

University Press adopts a giant panda cub. Rejoicing ensues.



We talk to some overactive freshers about their experiences



Straight from the horse's mouth: an architect prepares for Saturday's revels

Varsity

Cambridge left mobilises against cuts



NOAH B. KATZ

Businesses and banks to be targeted as student activists claim “it is just the beginning”

TRISTAN DUNN & NATASHA PESARAN

Following national protests last week, the Cambridge left are planning further action to voice their anger at government proposals. Cambridge Defend Education, a student organisation which was started in October to fight funding cuts and fee increases, have decided to hold a teach-in on Sunday to raise awareness, to be followed by a demonstration in Cambridge city centre next Wednesday, which will coincide with a walk-out of sixth-form students from the Cambridge area. A member of Cambridge Defend Education told *Varsity*, “A lot of people were saying at the time, and this was repeated by ministers and others, that the protest last week was just the beginning. But that’s the reality. We’re not done yet.”

“Since the protest last week, things are really heating up. We have had a lot of new faces at meetings and new names added to our email list. We’re hoping the teach-in and demonstration next week will build interest and new involvement. We’re doing everything we can to get the word out.” A demonstration will take place next Wednesday, starting outside Great St Mary’s at noon. The group will march through Cambridge targeting businesses and institutions that are in some way linked to the cuts. In particular, banks and the phone company, Vodafone, which has come under charges of tax evasion, have been singled out. A member from the group told *Varsity*, “Once everyone is assembled we will march through Cambridge. It won’t just be a ramble, there will be people leading the parade, with

flags and music. But we will stop and protest outside every locale which has a stake in what’s going on. “After the march, we will see what the vibe is like. I don’t know what will happen. If people want to continue protesting, we will go with it.” Sixth-form students from around Cambridge will stage a walk-out on the same day and join the protest. Cambridge Defend Education will also hold a “teach-in to fight to fees and cuts” at King’s and Clare, which includes a number of talks, discussions and workshops. The title of one panel discussion had to be changed after King’s College expressed anxiety about its radical overtones. The panel, which was originally entitled ‘Direct Action Workshop’, was renamed ‘Sharing Stories of Activism’ at the College’s behest. According to a spokesperson, the

panel will consist of an “academic training session in how to go about doing direct action in a way that has political impact but does not cause any damage to persons or property.” Speakers include the socialist writer Richard Seymour, CUSU President Rahul Manisgani, and professors from the University of Cambridge and King’s College, London. Cambridge Defend Education’s promotional material says they hope the event will “shake up the debate on education funding, train up to resist cuts, fees and outsourcing” and “build a movement to defend education.” The group estimates that between 200 and 300 students will attend. All members of the campaign who commented wished to remain anonymous as an expression of the group’s democratic collectivist policy.

Student assaulted near Grange Road area

ABTIN SADEGHI

A female Wolfson student was assaulted at around midnight on Tuesday at the junction of Sidgwick Avenue and Grange Road. The attacker was described as a dark-haired male, wearing a leather jacket. Based on the description given, it has been suggested that the same attacker may have assaulted a Robinson student last Thursday morning on Adams Road. The Senior Tutor at Wolfson College, Dr Jane McLarty said that “neither student was hurt and nothing was stolen” but they “were both very upsetting incidents for the women concerned.” According to a Wolfson College student said that “Cambridge was a very safe city overall, but some areas feel really deserted, particularly at night.” “The recent assaults have made me much more wary and vigilant whilst coming home from a night out,” she said. Following the incident, many colleges have sent precautionary emails to their students, urging them to be careful when venturing out late at night. Dr McLarty advised students to take a “common sense approach” by “keeping to well-lit areas when coming home at night” and trying to “travel with companions if going to and fro, late at night in the Grange Road area.” The assault comes weeks after *Varsity* conducted an investigation into street safety. The investigation revealed Grange Road as being a higher-risk area for student assaults, with two female students from Homerton being assaulted earlier in the year.

