-Gordon's win reflected greater success for the Liberal Democrats across Cambridge City, with the party's candidates successful in eleven of the thirteen divisions they contested.

Fitzwilliam undergraduate James Sharpe contested the Newnham division

for the Conservative Party, coming second to Liberal Democrat candidate Lucy Nethsingha with around 22 percent of the vote. Sharpe attributed his loss to the difficulty of campaigning in a context of widespread voter apathy in "solid Liberal Democrat territory," rather than his student status.

He said, "One of the most disappointing things I've found with campaigning is not the long hours, but the difficulty in talking to voters. Too few people are interested in talking. They are either so utterly uninterested in politics that they don't care, or so set in their ways that they are not willing to expose themselves to new or alternative ideas."

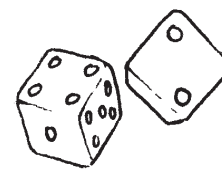
Turnout fell across the county in these elections, with some divisions seeing a drop in turnout of around a third since the 2005 local elections.

In a wider context, Labour sustained heavy losses in the elections, which saw the Conservatives dominate almost every area of the country. The UK Independence Party returned more MEPs than Labour, and the BNP gained its first seats in the European Parliament. Of seven MEPS for the East of England, three Conservatives, two members of the UKIP and one member each of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties were elected.



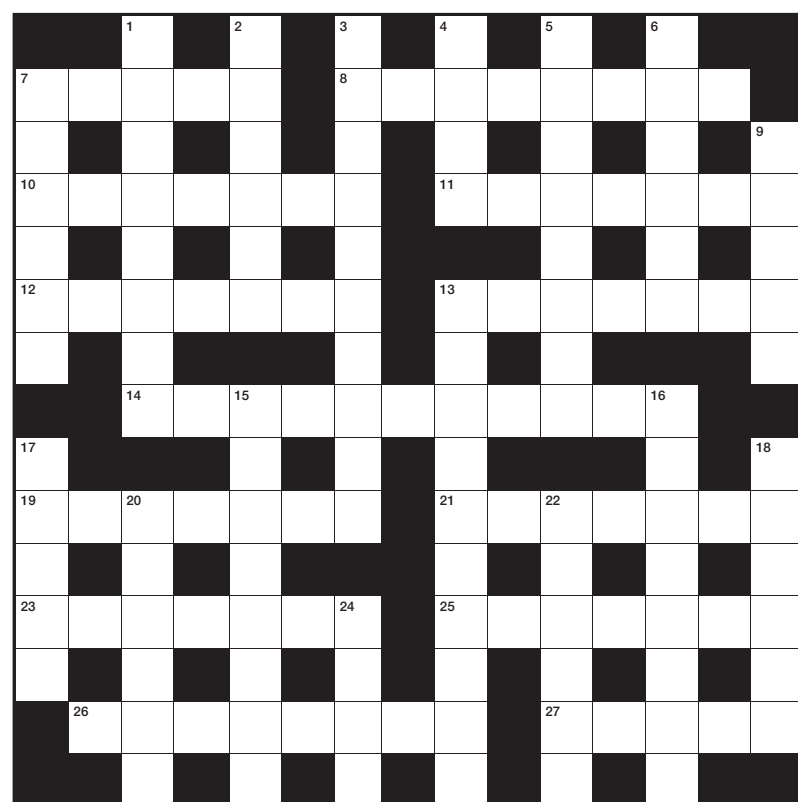
Churchill College alumna Belinda Brooks-Gordon

Games & puzzles



Varsity Crossword

no. 505



Across

- 7 Clamour for one taking part in one's freedom (5)
- 8 I clamour out loud for a summer treat (3, 5)
- 10 Bad French by fat duck (7)
- 11 Award for tactful person, though without tact at first (7)
- 12 Mechanical love pierces the heart of heart-throb, ticklishly (7)
- 13 Happy Spooner says to abandon a bird? (7)
- 14 To test one to the limit after demolishing a sly herb tea (11)
- 19 Type of frog retreating upon entry in intercourse (7)
- 21 Dicky ear hurt getting tube (7)
- 23 Time for fun might sound pathetic (3, 4)
- 25 Ringleader of rebels surrounded by fictional native of North American city (7)
- 26 Girl-like tones produced on application of fake tattoo: no thanks, one ring only (8)
- 27 Dessert made of French ice cream, but with topping of pistachios rather than macadamias (5)

Down

- 1 Someone's ill: a bubonically infected English dessert (8)
- 2 Pet has DNA altered by bureaucrat (6)
- 3 Shows to be just five at shows (10)
- 4 Moneyed cook's objective? (4)
- 5 Piper beaten in cooking technique for light-hearted fun (8)
- 6 Free time which one (as the upper classes say) enters at the drop of a hat (3, 3)
- 7 17 body expelled after rambling moron passed (2, 4)
- 9 What cricketers produce 23 entertainment? (5)
- 13 I drag out an incredibly important occasion (10)
- 15 Press in drug, so making potent drink (8)
- 16 Better shorthand faith admitted in conclusion? (8)
- 17 Former origins of arduous mental stress! (5)
- 18 Wind around circle with initial rowdiness a-plenty (6)
- 20 A clear 'no' spoken by a horse, vocally, for example (3-3)
- 22 Ameliorate renovated nicer house (6)
- 24 Pack colouring agent intended to get high (4)

Set by Hisashi

Trinity May Ball

Balls in Brief



HARRY BULLIVANT



Jesus: Oz

The purple hues of the sky last night, together with the bright green trees, provided a magical backdrop to what was undoubtedly one of the best Balls I have been to in my time at Cambridge.

The entire College was covered in gorgeous festive decorations. All the entertainment and activities you could ask for were provided, from a caricaturist to a masseuse and acts including *The Go Team* and *The Kins of Leon*, a tribute band that seemed to be hugely popular with all the guests. The pleasantly short queue (not something to be undervalued in May Week revelries) that greeted guests at the gate meant we could get stuck in straight away. And for those flagging at 5am, an hour's ceilidh was a fantastic way to perk oneself up!

The only criticism to be made is that a few of the acts and events started quite late on in the night, though given all the various food and drink available to sample in that period, the time was easily filled. I would say that it was definitely worth the money, and would advise anyone to try and buy a ticket for next year's Jesus May Ball.
Emma Mustich

Clare: The Forbidden City

The imaginative theme is what made this one of the most beautiful Balls I have ever seen with red, black and white decorations, myriad lights glistening across the waters and a striking structure of bamboo and fairy lights constructed over the bridge at Clare. The fireworks were a main attraction and definitely did not disappoint with an array of colours lighting up the sky and offsetting the stunning decorations and vibrant atmosphere of the evening. I imagine the Committee were most relieved that the British weather cleared up just in time for this key event. And once satiated with food, drink and activity, there was nothing more fitting to the desires of last night's guests than relaxing with a shisha in the fellow's garden which was strewn with handsome cushions and yet more decorations. Clare was an extremely slick and intricately decorated Ball. There are very few criticisms I could make, and those I could, I don't want to. *Imogen Tedbury*

100
number of live performers

1
number of Champagne punts

200
number of workers

20
number of rosebushes

12
number of committee members

The warning signs were there. The clouds were looming on the horizon, both literally and metaphorically. The ball that had everything, a budget of ten million pounds, and one million guests, was about to be brought down by the one factor that its committee could not control - the weather. However, God smiled upon Trinity, as He has done so many times before. The rain was averted and the First and Third Trinity Boat Club May Ball went forward as planned.

However, queueing was by all accounts a shambles. The key areas became horrific bottlenecks, only exacerbated by the wet weather. Perhaps most worryingly of all, hundreds of guests seemed to still be waiting outside the gates by the time the oysters had finished and the fireworks had started. I was fortunate enough to catch the fireworks display myself, but I can only imagine that my peers in the queue must have been gutted. One recognises, of course, that queueing is never going to be a fun process and is always going to be something of an ordeal, but it is difficult to imagine that Trinity couldn't have dealt with it somewhat better than it did.

However, once guests made it inside, there was nothing to be faulted about this, the most famous of all the May Balls; so famous, indeed, as not to necessitate a theme. The food, such a necessity for hungry revellers, was perfect. The main cuisine was both convenient and upmarket, being a selection from the western Mediterranean, with no fewer than four different types of pate on of-

fer. One guest described it as "elegant, superb and entirely in keeping with the event"; all present seemed to agree. The other food - the hog roast, the burgers and the doughnuts - managed to escape the curse of the queues that manages to strike down so many excellent balls. It was enjoyed by all and set the guests up for the wonderful night ahead of them. The overriding atmosphere was one of simple child-like joy. The dodgems, the candyfloss and the helter-skelter (that has blemished many a tourist's photograph of Trinity Backs in the past week's preparations) were perfectly aligned to create in the guests a feeling which most of them haven't felt since their tenth birthday party. However, once the initial glee had passed and the fairground rides were dismantled, another childhood memory, the peril of mixing excessive quantities of food and drink and dizzying heights came rushing back in a sea of nausea.

The central part of the Ball, Trinity's largest lawn on the Backs, was converted into a fairground, with all the usual attractions. Trinity, like all good balls, managed to blend the classy with the simpler pleasures of life. Classical music was provided by a host of talented Trinity students, ranging from light jazz to some of the highest quality classical music that can be found anywhere in Cambridge. And those of us with ruder tastes were also extremely well catered for. We were greeted by Silent Disco, the mainstay of student parties for the last decade at least and award-winning comedians such as the successful Footlights alumnus Nick Mohammed kept

crowds reeling with laughter. And to close the evening, as has now become traditional at seemingly all May Balls at Cambridge, the ubiquitous Shut Up And Dance saw out the night with their usual brand of hedonistic tunes. Headlining the main stage were Hamfatter, who have much more to them than their name may suggest, Athlete, a band for all of those who adore slightly rubbish Coldplay imitators and Wiley - no man has been so singly out of place at a Cambridge Ball as to resemble a transvestite at the BNP disco.

It's never easy to balance a line up of bands for all tastes but this Ball seemed to have succeeded better than any I have been to before.

The centrepiece of the Trinity May Ball was, as always, the fireworks. I have already alluded to the giddy child-like glee instilled in many guests by the rest of the entertainment but if there is anything more joyful than 15 minutes of loud bangs and bright colours, then we have yet to see it. Trinity's fireworks were a triumph, far outdoing last year's and indeed outdoing almost anything else you could find around the country on Bonfire Night. And just like the fireworks, the First and Third Trinity Boat Club May Ball 2009 will be remembered by all those who attended it. It was a masterpiece with very few exceptions - a masterpiece of imagination, planning and execution. For the next few hours at least, Trinity holds the top spot in the May Ball tables. Cambridge waits with bated breath to see how their ancient rivals and neighbours will answer to-night. *Hugo Gye*

What I hate about May Week



In two words: May Balls. Call me a misanthropic cantanker but, as parties go, the Balls this week are a collective shocker. Divisive, dull and profligate, the majority are an over-hyped marriage of farcical formality and over-priced cheapness.

Most depressingly, though, the Balls highlight the University's social divisions like no other event in the Cambridge calendar. This week, students are segregated into the haves and the have-nots, hedonists and servants. We are divided into those who can afford to pay in excess of £100 for Ball tickets, and those whose only chance of Ball action is through serving their fellow students champagne for below the minimum wage.

May Balls are also a catastrophe of wastefulness. The combined Balls budget approaches a seven-figure sum, much of which is needlessly thrown at uneaten food, unnecessary pyrotechnics and over-priced indie drudgery. What's more, many profit-making Balls rarely involve themselves in altruistic endeavours; earnings are often merely turned over to the next year's committee. In short, then, the Balls are a shocking misdirection of charitable potential; it is a cliché, but even a tenth of the money spent, whilst not quite eradicating Third World debt, could pay for over fifty new scholarships to this university.

And even if you don't buy into all this moralising, all of us have had the suspicion that May Balls are not even particularly fun, or good value. You spend the whole night trying to convince yourself that you're having a good time but end up only frustrated at the bathos between the oppressive formality of the black tie format, and the underwhelming vapidity of some of the entertainment. There's always lots of 'stuff' on offer, certainly, but none of it actually justifies the ticket price. Dodgems, chocolate fountains, ice sculptures, bouncy castles, music and fireworks are all of passing and limited amusement, and the sum of all these acts does not add up to the exorbitant fee many of us pay.

Don't get me wrong; we should be celebrating the end of the most gruelling of exam terms, and most May Week festivities are a relaxing and enjoyable way of doing so. But the Balls themselves are a waste of time and money, and divide the University like no other tradition.

Patrick Kingsley

James Sharpe



Who is a right-winger?

Empty political labels can't describe the BNP

With the recent gains of the British National Party, it is important to consider the challenge that they pose. One of the main problems is that the narrative we use to characterise them is wrong, allowing them to present themselves to the general public as a legitimate political ideology. At heart, this is a failure of the language of the political spectrum, demonstrating that it is time to move on from the old left-/right-wing dichotomy.

When people think 'BNP', they think 'right-wing'; it is almost inevitable to hear the two words together on television or in a newspaper. But the term 'right-wing' is loaded with so many contradictory political positions and ideas that it is inaccurate to characterise the BNP as a right-wing party simply because it describes itself as nationalist.

If we look at the political division along economic lines, we all know that free markets are right, and protectionism is left. By this definition, the BNP is avowedly left. It adheres to a socialist economic policy to nationalise state industries, gain full employment for British citizens, and significantly redistribute wealth. These are all positions commonly believed to be on the left. And, more interestingly, they are all nationalistic in skew. Indeed, the nature of free market economics is such that, logically, this economic system is most compatible with internationalism, a political ideology monopolised by the left.

This illustrates the huge problems we

encounter when we define political parties solely in terms of left and right. The privilege we give to labels rather than to definitions means that we misclassify certain positions. Ultimately, we use the terms left- or right-wing inaccurately, and therefore make them redundant. Because the BNP calls itself the British National Party, the media have automatically defined the party as right-wing, even when, on closer inspection, there are significant exceptions to be made with regards to this label. Instead of looking into the substance of BNP policy, the mere use of the term 'national' is enough to make it right-wing.

Indeed, it is interesting to speculate on the extent to which the BNP is actually right-wing socially. The intellectual foundations of free market economics is liberty, and liberty in the (albeit simplistic) sense that one should be able to do anything as long as it does not cause harm to another person. As such, it is perfectly reasonable to argue that someone who is truly right-wing will be as against social conservatism as anyone who, on such social issues, defines themselves as left-wing.

It is undeniable that the BNP wishes to introduce legislation to discriminate

against non-Britons, homosexuals, and, to a lesser extent, women. But, in the same way, it is those who define themselves as left-wing who wish to introduce similar discriminatory laws, even though these are affixed with the term 'positive'. Regardless of motive, the respective results of such legislation are the same: discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, or gender.

Of course, some may argue that the motive behind policy is a significant factor in placing a party along the political spectrum. But, if this were true, and the BNP were placed firmly on the right, it would mean that anyone with political motives non-racist, non-chauvinistic, and non-prudish would have to be left-wing, regardless of policy political views. This would mean that something like libertarianism would have to be put dead centre. This will obviously not do.



This is not an attempt to demonstrate that the BNP is actually left-wing. Rather it is to demonstrate the problem of using such labels. Ultimately, the ideology of the BNP is so exceptional that it has no place on the political spectrum. Nevertheless, the spectrum still deals with a

range of rational political positions, as well as those developed thanks solely to bigotry.

After all, why do we include fascism and communism on the same spectrum? They were both collectivist and totalitarian, and yet are labelled as polar opposites. The description of such ideologies as left or right does not tell us anything about the substance of fascism and communism; it merely seeks to discredit alternative legitimate political positions like socialism, libertarianism and conservatism that are described using the same language.

Indeed, by placing ideologies like those expressed by the BNP anywhere on such a spectrum is to do nothing other than to make racism seem to be a legitimate political position. Racism is not left- or right-wing; it is just wrong.