Corpus JCR leaves CUSU
In an overwhelming 71% vote, Corpus Christi JCR has decided to disaffiliate from CUSU. In the wake of the decision, *Varsity* considers the value that CUSU provides and the impact the disaffiliation would have on CUSU’s budget. »p3


Dean criticises press treatment
Dr Priyamvada Gopal, Dean of Churchill College, has criticised sensationalistic coverage of the College in national and international press, after Freedom of Information requests were used to obtain student disciplinary reports for the last five years. »p4


A royal connection for Cambridge?
Cambridge residents are excited to learn that newly engaged couple Prince William and Kate Middleton are likely to take the titles Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, according to bookies. The Palace has so far remained tight-lipped on the issue. »p7

Explore careers at the European Union
The European Union (EU) is in the market for talented graduates looking to build careers as EU civil servants. *Varsity* spoke to David Lidington, the Europe Minister, about the opportunities available and the skills graduates need to be successful. »p6

News Interview: Sir Martin Gilbert
Renowned historian and official biographer of Winston Churchill, Sir Martin Gilbert has written over 80 books. *Varsity* sat down with him to discuss the ways in which colliding historical narratives have contributed to the Middle East conflict. »p8

The Question p12

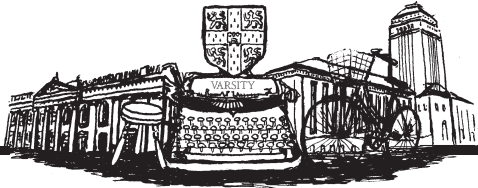
 **Corpus disaffiliation:** Is CUSU useful?

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Corpus disaffiliation

Corpus’s decision to disaffiliate from CUSU has met a mixed response from the wider student community, although the reaction of the majority is probably the endemic (and ill-advised) indifference that seems to dog most CUSU activity.

In *Varsity* this week, Clare College JCR President James Tiffin claims that Corpus have deprived “CUSU of a considerable chunk of their funds , which means that the services they are able to offer could be severely diminished this time next year. If every JCR committee decided that they didn’t want to pay, CUSU could not function.”

Fortunately, Corpus JCR have offered an eloquent defence of their position, accompanied by figures that make Tiffin’s comments seem hyperbolic. Corpus’s affiliation fee constitutes only 0.6% of CUSU’s budget – hardly ‘a considerable chunk of their funds.’

The source of CUSU’s problem is confusion and consequent ignorance about what services affiliation fees provide. Since all students are automatically entitled to the services CUSU provides, regardless of

whether their JCR is affiliated or not, the affiliation fee is essentially an expensive goodwill gift from the college communities.

There is also the troubling and terminally unanswered question of what exactly CUSU do. *Varsity*, with CUSU’s help, has tried to shed some light on this murky topic this week.

Calling for disaffiliation seems churlish when there are more interesting questions at hand. We ought not ask whether CUSU should exist or not, we ought to ask if it is efficient, if it is meeting the needs and demands of the student population and if it ought to be run for less.

Importantly, Corpus point out that affiliation fees constitute 20% of the CUSU budget. The onus is upon CUSU to prove that they cannot provide necessary services with 80% of their budget. Unfortunately, CUSU aren’t particularly vocal on this topic. As long as JCRs remain in the dark about what exactly it is that CUSU do, it will be easy to persuade them to disaffiliate. If only *TCS* would do their owners a favour every once in a while, CUSU might be able to get their message out.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

I’m writing to complain about the story published Friday 12th November, page nine,headlined: ‘Union membership reduction claim proved false.’

The content of this article damages my reputation as a journalist (as the author of the piece in The Cambridge Student, page one, 4th November) on several points, totally misrepresenting my article, and I expect you to publish a full apology in your next edition.

Your headline, claims that claims have been “proved false” and the subheadline states that the potential move is “unfounded.” However, quoting James Counsell directly in my original article, he explicitly said that he hoped to reduce fees to £10. Thus you cannot justifiably say it has either proven false, or “unfounded”.

This implies that I invented the story and deliberately misled in my article. Two claims without basis.

Your next comment: “The story in *TCS* maintained that due to a significant boost in corporate revenue the Union would be able to reduce their membership fees by a substantial amount” similarly misrepresents my integrity. Colonel William Bailey, Union Bursar said this, (indeed in the presence of two of your own reporters). To say that we “maintained”, again wrongly implies that this is based on false speculation on the part of *TCS*.

Moreover, this is only part of the explanation given by my article: “the launch of an appeal to alumni may help to cover the cost of reducing fees.”

The next section is similarly badly imbalanced: The article also stated that the Union had not settled on an exact figure, but did quote Union

President, James Counsell, as naming £10 as a “symbolic fee” in light of funding changes which might allow the Union to

abolish fees entirely.

Regardless of later statements by the Union, this is clearly not speculation but based on a direct quote by an authoritative source.