Unfortunately, the left-/right-wing dichotomy has such a hold over our political discourse that it is almost impossible to abandon it. But abandon it we must. Otherwise, we shall remain enslaved to the emptiness of the language employed by the political spectrum, and the laziness of its utility. People often now use the term 'right-wing' and 'left-wing' to define anything other than what they actually mean in terms of rational political choices. Instead, they are used as nothing more than labels to reflect perception rather than substance. It is time for definitions rather than words to reassert themselves.

Ashley Riches



Down with fairness

Education is about more than value for money

These days everyone should get what they deserve. Of course. That is what fairness is all about.

But the obsession with 'value for money' among students has, since top-up fees, become increasingly hysterical. At the start of May some 600 pupils studying economics and finance at Bristol revolted over not getting a fair deal, complaining: "Since 2006 the university has charged more and delivered less. We demand results today." At Manchester Metropolitan University students have created a "Late" hotline which they can text in the event of a lecturer spending too long with a morning cup of coffee. And they do so more than 20 times a week.

More broadly, the National Student Survey 2008 shows up an increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching, including 33 courses ranked below 2000 of 2175 at Russell Group universities.

More and more, we hear talk of value for money. The Shadow Minister for Universities and Skills, David Willetts, who helped broker an agreement at Bristol, said: "The students have done a very impressive and thorough analysis of the education they are entitled to expect for paying their fees. This will be a powerful trend that universities ignore at their peril."

The head of education at think tank Policy Exchange, Anna Fazackerley, supports the commoditising of learning. "The government should collect data about how many hours of teaching students receive, whether postgraduate students or professors are doing that teaching and how many students are being packed into classes. Parents and students have a right to know what they are paying for."

It is the modern enlightened viewpoint that we, the consumer, get what we have paid for. But it runs entirely

contrary to a current of thinking that we consider more 'enlightened' still which arises at those moments when we perhaps think of ourselves at our most humane.

Since Peter Allen and Gwynne Evans were hanged in 1964 for the murder of John West – and since the death penalty was removed from law altogether in 1998 – it has been deemed in the United Kingdom that no crime 'deserves' death. This attitude, shared by many nations, is exemplified in cases such as that of

Josef Fritzl. There is no need to repeat his crimes. If anyone ever 'deserved' death, surely it was he. Libby Purves called Fritzl 'the end of hope' and declared a wish to see him dead, which she said was irrational – pure 'emotion'.

In fact, such a view appears to be intensely rational. Fritzl has caused untold suffering. He is mentally ill, and can no longer contribute. It would give many satisfaction – or pleasure – if his suicide watch failed to prevent him hanging himself. Why not put him out of his (and our) misery?

effect simply follows cause, there can be no decision to give, no goodness, no generosity – none of the qualities we value most.

The great quest for 'fairness' misses the point. Of course students should get a good education. But they should get it because we believe that it should be so for their benefit and ours. They have done nothing to earn it but be born. It is the absolute premise of equality of opportunity that the future is to be given, not purchased.

It is very dangerous to stipulate what is required, because in doing so you mark out what is not required. When the merit is fulfilling a contract, what merit is there in going beyond the contract itself? Because today education is bought and not given, future students may not benefit from a generosity of learning, from interested, spontaneous, joyfully excessive, teaching. They and we will be poorer for it.

People never remember – never truly value – what was given as a matter of course, but the moments of self-sacrifice, where someone went beyond what was asked for no reason. Contracts deny this possibility. In the attempt to make sure everyone gets the education they ought to have, let us not forget that what we really value is what we do not deserve.

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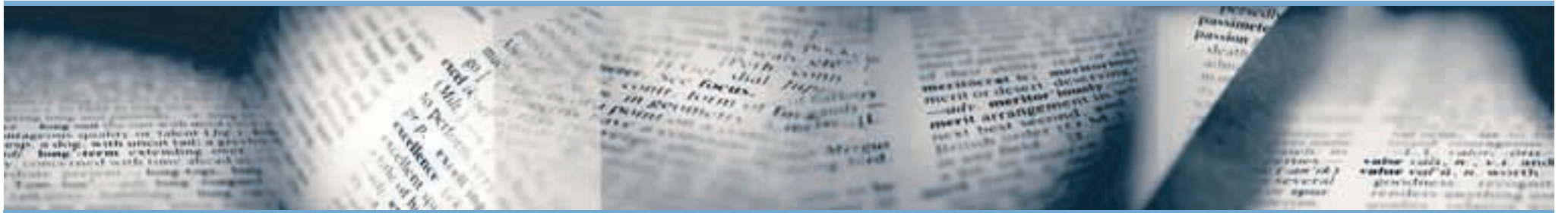
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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Nina wears tank top, Topshop, £18; leggings, Topshop, £20; gloves, Claire's Accessories, £3; boots, All Saints, £150; bow, Chapeau Claudette, £16. Jacket, vintage Ralph Lauren, £50; dress, American Apparel, £45; tights, Jonathan Aston, £5.99; shoes, stylist's own.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM ROW: Nina wears tank top, as before; earrings, River Island, £9.99; ring, stylist's own; sunglasses, Lazy Oaf, £20. Caitlin wears headbands, Dorothy Perkins, £5 each; sunglasses, Dolly Dagger, £12; denim shirt, as before; bra, American Apparel swimsuit, £31; dress, Calvin Klein, stylist's own.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP ROW: Caitlin wears denim shirt, stylist's own; shirt, Topshop, £16; skirt, stylist's own; bangles, River Island, £12.99; sunglasses, Topshop, £15; shoes, Faith, £54. Jacket, The Dressing Room NYC, £48; tank top, New Look, £6; jeggings, £20; socks, American Apparel, £8; shoes, Nike, £70; gloves, stylist's own.

Styling: Zing Tsjeng
Photography: Zing Tsjeng
Assistant: Michael Derringer
Models: Nina Ellis & Caitlin Breeze

With thanks to Tom de Freston, Ed Kiely, and Phillippa Dunjay.



143 Years of Champagne, Fireworks, and Unashamed Decadence...

MAY WEEK, THAT SURREAL ANOMALY OF THE CAMBRIDGE SOCIAL CALENDAR, IS UPON US. DAVID SHONE PRESENTS A BRIEF ROMP THROUGH MAY BALL HISTORY

Scuppering any ideas we might have about the sybaritic origins of the most lavish of Cambridge traditions, it seems that the first May Ball was, in fact, organised by rowers. In the spring of 1866, three hundred of these ascetic early risers gathered at the Lion Hotel in Cambridge to celebrate Trinity Boat Club's victory in the year's Bumps races.

fetters of their oarsmen colleagues, 489 guests were able to worship at the altar of Hedonism (or, rather more unromantically, the Guildhall) thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Cambridge Gas Lighting Company.

These happy pioneers danced and dined for the bargain price of one pound, one shilling and one penny, though the

to spend on posh togs or post-ball Paracetamol.

Presumably, this first 'May Ball' was a success, as it was repeated in 1892. By 1896, the ball had moved into Trinity itself. These parties of the late 1890s set the precedent for what we today recognize as a May Ball.

It took a little longer for other colleges to get in on the act, with Magdalene joining in (after John's) in 1911, offering guests the opportunity to roam the College gardens and waltz to music provided by Herr Moritz Wurm and his band. Since its Edwardian heyday, the May Ball has infiltrated Cambridge's notoriously capricious social calendar, becoming an integral part of May Week and a popular reference point for those outside the Bubble to gauge the depth of Cambridge lore.

One commentator, writing in the 1960s, turns the May Ball into some sort of gracious reverie, noting not only that "the most interesting and bizarre time to visit Cambridge is during May Week" but also describing how the "punts glide romantically down river and in the silver-grey light of dawn, couples in evening dress stroll leisurely, perhaps rather dreamily, through the Backs, and the narrow deserted streets until it is time to punt upstream through the meadows to breakfast at Grantchester." Is it this shameless nostalgia and aspiration to fin-de-siècle decadence that inspires the continued popularity of the May Ball?