Most seriously, and indicative that neither The Union nor yourselves have properly read my article is fundamentally untrue. “*TCS* mistook speculation concerning the Union’s funding over the coming decade for a concrete plan for an immediate reduction.” At no point in my article do I state that this is either a concrete plan or intended to come into force immediately. This total misrepresentation is intolerable at the best of times, but to have printed these libelous untruths without even allowing me a right of reply is beyond the pale.

The rest of the article bases itself upon this untruth and again denigrates my journalistic abilities, especially as the profits from fundraising amongst alumni should have been taken into account along with corporate fees: ” To many,

the proposed reduction in fees was baffling when considered alongside the Union’s 2009 figures, which showed that while membership fees had raised £133,430, corporate income was only at £46,257. Given the disparity, it appeared highly unlikely that the Union could suddenly raise enough corporate income to drastically reduce membership fees, let alone eradicate them completely.” Of course I was aware of this disparity, and this is why at no point do I state that a reduction in membership fees is even agreed, never mind imminent.

The article fails to represent my article in a fair manner, fundamentally misunderstanding central aspects of it and denigrates my journalistic abilities. I feel that at the very least, a full apology is due to me, recognising your error, and I look forward to seeing it printed this Friday.

Yours,

Philip Brook
TCS Reporter

Online this week

ARTS COMMENT

Handsome wretch, Conrad Steel on why Harry Potter is so bloody good.



NEWS

Storm clouds gather as student movements prepare to carry on the fight for higher education



SPORT

Catch up on thrills and spills of Botswana’s No.1 meat packing football team



Inside this week

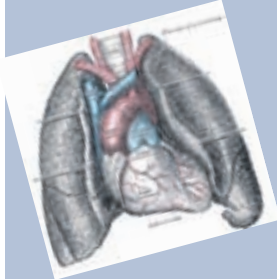
FEATURES

Five freshers spill the beans about what they’ve been doing in their first term



MAGAZINE

Medic? Missed that seminar on surgery? Big op’ coming up? Get cramming with this week’s Lecture Notes.



THEATRE

The Freshers’ shows, a smoking new sketch company and a fresh farce for Downing’s Howard Theatre



COMMENT

Gemma Gronland on why forking out for the royal wedding might not be the British’s cup of tea



Get involved

If you would like to find out how to write for *Varsity*, come to one of our weekly meetings.

News: Monday 3.30pm, Pembroke College Bar

Magazine: Wednesday 5pm, The Maypole (Portugal Place)

Alternatively, email the relevant section editor (right) with your ideas.

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Corpus disaffiliation: the fallout

DANIEL CHURCHER



Corpus students at a demonstration against College authorities last March, which enjoyed the support of CUSU sabbatical officers

ANDREW GRIFFIN

Corpus Christi JCR have voted to disaffiliate from the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU).

An overwhelming 71 per cent of Corpus undergraduates lent their support to the motion to disaffiliate from the University students' union in a ballot on Sunday. 149 students voted in total.

The postgraduate MCR also voted to disaffiliate, with 81 per cent of students opting out of membership of CUSU.

The move to disaffiliate comes after mounting frustration on the part of Corpus undergraduates and JCR members at the cost of membership, and the quality of service received. The JCR currently pays £2,800 to CUSU in affiliation fees.

The President of Corpus JCR, Rhys Grant, said that the Committee had not received clear information "as to what affiliation fees are used for and what CUSU actually does

for JCR/MCR committees. We needed some clear reasons as to why we should stay affiliated when our affiliation fees are more than 10 per cent of our budget."

He added, "It's hard to tell if this will affect Corpus students, but the general consensus seems to be that it won't, other than that we now have an extra £2,800 to use as the JCR/MCR wish."

Not all students were entirely happy with the news, however. Lawrence Dunn, a second-year Corpus student, was worried that the decision may act as precedent, and "the withdrawal of funding as other JCRs disaffiliate may seriously weaken CUSU just as the cuts come in from on high".

The affiliation fees paid by Corpus contribute only 0.6 per cent of CUSU's funding. Approximately 20 per cent of the CUSU budget is made up of affiliation fees.

However, coming at a time when questions are being raised at other

colleges about affiliation, the move will represent a significant blow to CUSU.

Rahul Mansigani, CUSU president, told Varsity that CUSU was "disappointed that Corpus Christi JCR and MCR voted to disaffiliate".

He argued that "the Committee and Corpus students recognised the many benefits that CUSU provides," and that "arguments for disaffiliation were based almost entirely on the fact that Corpus students would largely retain these benefits without the JCR paying for them".

He also assured that CUSU, "will continue to represent the entire student body to the University and beyond".

Corpus undergraduates will remain members of CUSU on an individual level, and thus will continue to be represented to the University by them and make use of the majority of their services.

The JCR is also eligible to remain as a member of the National Union

of Students (NUS). The JCR will, however, lose their seats on CUSU Council.

Some have expressed concern that the JCR's disaffiliation will have adverse effects for Corpus students in their ability to influence College and University authorities.

In the past, Corpus JCR has enjoyed the support of CUSU. Most recently CUSU backed Corpus JCR in a protest in March which was held against the College for alleged instances of miscommunication and financial mismanagement.

Corpus JCR is the only JCR in the University to disaffiliate, although Magdalene and Downing Colleges' MCRs have also done so.

The last time a JCR disaffiliated from CUSU was in March 2006 when Trinity College Students' Union voted to disaffiliate by a margin of only six votes.

Unsuccessful attempts to disaffiliate were also made by Peterhouse students in Michaelmas 2009.

Opinions

"We were disappointed that Corpus Christi JCR and MCR voted to disaffiliate from CUSU. JCRs contribute to CUSU on behalf of their individual students—thus collectively funding the fundamental representation and services CUSU provides to all students: disaffiliation compromises our ability to carry these out. CUSU is the only student union in the country that does not have block grant funding from the university, and depends on JCRs paying affiliation fees. CUSU's budget is very constrained, with the bulk of our services being funded by affiliation fees. We will continue to represent the entire student body to the University and beyond, as all students remain individual members of CUSU."

Rahul Mansigani
CUSU President

"I would like to have a body that represents my views to the University. Unfortunately CUSU represents the views of a few students further to the political left than I and don't appear to poll their membership on these opinions. CUSU also take large sums of money from JCRs for apparently no return; at least from my College's reported experience. This is why we have disaffiliated."

Alexander Johnson
Corpus Christi College

"Despite its best efforts, CUSU has repeatedly failed to provide any kind of service students either value or require. Colleges should not affiliate to an organisation deemed by the much of the student body as an inconvenient source of irritating email updates."

Ben Richardson
Christ's College

"Without the representation that CUSU provides for us all, the University would be free to trample all over us. JCRs can only do so much on their own. CUSU is the only organisation which can bring all students together so we can speak with one voice whenever we need to. At a time like this when students are more under threat than ever, CUSU is even more important."

Anonymous
Trinity College

Where the money comes from...

- Unlike almost all UK Students' Unions, CUSU receives no block grant funding from the University.
- CUSU relies heavily on affiliation fees to cover the cost of providing basic representation for and services to students
- The current affiliation fee is £6.70 per undergraduate, £3 for graduates
- For example the £1,700 (approx) which Peterhouse JCR contributes to CUSU makes up the entire budget for both the Education Campaigns and Ethical Affairs Campaigns for the whole year.
- Affiliation fees are set annually by representatives of Affiliated Common Rooms on the CUSU Council.
- As a result of responsible management of its finances, CUSU has never needed to approach the University for extra emergency funding, unlike the Graduate Union and other Students' Unions

And where the money goes...

- Almost all the money that JCR/MCRs donate to CUSU in the form of affiliation fees go directly to CUSU's campaigns CUSU relies heavily on affiliation fees to cover the cost of providing basic representation for and services to students.
- CUSU trains JCR/MCR committees, providing Welfare Officers with training in counselling, Presidents in leadership and communication skills, Treasurers in managing the budget.
- CUSU Sabbatical Officers are members of various Senior Tutors' Committees where they can make sure the efforts of individual JCR/MCRs are carried through at a higher level.
- CUSU offers welfare support through the Student Advice Service, which is the only professional, free and independent service that offers advice to all students and advocates on students' behalf at college and University hearings.
- CUSU can act as a strong local and national voice of Cambridge students

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Churchill Dean slams press coverage

Press reported several incidents of indecent exposure and misdemeanor at Churchill

JEMMA TRAINOR

The Dean of Churchill College has condemned the tabloid coverage of the College's disciplinary reports as "distorting" and "sensational".

In a statement released to *Varsity*, Dr Priyamvada Gopal clarified that, contrary to reports in the *Daily Mail* and the *Times of India*, she did not "complain" to the College following an incident in which she was propositioned by a former student of the College. "A drunk former student who did not know me made some inappropriate remarks when I came down to investigate noise late at night."