Yes, that - and the unlimited champagne. May Balls give the opportunity, or rather the excuse, to behave according to a kind of clichéd privilege that most would rather avoid at any other time. Perhaps this explains why trendy liberal undergraduates leap at the thought of attending a Ball themed around the Glory of Empire or Slave Trade or another such proud moment in our country's history, becoming flag-waving nationalists for the evening before retreating, hungover, to bed, copies of the Guardian tucked neatly under their arms.

A young Johann Hari boasts of snorting his way through May Week, presumably a droll, ironic gesture, although it can't have hurt his journalistic credentials. Tantalisingly, even Karl Marx was reported to have attended the 1882 Corpus Christi May Ball as a guest of the Master, apparently getting roaring drunk in the process. This story is, of course, apocryphal, but it speaks volumes that even the father of communism has been adopted into the shared mythology that has grown up around the May Ball.

So pervasive is this tradition, so central is it to Cambridge's identity, that the party seems to go on despite

potential interruptions from the outside world. Though successive recessions have undoubtedly had their effects, with many Balls struggling to survive through the 1993 downturn, it is telling that in that year both Trinity and Magdalene, two of the costlier Balls in the May Week calendar, sold out. Indeed, aside from disgruntled dons, it seems that it takes a World War to stop a May Ball. No May Balls were held from 1914-18 and again from 1939-45.

From these sturdy foundations, the May Ball has grown into something integral to the "Cambridge experience". These opulent gatherings define, perhaps more than anything else, the way in which the outside world looks in on Cambridge. The image of hundreds of beautiful young things quaffing champagne, draped across the majestic landscape of

the University is too perfect to have escaped the public imagination. Subsumed into the mythology and folklore of the place, these balls are no mere social events. If this were the case, why would thousands of penurious students fork out hundreds of thousands of pounds every year to attend them? The reason we do so, the reason tickets are so keenly sought after is that, in buying them, we buy into this grandiose mysticism and become part of the ancient and fabulous fabric of Cambridge. For one night we are invited to live the Scudamore wet dream, to become part of a sumptuous tradition woven from privilege, plenty, and Pol Roger.

SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE ARCHIVES



Sidney Sussex May Ball Survivors' Photo, 1921

Sidney Ball dance card, c. 1921



St John's College May Ball Survivors' Photo, 1898

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

Though the First and Third Trinity Boat Club Ball (to give it its full name) still bears a more than emblematic clue as to its origins, the two institutions have not been

cash-strapped revellers of 2009 might be relieved to discover that this would be somewhere in the region of one hundred and ninety pounds in today's prices. That is to say, enough

"TANTALISINGLY, EVEN KARL MARX WAS REPORTED TO HAVE ATTENDED THE 1882 CORPUS CHRISTI MAY BALL AS A GUEST OF THE MASTER, APPARENTLY GETTING ROARING DRUNK IN THE PROCESS."

directly linked since 1891, when the college held its first May Ball proper. Released from the abstemious

to get into the most expensive of Balls whilst still leaving the parsimonious merry-maker a crisp tenner



St John's May Ball Stewards, 1898

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE LIBRARY



Menu from St John's May Ball, 1894

Out of this World



ANDREW LOGAN'S ALTERNATIVE MISS WORLD HAS BEEN ATTRACTING "A PARADE OF FREAKS, FOPS, SHOW OFFS AND DRAG QUEENS" SINCE 1972. OUR MAN KIRAN MOODLEY JOINED THE STAIRCASE BAND IN LONDON FOR THIS YEAR'S FANTASY FESTIVAL

The Alternative Miss World 'competition', started in 1972, is not about beauty; it's about transformation. And when it comes to costume, absolutely anything goes.

As in the real Miss World, there are contests for day wear, swim-wear and evening wear, as well as the all important personality interview. But the event's creator, Andrew Logan, refuses to let anyone rehearse, and anything can - and often does - happen.

Sitting outside the Roundhouse next to a doyenne of the Camden music scene, I was surprised to find her rather accommodating to the present goings-on in one of London's most prestigious venues. Setting aside her formative years spent watching The Who and The Stones, she mused on Alternative Miss World (AMW): "Isn't it nice that during such a pessimistic period, we can all get together and, you know, just have fun?"

And that's what AMW is all about. Logan is renowned not just for his glass sculptures but also for his talent for throwing the best parties. After all, it was his studio at Butler's Wharf in 1976 that witnessed Westwood and McLaren's Valentine's Ball - the event that brought the Sex Pistols into the public eye.

AMW was conceived in 1972, inspired by Logan's trip to Crufts Dog Show. The format hasn't changed since that first party in Hackney, although the original indoor pond has sadly faded from the

stage. Anyone can enter: AMW, unlike the real Miss World, is not exclusive. This is not a celebration of conformity or the artificiality of the modern conception of beauty. Instead, poise, personality and creativity steal the show. The 1998 winner, a seventy-five-year-old Russian grandmother, is living testament to this.

Twelve shows have now been held since that first intimate night thirty-seven years ago, and a host of artistic notables have participated in them. Derek Jarman and Leigh Bowery have both performed, whilst David Hockney, Celia Birtwell, Richard O'Brien, Brian Eno and Grayson Perry have all graced the judges' stage.

Logan says his event is simply "about transformations". Each contestant has two minutes in which to flaunt her (or

IN 2004, SIR NORMAN ROSENTHAL APPEARED HALF NAKED, PAINTED BLUE, WITH LUMINOUS RED HAIR.

his) respective outfits, and this year's winner didn't fail in her ability to change from costume to costume.

Miss Fancy Chance's initial day wear piece witnessed a near-full striptease as she stumbled about the stage, whilst in her evening wear piece she emerged from a large time machine, suspended

from the ceiling by her head. On coming back down to earth, she exclaimed that if chosen to be AMW2009 she would ensure that there were more public toilets. At last, a popular, elected official with some logical policies.

Another highlight was Miss No Signs of Any Civilisation Whatsoever, whose day wear piece was a man with a cardboard caravan around his torso. Having left the stage to allow Miss Trailer Trash to come on, the man returned to fight said participant, thus destroying the caravan and revealing that underneath he was simulating sex with an inflatable doll. Miss Hokusai was Janet Slee, Logan's sister, and the only person to have contested every AMW to date. She was wheeled out on an operating table accompanied by two Japanese nurses,

and finished in third place.

'Transformations' in the past have often been controversial. Sir Norman Rosenthal, head of the Royal Academy, participated in the 2004 contest with the help of Sarah Lucas. He appeared half naked, painted blue, with luminous red hair. Logan himself always comes as a

'host/hostess' - half his body male, the other female, with the latter decorated by fashion designer Zandra Rhodes.

Of course, the playfulness of the event, along with its massive expansion over the years in terms of size and prestige, has made the show enemies. AMW1978, held in a tent in Clapham Common, was filmed by the director Richard Gayer. However, the movie received an injunction from Eric Morley, the creator of the real Miss World. Fortunately, the judge threw the case out, stating that no one could confuse the two events. Interestingly enough, Logan's barrister for the case was none other than a young Tony Blair. It appears he ensured the pink vote early.

Cambridge was well represented this year at AMW. Whilst I shall not bore with details of my own handiwork in helping to decorate the Roundhouse with metres of Indian prayer flags, I should mention that The Staircase Band from Clare College was in attendance.

Since their formation in late 2007, this group have taken the university quite literally by storm. They have performed this year at the student productions including Suitcase Cabaret and Film Night, whilst this week they shall grace Clare, King's, Trinity Hall, John's, Corpus, Queens', Homerton and Robinson May Balls. As if that weren't enough, on June 18th they will be at Cargo in London for a Big Issue support gig, whilst last week

they were at an Oxford recording studio, attempting to immortalise their sweet sound.

This was the band's first 'out-of-Cambridge' experience, and they certainly didn't fail to make the transition from sleepy university town to large London venue. On the night, they graced the foyer and al fresco area; they provided a perfect welcome for the many spectators and a bit of a relief from the chaos inside. Not only did their eccentric, multi-coloured garb ensure that they attracted several potential employers, but their style of music was match fit to the scenario. Their assorted gypsy, jazz, folk and klezmer tunes in many ways reflected the diversity of the audience that surrounded them - attired in a veritable smorgasbord of monolithic flowery hats, wigs, headdresses, spandex, latex, and velours.

Logan and Ruby Wax crowned Miss Fancy Chance as the evening drew to a close, the winner joining a long line of victors that includes a robot called Miss Rosa Bosom. During a term full of stress and scepticism, it was relaxing to revel in a world of fantasy and absurdity, a huge party out of control. As MPs fill our papers with stories of their need to show off by paying for the upkeep of moats, I was thankful for the chance to watch so many artists make heads turn with minimal cost, a lot of imagination and some pure hilarity.

Ten Word Reviews



With their identities safely protected, Cambridge students share their views on May Week Theatre:

Wolfson Howler Wolfson College

Robin Ince's mercuriality was bested by Dannish Babar's nervous anger.

Ed Gamble's "Heinz Baked Beats" T-shirt was a fashion tragedy.

Five acts. Five pounds. Great comedy value. Will go again.

Shame Young and Moran weren't up to their usual standard.

Private Lives Trinity Fellows Garden

Nothing new about this stuffy piece of typical Cambridge theatre.

Didn't have the audience in stitches. Owen's witty delivery exceptional.

Exquisite actresses and beautiful costumes. Sadly lacked distinctiveness and character.

Not the best start for the new Noël Coward Society.

Wishful Thinking Footlights Tour Show - ADC

A funny mixture of old and oddly elongated new sketches.

Footlights even funnier than usual. Not surprised they sold out.

Twice the price of a smoker, but ten times better.

Imaginative. Inventive. Intelligent. Interesting. I just love you Keith Akushie.

Sense and Sensibility Christ's College Gardens

Casting was spot on. The two redheads stole the show.

Can't beat a bit of Austen in a beautiful garden.

Perfect May Week activity: not too stressful. Full of fitties.

Disagree with a Varsity review? Send your 10 word review to theatre@varsity.co.uk

THEATRE

Mozart: The Magic Flute
St. John's, Fisher Hall, June 9th-10th
Dir. Jack Furness; Shadwell Opera

★★★★★

This was a production, sadly moved indoors due to rain, that refused to take itself seriously. This is no bad thing, given that a completely sober vision of *The Magic Flute* is practically impossible: the plot is not coherent enough to allow it. At times the humour was puerile, but more often than not it succeeded, providing an enjoyable evening.

Arguably, *The Magic Flute* contains Mozart's finest music (Wagner certainly thought so), and Jack Furness's direction took this as its cue, as the shady secret society that Tamino must enter to win Pamina seemed dedicated to music itself: its male members emerged topless, with blue notation painted on their bodies, and cassettes and CDs draped around their necks. But overall the staging usually verged on the far side

of peculiar. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang appeared to be the principle influence: Monatatos was a leery, disgusting version of the Childcatcher (accent and all); Pamina and Tamino both played the puppet to the Queen of the Night's music, and even Papageno had a startling resemblance to the Toymaker. Space, however, was used well, especially considering the late change of venue.

Gareth John's Papageno was the star of the show; if not always that secure in his singing, his comic timing was brilliant. He dealt adeptly with the crude, not to mention lewd, libretto, featuring such gems as 'I Pa-pa-ge-know I'll die' and wordplay between bird, as in flying thing, and bird, as in woman. Tamino's entry seemed to herald a mix of Roger Moore's Bond and Don Giovanni, but he

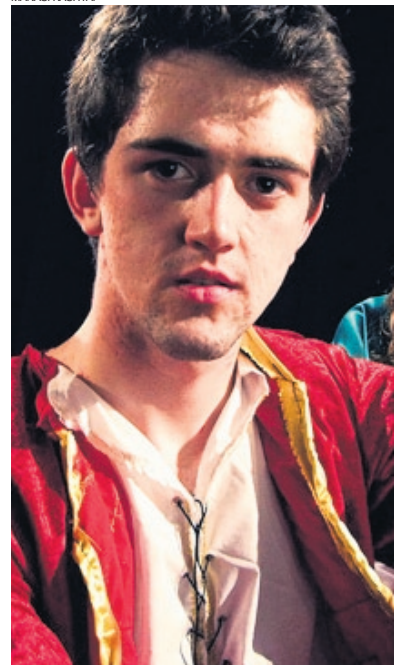
became increasingly one-dimensional over time, not helped by our tenor's heady, nasal tone. The coordination between Papageno and Tamino's flutes and the orchestra rarely worked.

The Three Ladies, doing their best Charlie's Angels impression, were sassy enough, though they occasionally had a tendency to rise up to a note from beneath it. The Queen of the Night managed her ridiculously high notes with aplomb, though her haughty voice grated slightly. Pamina's aria was a welcome moment of poignancy. Orchestrally, Aidan Coburn kept things moving at a quick pace, drawing surprising emotion from reduced forces, despite occasional major slips. Yet this performance will be best remembered for its comic moments.
David Allen



ELLIE BRINDLE

MANASI KASHYAP



Don Juan On Trial
Pembroke Gardens, June 18th-19th
Dir. Michèle Murez; Pembroke Players

★★★★★

When my future dermatologist confirms malignant melanoma, I will know that it was contracted in the name of outdoor theatre, and won't weep. Yes, the sun was blazing on our heads—and yes, mum, I should have worn a hat—but the Pembroke Players production of *Don Juan on Trial* helped me to ignore my sizzling skin and the other myriad distractions that seemed determined to disrupt.

Beside the expected annoyances of traffic, it seems that a sound system was being checked behind the wall that enclosed the gardens. Although the director has assured us that we were about to enter the eighteenth century, the bass lines begged to differ; it is to the credit of the entire cast that they did not just give

up and go down the pub.

And I am glad they did. The calling to task of the famous lover by previous 'victims' is at turns funny and tragic, something this cast managed to transmit well. Hannah Allum's frivolous nun gave great comic relief, and there was some strong chemistry between the principles, filtered through a satisfyingly arch Katie Alcock. Olivia Crellin's excellent vocal range lent her depth and passion, and Don Juan himself was a study in lip-licking lasciviousness that was surprisingly nasty. Good stuff.

Director Michèle Murez has an eye for tableau, useful when stage size is so limited and the cast relatively large. It was a treat to see Patrick Garety's Don Juan, (thankfully rid of a jacket rejected

from Puss in Boots) loose and louche on the sofa, while his accusers, pleasingly uniform in height, arranged themselves before him to indulge their memories. Tight control of spectacle in the first half led to good use of the gardens for the second—as the plot opens out, so does the set, and the action, necessarily stilted by the drawing-room setting, expands to hold rape, swordplay, love and death.

Hopefully, the shift to the 7pm slot will remove most of the traffic—and someone will have hanged the DJ—so that the bitterness, humour and considerations of love will be able to be heard properly, and you too can decide whether Don Juan is an eternal 'black diamond', or a man deserving rebirth in the name of true love.
Annabel Banks

Sense and Sensibility
Christ's College Gardens, June 17th - 18th
Dir. Alice Bagnall; Christ's Amateur Dramatics Society

★★★★★

"The day is becoming so gloomy." As if on cue, the ubiquitous English summer rainclouds descended and all was moved out of the lush foliage of Christ's gardens and into a nearby auditorium. I daresay, if Austen herself had been one for pathetic fallacy, the presence of such ominous skies could have forewarned us of the grey dispassion ahead.

This Austen adaptation follows the plight of the Dashwood sisters, Elinor (Alyshia Gordes) and Marianne (Victoria Rigby). After the death of their father, they are lead into, and equally out of, the arms of rascals and lovers before a suitably Austen ending - that of unabashed happiness.