She also made the point that she there was nothing unusual in the way she dealt with the incident. "I did not 'complain' to the College about the incident; I reported it in an annual report as part of my normal duties."

Dr Gopal categorically stated that reports of "harassment" and having to "reject" and "fight off" the

advances of the student in question were completely unfounded, and has described the entire reaction by the British tabloids as "disturbing". The incident has generated a great deal of national and international press coverage, with the story being picked up by the *Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph*, as well as the *Times of India* and *The Hindu*.

Information regarding the disciplinary reports of Cambridge colleges was requested under the Freedom of Information Act, a request to which 29 of the colleges responded. It seems that according to the records, Churchill, Clare and Sidney Sussex have had the highest recent rate of "student misdemeanours", with Churchill alone having recorded 91 incidents involving more than 100 students over the past five years.

The timing of the articles in the national media has appeared somewhat artificially engineered to coincide with student protests over the Government's planned increase



The *Daily Mail's* coverage of the "indecent proposal" at Churchill College

in university tuition fees, particular as the disciplinary records are now more than three years old.

Dr Gopal remarked "I found the timing bizarre. The *Daily Mail* carried the story the day before the protests and *The Telegraph* on the day of the protests. My suspicions were bolstered by readers' comments which stridently denounce providing students like this with public funding."

In the context of the raising of university tuition fees and the violent outburst at last week's student demonstrations, its appearance in the press has certainly managed to distract from the issue of tuition fees to the detriment of the student population, a concern that is shared by Dr Gopal.

"I am disturbed that the British tabloids have misused the Freedom of Information Act to obtain a report dating back so many years in order to deliberately discredit university students who are protesting today against cuts to the higher education

budget."

Churchill JCR President Matt Boardman was also keen to stress that the media reports failed to reflect a realistic portrayal of college students.

"Most of the events mentioned in this article happened several years ago, and involved a very small and unrepresentative minority of Churchill students. The most recent Dean's reports in Churchill show that disciplinary incidents are actually very infrequent."

"The *Daily Mail* article provided no context, and as was pointed out by readers in the online comments, no mention was made of the College's strong performance in the Tompkins table this year. It's possible that 'Students Perform Well' was not a sufficiently exciting headline."

He added "In light of the media's treatment of the recent NUS protests in London, we can perhaps withhold our surprise."

Guernsey resistance testimony uncovered



The documents obtained by Dr Carr's research team

ANNA GOLDENBERG

Testimonies of resistance fighters in Guernsey during World War Two have been revealed by a University of Cambridge research team.

The shocking accounts of Channel Islanders who were sent to German prisons were presented as part of the Cambridge Festival of Ideas. The documents will help to finally recognise the resistance attempts to sabotage the German occupation.

The documents were obtained when a Guernsian who was imprisoned for resistance activity responded to a newspaper advertisement by Dr Gilly Carr, University Lecturer in Archaeology and daughter of Frank Falla. Falla was another Guernsian who was imprisoned for resistance activity.

The respondent to the advertisement handed the Cambridge research team untouched documents from Falla's bequest.

He had compiled nearly 200 pages of testimonies of Channel Islanders who were deported during the war in his life-long quest for recognition for their efforts.

Falla and four others ran the

Guernsey Underground Newsletter (GUNS) in which they distributed news from the Allied side to their fellow citizens. Upon getting caught, they were sent to Germany, travelling in cattle trucks under appalling conditions.

One report reads: "While in the trucks we had no sanitation on our journeys and through suffering from starvation and malnutrition, we were forced to bury the many prisoners who died in the trucks." Two of the GUNS members did not survive imprisonment.

Dr Carr explained why research into the Channel Islands resistance has been difficult to conduct: "Researching the resistance in the Channel Islands is still a very difficult and sensitive issue. Not everybody felt that they could afford to defy the Germans at the time and emotions still run deep."

Since the Channel Islands were of no strategic importance, the British government surrendered it to the Germans. Large parts of the Islands were evacuated. Authorities cooperated with the occupiers and the inhabitants always had the reputation of being passive.

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Record gift to Cavendish lab

RAPHAEL GRAY

The Cavendish Laboratory, the University of Cambridge's Department of Physics, will receive a £20 million donation from a wealthy City hedge fund manager, the largest in its 136-year history.

Coming at a time when institutions of higher learning across the country are facing punishing spending cuts, the pledge has been well received by the University authorities.

The donor, David Harding, 49, studied theoretical physics at Cambridge before founding Winton Capital Management in 1997, a hedge fund that predicts swings in commodity prices.

The company is known for employing highly trained PhDs in such esoteric subjects as extragalactic astrophysics and artificial intelligence.

Mr Harding's gift will set up and fund 'The Winton Programme for the Physics of Sustainability', an outfit he hopes will "develop materials with seemingly miraculous properties that could combat the growing effect humans are having on the planet."

The Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, unequivocally praised Mr Harding's donation as "truly exceptional both in its generosity and in its vision of translating fundamental discoveries in physics, to meet one of the most pressing needs of our generation.

However, sections of the student body have not met the news with such enthusiasm. Ashley Walsh, Chair of the Cambridge Universities Labour Club, expressed unease at the idea of the University coming to rely on private donors: "I do not believe that the entirety, or the majority, of the system should be funded by wealthy private individuals."

The Cavendish laboratory has produced 29 Nobel Prize winners.

CUP adopts panda cub

EMILY CARLTON

Cambridge University Press (CUP) has adopted a giant panda cub in an attempt to improve relations with potential Chinese clients.

The panda cub, named Jian Qiao, has been adopted for life, a commitment of roughly £2,500 a year for the extent of its life, usually around 20 years.

Cambridge University Press are positive about the investment. Chief Executive Stephen Bourne said "given the importance of giant pandas to China, this adoption is a symbol of our strategy to work with the Chinese Government to build bridges between China and the West."

The adoption is also "part of the wider commitment to do all we can to protect the environment".

Giant pandas are amongst the world's most severely endangered species, with fewer than 2,000 in the wild today.

CUP are keen to link this environmental commitment to their extensive collection of published works on climate change.

China is an important market for CUP, who have produced 30 titles in their 'Cultural China' series and English language teaching materials that are used throughout the country.

A spokeswoman said they are planning on utilising the interest in pandas they expect on the part of their Chinese students to make lessons more "fun and engaging". They plan to develop an English-language site where students can follow the growth and progress of Jian Qiao which will complement their published teaching materials.

But opinion amongst university students is mixed. Adam Sullivan, a second-year Bio NatSci, said "Chinese students will care more about

the quality of the teaching materials than about the company adopting animals".

Meanwhile Queens' student Edward Davenport said, "I don't think it's a particularly good investment, but £2,500 is a drop in the ocean for CUP and, as far as publicity stunts go, it has good environmental consequences".

Whilst some are still sceptical about CUP's stated aim to pander to an uncertain interest in Jian Qiao amongst Chinese students, few question that the money this will provide for Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Research Foundation is a good thing.

Whatever the motives behind the adoption, Chief Executive Stephen Bourne hopes that it will demonstrate interest amongst prospective English-language students as well as demonstrating good will to prospective Chinese buyers since "it shows the importance that we place on being a responsible member of the communities in which we operate."



Chief Executive Stephen Bourne with the adopted panda cub Jian Qiao

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Tess Maddock
(1989 – 2010)

Jesus Theologian Tess Maddock died on 30th October.

The university community has been shocked and saddened by the news of Tess Maddock's tragic death. Tess, a third-year theologian at Jesus College, was a brilliant student who had gained a starred first in her first year. She also found time to play hockey for the College and for the University Women's Second Team.

Not just a keen sportswoman, Tess also organised the College's Short Story Society and volunteered for several charities in the city. She will be greatly missed for her sound advice, deep intellect and great sense of humour.

Tess had found life difficult over her two years here and, despite the support of her many friends and of the College, had had to suspend her studies this year, returning home to Bristol in September. The thoughts of everyone at Jesus are with Tess's family at this time.

A memorial service will be held in Jesus College Chapel on Monday 22nd November at 8pm, and all are welcome to attend.

Cable fuels Cambridge privatisation speculation

IMOGEN GOODMAN

Business Secretary Vince Cable has fuelled speculation that Cambridge and other Russell Group Universities could go private in the near future.

In a speech given at the Girls' Schools Association Conference, he cited the threat of privatisation as one of the key reasons for government plans to increase tuition fees, stating that "fees keep universities public."

His comments follow media speculation earlier in the month that Cambridge was planning to go private as a result of reforms in government funding for Higher Education institutions.

The Comprehensive Spending Review, released on the 20th October, outlined plans to slash the budget for Higher Education by 40 per cent over the next four years. Lord Browne's controversial report proposed lifting the current tuition fee cap of £3,290 a year in order to replace the money lost in cuts to state funding.