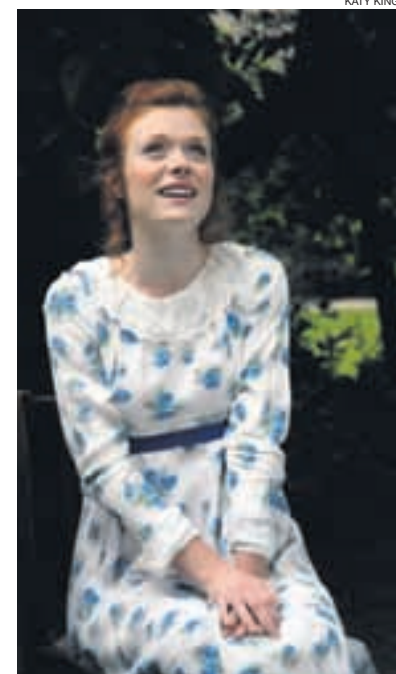
The female protagonists are played beautifully, without over-exaggeration

or resorting to hysteria. In a time where, snotty-nosed crying monstrosities and gargyle-esque prosthetics and transformations are regarded as the pinnacle of female theatrical accomplishment, it is refreshing to witness subtle, nuanced performances.

However amongst a backdrop of oddly contemporary mannerisms from other cast members and strange admixtures of tailcoats and Gola trainers, such performances seem fairly isolated. In a time where introductions without curtsy or chivalric bow are the modern-day equivalent of greeting your 90-year old grandmother with a happy-slap, such oddities are enough to make Austen in all her 19th century eloquence and sartorial elegance, turn in her literary grave.

Put simply, Austen does not adapt well to the stage. Where flute and violin ditties initially indicate the presence of a new scene, 120 minutes in and my left-bum cheek down, it becomes a nails-on-blackboard reminder of the disjointed nature of such a production.

However, there are without doubt funny interludes from the likes of Sir John Middleton (David Harrap) and the effervescent Mrs Jennings (Juliet Shardlow) and the play certainly starts off with jaunt and purpose. You'll still get the bounce and brilliance of witticisms and the cast are without fault in their enthusiasm and vibrance. However, what essentially remains after the first act is a convoluted shell of Austen's former self.
Jessica Tovey



KATY KING

REVIEWS

Endless Forms: Charles Darwin, Natural Science and the Visual Arts Fitzwilliam Museum Until October 4th

★★★★★

Art and science are unlikely bedfellows. Art is sprawling, chaotic, a magpie with eclectic tastes. Science is meticulous, tidy, suffers from a touch of OCD. Art resists taxonomy and neat categories, science insists on them. In the Fitzwilliam's *Endless Forms: Darwin, Natural Science and the Visual Arts*, the two disciplines are elegantly married. The exhibition explores Darwin's susceptibility to the influences of art and the artistic efforts inspired by Darwin's own discoveries. Occasionally the links border on the tenuous. A Martin Schongauer print in the first room is included as an example of the 'sort of thing' Darwin might have seen in the Cambridge collections while studying at Christ's. The Fitz's own collec-

tion has been filleted and highlights removed from their regular spots and pressed into the service of Darwinism.

Darwin himself was no draughtsman. His sketches of geological strata are winningly naive. It is more profitable to examine his gluttonous collector's instincts. The exhibition is rich in Darwin's memorabilia: his collection of succulently illustrated natural history books, fossils, and a spectacular display of Argus pheasant feathers (accompanied by a natural history film of an Argus indulging in a surreal and beautiful mating dance).

It is an ambitious exhibition in both scale and scope, with wall space offered to everything from Henry Fox Talbot's early photographs, to Odilon

Redon's *Dawn of Time* lithographs, and a colossal painting by Robert Farren reconstructing an imagined pre-historic Devon. There's a curious excursion comparing Edwin Landseer's rather cloying anthropomorphised Dog pictures with Darwin's studies on the affinity between human and animal facial expressions and a novel presentation of Degas and the Impressionists as artists working in the shadow of Darwinism. A discussion of Darwin's concept of the Struggle for Existence, its roots in Thomas Malthus' *Essay on Population*, and contemporary artistic responses to the plight of the poor is enlightening. The intelligently illustrated presentation of contemporary attitudes to 'primitive' cultures is also masterfully



handled.

Ruskin's exquisite watercolour studies of a feather, displayed here, are testament to that. Darwin himself observed that those prized Argus feathers were "more like a work of art than of nature." The art of 'looking' is as much the province of the botanist, geologist and entomologist as it is of the diligent artist; both observe the world of nature with insatiable eyes.
Laura Freeman

Looking for Eric Dir. Ken Loach

Starring: Eric Cantona, Steve Evets

★★★★★

I'm not much into football. It could be because my local team is Millwall (unpopular, I hear), or it could be because, as national fascinations go, it's up there with the shipping forecast (minus kitsch sentimental value, and about zero times as useful) in the interest stakes. Anyway, knowing little about the subject, I was rather dreading *Looking For Eric*.



Until I heard the premise, that is. Briefly, the film involves Eric (Steve Evets), whose life – his ex-wife, his sons and their indigent friends, his job – is a shambles. However, when he has a quick spliff, he's suddenly joined by Eric Cantona himself ("he is a footballer, right?" I asked my supervisor, the other day). I was looking forward to a movie in the tradition of *Play It Again, Sam*, or *True Romance* which, to some extent, *Looking For Eric* is.

It's a film with some quietly enrapturing moments, most, if not all of which involve Cantona, whose performance as himself is well judged, witty, and with just the right amount of self-deprecation. He

comes across very amicably, as does little Eric, and their interactions are consistently engaging and surprising to behold. These are moments that should be central to the film. However, they almost all take place in little Eric's bedroom, with Cantona appearing sporadically elsewhere. It may be the case that Loach only had Cantona – surely busy playing a sport of some sort elsewhere – for a short part of the shoot. However, the baggy nature of the film doesn't help the feeling that the movie is a little light on its central premise: a chance to watch Cantona eulogise and hold forth. When this happens, it's very entertaining, but it just doesn't happen enough.

Elsewhere, performances are patchy (Eric's two sons, in particular), and the music grating, if not forgettable. The various strands of Eric's life come together rather clumsily in a pleasing, but somewhat disingenuous finale. The gangster subplot is under-explained, and the antagonists are poorly dramatised, seeming to come from nowhere, and disappear just as quickly. Last summer, with its dearth of good blockbusters (*Dark Knight* excepted), *Looking for Eric* would have provided welcome respite. However, with something as good as *Star Trek* in the cinema this early on, it's hard to see that *Looking for Eric* has a place.
Fred Rowson

Britney Spears Circus at the O2 June 4th

★★★★★

A massive poster featuring each member of Girls Aloud clutching a chocolate bar faces the escalators in the O2 arena. It advertises 'Kit Kat Senses', a product characterized by its low food count: 'only 165 calories' runs the copy. In this instance, the Girls fail at selling in-substantiality; each looks at her chocolate bar as if down the barrel of a gun. Britney Spears Inc on the other hand have been capitalizing on vacuity to great success with the Circus tour. Before the curtain came up, we wondered whether real Britney was nervous about performing in a ring of 20,000.

These concerns were quickly forgotten as a dwarf began to circle the stage, trying to co-opt the audience to clap their hands. He was followed by men-twirling-giant-metal-shapes, and a short film

involving a small bald man dressed as Elizabeth I. When the veil around which all this was taking place was finally lifted, prerecorded Britney began; "There's only two types of people in the world/ The ones that entertain and the ones that observe". The divide between Britney and audience, voyeur and object didn't last the duration of the song. Where Britney says: "I'm like a ring-leader, I call the shots"; we see Britney in a cage, Britney in bondage gear, Britney being pushed around by dancers. Then again, many of those dancers were wearing gimp masks and responding well to her whip. It was hard to see who was in control of what; the 'observers' around me for example were trying to commandeer the entertainer role with some aggressive karaoke.

The whole show seemed to be based

on the deconstruction of *Miss American Dream*. Under close scrutiny, Britney's hair looked like hacked-off Barbie-locks that an evil sibling might Sellotape on to the dark, indelibly drawn on crown of a Ken doll. Subjectivity issues abounded in *If U Seek Amy*; "Is she in the bathroom, is she smoking up outside?" That Amy's a trickster, rhyming as she does with the first person pronoun, and other naughty things. Essentially, the concert was like a good Shakespearean comedy; it knew very well that all the world's a stage, but also provided some less self-conscious fun with love, sex, freaks and gender-bending. There were even tragic moments, namely when Britney stopped lip-syncing and hopped onto a crescent moon to sing the ballad *Everytime*. I was genuinely afraid for her and her musical



notes and her moon. When everything was spent, the crowd left efficiently and quietly. I like to think we were engaged in deep reflection on the state of modern culture and the politics of performance. It is conceivable however, that the crowd had been hypnotized by the repetitive drone of lyrics such as "Oh, womanizer, oh, you're a womanizer baby/ You you you are, you you you are/ Womanizer, womanizer, womanizer..."
Amanda Palin

Food and Drink

For the love of cheese



My name's Oscar, and I'm a serious cheese fiend. As 10 CC never quite sung, 'I don't just like cheese, oh no, I love it'. It's not even as though I'm just a cheddar virgin, either. I enjoy several different types of cheeses. Abertam cheese, Gudbrandsdalsost Passendale cheese, Mató cheese, Harzer cheese, chances are I've downed it all. I even enjoy a good old Stinking Bishop. So, yeah, I like lots of different types of cheeses, and on a lot of different types of foods. I like cheese that's spread, cheese that's grated, and cheese that's in a sandwich. I even enjoy cheese based snack foods. Like Mini-Cheddars, or cheese and onion crisps. And food that has the word cheese in it, but probably not much actual cheese itself, like Cheesestings. It's fair to say I'm a bit addicted. I can often be found in sordid back alleys (notably All Saint's Passage), looking for my next fix, sniffing out the various cheese dens. I even applied to my college because it is the only college in Cambridge which has a cheese course at formal (yeah, take that Johns, with your money, and power, and Victoria Silvstedt, former Playboy Playmate of the Year...). And that is what I will be discussing tonight; the college formal; a staple part of one's diet. Some colleges' clearly buy in their food wholesale from the discount section of Morrisons, failing even to heat up their packaged delights properly (*ahem, Christ's ahem*), while others serve up their delicacies with the aplomb and charm of an irritated Mr Bumble (*splutter, Caius, splutter*). The St Catharine's college formal, however, manages to top these incidents, yet in such a manner as to preserve its status as the most well-fed college. It has indeed, always had a unique way with food. There was of course the notorious incident when Guinness flavoured ice-cream was served, leading to many being simultaneously cold and hungover. The chef at the time was trialling the recipe in the hope of moving to the Fat Duck restaurant. He later turned out to be quacking, and was put down. Then there was the bizarre occasion when a Vegetarian Xmas Cracker turned out to be stuffed, with, well, stuffing. I guess one ought to have guessed that. But for all its flaws, the cheese-board course brings me running back; there is even a raspberry flavoured cheese, one that disgusts and delights in equal measure. And it is this that I will miss most once I leave the 'Bridge. I can only hope that's not too cheesy.
Oscar Toeman

VARSITY MAY WEEK

Theatre

Gigi
Fellows' Garden, Emmanuel College:
2pm (£5 concessions - £6 other)

History Boys
The Grove Lawn, Fitzwilliam College:
6.30pm (£4 students -£6 other).
If you brave the journey up the hill
you'll be rewarded by an outdoor
performance of Alan Bennett's award-
winning comedy.

Cambridge Comedy Festival
The Junction: 2pm (£8 concessions -
£12 other)

The Comedy of Errors
Caius Court, Gonville and Caius
College: 2pm (free)

Trojan Women
Peterhouse Scholars' Garden: 4pm
(£4 concessions - £5 other)

Fair Youth
Fellows' Garden, Emmanuel College:
5pm (£4 concessions - £5 other)

**Wishful Thinking - Footlights Tour
Show 2009**
ADC Theatre: 7.45pm (£6 conces-
sions - £8 other)

Balls

St John's May Ball
Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the
John's May Ball. How could you think
it was either a bird or a plane? It's the
7th best party in the world according
to Time Magazine.

**Queens' May Ball: The Beautiful
and Damned**
As the old wives tale goes, when
beautiful people and damned people
hang out together, fun stuff happens.
We will testing whether that is actu-
ally true in a matter of hours, oh yes.

**Downing May Ball: Peter Pan's
Neverland**
In the J.M. Barrie classic, did Nev-
erland actually belong to Peter Pan
(pictured below)? Either way, it's now
coming to Cambridge. Fun, food
and drink guaranteed. Fairies and
mermaids not guaranteed.



Art & Classical

**Robinson College May Week Con-
cert and Garden Party**
Robinson College Chapel: 6.30pm
(£1 concessions - £3 other)
For their last performance at Robin-
son, Guy Button, Geoffrey Thornton
and Bobby Maguire will be perform-
ing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto
No.5 in D major and the Chapel
Choir will sing Bach's Cantata No. 67
and Handel's Zadok the Priest. The
Garden Party will follow on from
this and will finish well in time for
May Balls.

Ideas, Constraints and Policy
Richard Eden Suit, Herschel Road:
6pm
A talk by Richard Le Baron the
Charge d'Affaires from the US
Embassy, discussing Obama's foreign
policy in particular.

**Endless Forms: Charles Darwin,
Natural Science and the Visual Arts**
Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington
Street: 12pm - 5pm
This groundbreaking exhibition
opens today, exploring the relation-
ship between Darwin's theories and
19th century art. The exhibition will
remain open until October 4th.

Garden Parties

History Society Garden Party
Harvey Court Gardens, Gonville
and Caius College: 12pm-3.30pm
(advance tickets can be bought by
e-mailing ssa35@cam.ac.uk and cost
£4 for members and £6 non-mem-
bers; on the door these prices rise to
£6 and £8 respectively).
I expect there will be Pimms. Prob-
ably strawberries too.



**Murray Edwards and Fitzwilliam
CU Garden Party**
The Grove Lawn, Fitzwilliam Col-
lege: 4.15pm-6pm
Following on from FitzTheatre's May
Week performance of History Boys,
there will be a short talk by Andy
Buchanan on "Why Think About
Jesus This Summer?" accompanied
by scones and lemonade.

Film

Looking for Eric
Arts Picturehouse: 12.00 (daily
except Wed), 14.20, 18.50, 21.20
Vue: 12.00, 14.45, 17.30, 20.15
Steve Evets plays a down-and-out
postman who seeks existential advice
from Eric Cantona, obviously. Shot
in Manchester, and filled with good-
natured humour, Ken Loach's latest
film could well be worth a watch.

Terminator Salvation
Vue: 11.45, 12.30, 14.30, 15.15,
17.15, 18.15 (Wed/Thurs) 20.00,
21.00, 22.45 (Wed), 23.45 (Wed/
Thurs)
Christian Bale is repeatedly thrown
against things by robots, while
looking angry and shouting at
nearby humans. If you enjoy LOUD
NOISES and boredom then why not
try walking next to a motorway for
two hours instead.

Red Cliff
Arts Picturehouse: 13.30, 17.00,
20.15
John Woo's latest is the most expen-
sive Asian film ever made. Centred
on the epic battle of Red Cliffs at
the end of the Chinese Han Dynasty,
it has been praised for its epic scale
and tight choreography. Thankfully,
it's finally made its way to the UK.

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Athletes Triumph on the Track

» Both men's teams take victory by record margins on a thrilling day for the Light Blues
» Women battle right to the finish line and miss victory by only three points at Wilberforce Road

Cambridge Men	129.5	Alverstones	134	Cambridge Women	99	Alligators	114
Oxford Men	79.5	Centipedes	76	Oxford Women	102	Millipedes	87

Varsity Sport

On May 16th the CUAC, supported by a lively crowd hosted the Dark Blues at Wilberforce Road Sports Ground for the 135th Varsity Athletics Match.

While Cambridge struggled last year in both track and field, this year was a somewhat different story. Athletes throughout the team had been coming to form over the course of the season, with many entering the event with recent personal bests under their belt.