Cable pointed out that the Browne Review had originally proposed removing the cap on fees entirely, but this had been rejected by the government due to concerns that it would unduly affect students from poorer backgrounds. The current government proposals stand at annual fees of £9,000, on the condition that institutions take adequate measures to improve access.

Speaking at the conference, Cable said, "One of the reasons we are



Students protesting the raising of the cap on tuition fees to £9,000; Cable suggests that the cap has not been lifted completely to prevent institutions such as Cambridge from going private

doing this is precisely to head off Oxford, Cambridge, London School of Economics, University College London from going private, because if we had not opened up the system in the way we have, they would have had a very strong incentive to do so. Whether we will head them off or not, I don't know."

Cable indicated that the government had been under pressure from particular institutions to lift the cap on fees, but stated that universities would be much less likely to privatise

under the current proposals, which, he claimed, would be profitable for them.

"It's a little bit like bankers who say if you're going to put some kind of tax on us we'll run away to Singapore. Universities have been playing this game with us – let us have unlimited fees or we'll privatise. I don't believe it.

"I think what we're proposing is a fair settlement which will provide them with enough income to provide high quality education and which is

also fair to the pupils".

Cambridge-alumnus Cable said that he would "very much regret it" if the University did privatise, but said that he found it hard to imagine either Cambridge or Oxford taking this step, primarily due to the complicated logistics of the collegiate system.

Cambridge has stated that "the University has no position on these matters," and responses from fellows have been profoundly ambivalent.

David Lidington: Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth

Jessie Waldman talks to **David Lidington** about graduate opportunities at the European Union



Q: As Minister for Europe, your job must involve a lot of liaison between the House of Commons and European parliament. What advantages are there for an aspiring politician to go into European politics rather than British politics?

A: Most graduates are probably not looking to forge a career in politics by becoming MPs or

MEPs. They would rather be involved in the process of contributing to policy making. This is the role of the EU civil servant. European policy is developed by EU civil servants who need to think creatively, be at ease working in a dynamic political environment and who are able to develop policy that those at the political level can judge and implement. Those who are interested in this kind of career can work in areas as diverse as climate change, trade development or the single market, alongside people from all over Europe.

Q: Are recruiters only looking for people with a background in political sciences or languages?

A: No, the EU needs generalist civil servants with a wide variety of academic backgrounds including lawyers, economists, auditors, IT and other specialists. However, you do need to have a satisfactory knowledge of a second language, to a minimum of French or German A-level standard.

Q: What qualities are recruiters looking for in applicants to fast stream the application process for the European institutions?

A: The European Fast Stream is designed for graduates whose ultimate ambition is to work for one of the EU institutions and become a European civil servant. Its main purpose is to ensure you get experience and training that will boost your chances of passing the EU's recruitment competition known as the concours. Otherwise you can apply directly to EPSO (European Personnel Selection Office) to take the concours. Both routes require you to be motivated to 'work for' Europe.

Recruiters are looking for people who have something more than just knowledge and professional skills. Equally important is the drive to deliver results and the ability to work effectively as part of a multi-cultural team. These are careers spent surrounded by Europe's brightest and best, in a buzzing, multicultural environment. The ability to be diplomatic and to adapt easily to a variety of environments and stakeholders is essential. It's a fact that the EU's institutions want more British staff because they are well-known for their quality and professionalism, for their native fluency in English and their ability to negotiate effectively.

Q: What kinds of job opportunities are available?

A: A graduate at 'administrator' level would be typically engaged in drafting policies and implementing EU law, analysing and advising. They may find themselves taking part in trade negotiations with non-EU countries, representing the Institutions in international forums, inspecting the fishing fleets in the Member States, developing or managing a specific scientific research programme, or drafting a decision of the European Court of Justice or the European Ombudsman. Career opportunities include administration, law, finance, economics, communications and science, because to cover the wide range of policy areas, staff are needed whose skill set reflects the incredible breadth of subject matter covered.

Q: European politics has traditionally been seen as a political backwater secondary to a career in Westminster. Do you think this

is still the case?

A: No, I don't think it is. There is much that the EU does that has a positive impact on the lives of UK citizens every day. Membership of this single market – the world's largest multi-lateral trading bloc – brings significant economic opportunities to the UK. 3 million jobs (10% of the UK workforce) are directly or indirectly linked to export of goods and services to EU countries. What the EU does directly affects us all. This means that EU civil servants have extremely stimulating and varied jobs. In other words, they have a career packed from the outset with interesting, challenging, responsible work that really makes a difference: shaping the policies, creating the legislation, and negotiating the compromises which make the headlines across Europe every day. This work is every bit as important as that carried out in Whitehall.