The women's match was always going to be tighter than the men's and despite a fantastic day for Lucy Spray on the track, winning all three of her individual events and both relays, they could not do enough to take the trophy. Emma Rowley and Kate Laidlow also won their respective track events,

but it was Oxford's domination in the field, where they set massive records in both the pole vault and the javelin, which ensured their slim three point victory. The two relay wins, comprehensive though they were, would never have been enough to steal back a lead.

Their seconds had a much easier time of it, overcoming the Millipedes by a comfortable 27 point margin. Georgie Hurt ran well in the 200m and 400m, while Jo Harris threw an impressive shot. In the relays, again, it was all one-way traffic.

The men's matches were even more one-sided than predicted. In the seconds team, the Alverstones, Mickael Decressac, who is not eligible for the Blues on a technicality, threw an enormous record of 58.73m in the javelin. Another outstanding performance came from



The 4x100m team pose for the cameras

Dan Ekpe, who took a double in the 100m and 200m sprints, including a time in the former that would have seen him take bronze in the Blues race, ahead of both Oxford athletes. Taking first place in seventeen out of twenty events, the Cambridge team strolled to victory by a record 58 points.

Inspired by their supporting cast, the Blues were on top form right from the outset as Andrew Lee launched his hammer a massive 47.05m. And on top they remained, taking victory by another astonishing record of 49 points. Cambridge students filled the top two spots in no fewer than nine individual events and won both relays by comfortable margins.

The terrifyingly talented Louis Persent, junior international and BUCS silver-medallist, ran a fantastic 400m, winning by an astonish-

ing 3.2s. Meanwhile, Clare student Mark Dyble, who races for Basildon AC when at home, followed in Dan Ekpe's rapid footsteps, taking gold in both sprints, and was ably supported by Bens Richardson and Ellis. Yet again the relays underlined the depth of the dominance of the Cambridge team.

The men's victories were more than emphatic and only the women's defeat left a little tarnish on what was otherwise a well-polished performance.

Though both teams will be losing athletes before next year's event, this result was very encouraging for the younger members of the team, particularly Mark Dyble, who is currently only in his first year. Hopefully next year they will have a real chance to end their frustrating record at the famous Iffley Road ground in Oxford.



Mark Dyble and Ben Ellis jog home in the 100m

Jimmy's Marathon



Jimmy Pickles

Week Unknown

In which Jimmy fails to run the London marathon...

There's a lot of talk these days about the importance of keeping fit and the London Marathon has become something of a craze. I decided to jump on the bandwagon. Being blessed with a rugged natural fitness and having reduced my alcohol intake to the recommended twenty-four units per day, I felt in pretty good shape when the big day came.

Standing on the starting line I was looking around for a running partner, someone who might be at my level of fitness. It's hard to tell when they're all wearing fancy dress, but I assumed the guys dressed as burgers were below my standard, while those with expensive trainers and skimpy running shorts might be a bit too quick. I was searching for someone with a natural runner's body, tall and slim, but who obviously wasn't taking it too seriously.

Just as the gun went off I spotted the perfect guy on the other side of the crowd: He had dressed-up, so I knew he wasn't going to go absolutely hell-for-leather, but he was certainly tall and slim enough to be a good runner (his disguise as a lamppost didn't hide his body shape as some costumes may have).

I looked him all the way up and down and decided that this was a man with running experience. Having never done a marathon before, it would be my tactic to do exactly as he did, right up to the finish.

He was a slow starter. In fact he was a no-starter. I waited, perplexed, as he stood motionless on the opposite pavement. But with all his running experience, I didn't want to go over and question him. I realised it must be some kind of racing technique and that, any minute now, he would bolt off. Whenever he did so, I would follow.

But then, I thought, I didn't want him to think I was copying this technique. After all, if he knew some kind of secret marathon method, he'd be angry if I were spying. So, I ducked into a pub where I could see him. As he continued not moving, I went and bought myself a lovely pint of golden ale with a whisky chaser and took up a strategic position next to a window.

I drank quickly, not wanting to leave any in the glass when we eventually started running. By twelve thirty I'd had three pints and a few whiskies. By three I'd had three times that again and by six I was really in the mood to sprint.

At eight I was getting positively impatient, so I gathered all my courage and went out to have a word with him. I went to catch his attention then suddenly noticed that this was not the same guy as before but another, dressed also as a lamppost only wearing a yellow hat. I'd lost my running partner and, having never run a marathon before, I knew I wouldn't make it alone. I donned my cap and wandered dejectedly homewards.

The May Week Game

Jamie Ptaszynski

The reason sports are so successful is because of the rules. Without rules sports don't work. It didn't take any kids too long to realise that goal-hanging ruins a game of playground football, so every playground across the country has its own unique version of the offside rule. Most sports are really just a series of set plays, continuing within a predetermined artificial structure, like an over in cricket.

Life, as we are told all too often, is just a game, a sport. A fatuous cliché this may be, but all clichés contain some truth. The reason it works and the world doesn't collapse is that there are a certain set of accepted rules and structures, which may seem natural but could just as easily be artificially forced upon us by the evolution of a self-conscious society (bear with me, it gets fun in a minute).

The reason May Week seems so great is that many of these rules of 'common sense' no longer apply.

We have fewer obligations forcing us to fully consider our actions. We have no lectures in the morning, so we don't necessarily have to sleep at night. We have no work to do so we can, should we like, diminish our mental capabilities with the help of a little alcohol. We don't have to see any of the people around us for a couple of months, some forever, so our social responsibilities are reduced, the possibility of long-term embarrassment being less of a hindrance. For most students, these factors come together to create an atmosphere of unrivalled jollity.

However, there are those of us who find it very hard to function properly without a certain structure in place, if only so that we can completely ignore it. So, for their sake, I propose we turn the rest of the week into a sport. I'll recommend a few rules, but feel free to make up your own. The winners, rather than being those who have the most money or sex, like in real life, will simply be the ones who are still playing on Saturday.

The Rules

1. You may only enter your own room between 9am and 10am.
2. Water is for swimming only - consumption thereof is a crime.
3. Food must be accompanied by alcohol.
4. The use of real currency may be used only as a last resort - every effort must be made to barter for goods with clothing or other belongings you may have to hand.
5. Deliberation on any issue or decision will be punishable by any means deemed fitting by the present company. Just get on with it.
6. Being where you are expected to be should be avoided at all costs.
7. Being where you are not allowed to be should be seen as a great achievement.
8. Do your best to contract any diseases you come across. The proliferation of an epidemic will be greatly rewarded.
9. Compliments must be responded to with insults and vice versa.
10. Any challenges set for you by other players, friendly or otherwise, must be undertaken.

Obviously all sports need some kind of referee or arbitrator. If I am unavailable to sort out a dispute or decide on the proper course of action, the talking clock should be your next point of reference.

The end is only the beginning...



Congratulations on finishing your exams! You can now revel in the joys of May Week, and dedicate your time and energy to unwinding and relaxing.

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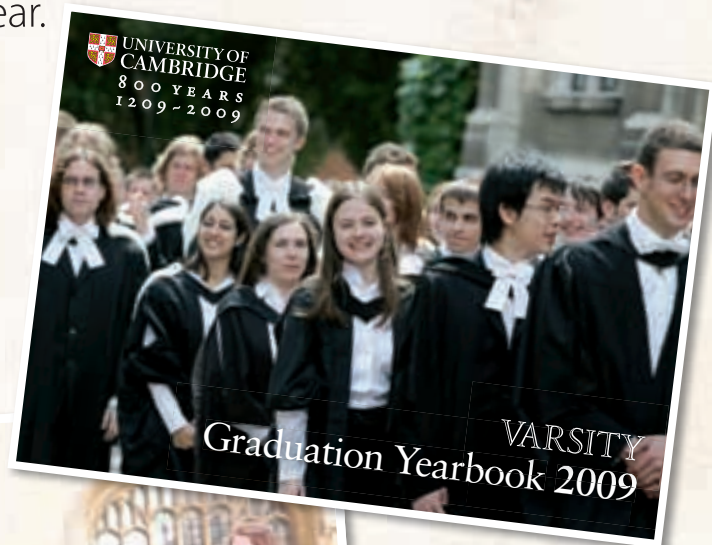
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