Q: What kinds of transferable skills could someone whose future career plan was to go into say the media, or a think tank acquire by working in the European Institutions?

A: Firstly, working in the EU institutions brings you into contact with a wide range of people from Europe and the whole world. Such contacts can be an asset professionally as well as personally throughout any future career. It's an environment that gives you knowledge which is in great demand in other careers, such as political and public affairs, think-tanks, media and even business. I'd also say that the skills required of a good official: clear thinking; ability to express yourself clearly and form a coherent argument [would be cultivated].

Hi! Society Cambridge Treasure Trap (LARP)



ROSEMARY WARNER

What is Cambridge University Treasure Trap?

Cambridge University Treasure Trap is a live action role play (LARP) system, set in a made-up medieval-fantasy world, which is a bit like the Lord of the Rings or Discworld in flavour.

Players take on characters who live in the city of Grantabrugge - similar to Cambridge in many re-

spects - and respond to the things which go on there and the people that they meet.

Currently the society has about 40 members, 5 of whom are Refs, responsible for running the game.

What happens when Cambridge University Treasure Trap meets?

Every Friday we have tavern nights, where we turn up in cos-

tume. The ref will shout "TIME IN", from which moment everyone is in character.

As the evening goes on, 'monsters' will be sent in, who might be townsfolk who want to give the player characters missions, or try to assassinate them, for example.

The players should build their characters up and keep them consistent from week to week.

How do you keep tabs on the progression of the characters?

Mostly we keep the characters quite simple, but sometimes there will be a fight, or an attempted poisoning, and that's where the rules come in - to adjudicate the things we can't do for real, like put a love potion in someone's drink.

Sometimes the players get carried away, and a ref might need to point out that they've been hit in the arm eight times.

That's quite an unusual pastime - how do you feel others perceive your society?

Mostly they want to take pictures of us! We do get a bit of flak for what we do, but mostly people seem really interested when they hear a proper explanation.

We're only in character during the LARP sessions - most of the time we're just normal people, and we usually end up in the pub after meetings.

What's the best thing about your society?

There's nothing else quite like it -

where else can you step into a different reality and then run around the woods hitting your mates with bits of foam on sticks?!

And what's the worst?

Falling over, defeated in battle, just to realise you've landed right in one of Grantchester Meadows' plentiful supply of cowpats...

What's your society REALLY about?

To me it's about having a great time with a large group of friends, doing something that we'll be telling war stories about for years to come. If you've ever wondered what it's like to live another person's life, or feel the thrill of fighting to the death, come along!

Sum up your society in five words.

Another you in another world.

MICHELLE TAYLOR WAS INTERVIEWED BY
LAUREN DAVIDSON

Find out more at
<http://www.srcf.ucam.org/tt/>

William and Kate could be Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

SAMANTHA SHARMAN

In a bit of news that has thrilled Cambridge residents, Prince William and Kate Middleton could become the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge after their marriage next year.

Traditionally, royal men receive a new title from the sovereign after their wedding. In addition to Cambridge, there are a number of titles that are available as possible options for Prince William, including Duke of Clarence, Connaught, Sussex or Windsor.

However, Cambridge appears to be a likely choice, as bookmakers Paddy Power have made the title the favourite of the suggestions.

The news came after Clarence House announced that the couple became engaged on a holiday in Kenya in October. The wedding is set to take place next spring or summer.

Many students expressed excitement at the prospect of a Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. "This is what the monarchy is for," said one Cambridge undergraduate.

She added, "The wedding will be a day of national celebration and it would be fantastic for Cambridge to have such an honour bestowed on it by having the future King and Queen as our Duke and Duchess."

Another student wondered whether the bestowing of the title would mean possible involvement of the young royals in Cambridge life. "If they are the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, is it so inconceivable that they might consider taking part in town or University events?"

However, not all students are so enthusiastic. According to one student from Pembroke College, "It won't have any effect on Cambridge or on any of our lives."

"I believe that the royal family is an anachronism that merely distracts us from modern problems and an escape into the bliss of our imperial past."

Another student argued that the Cambridge title was not the most suitable one for the couple. "While it would be exciting for them to be named Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, neither William nor Kate have any connection to Cambridge," he said.

He added, "It would be more meaningful for them, if they had a Scottish title." Prince William and Kate Middleton met when they were both students at the University of St Andrew's in Scotland.

The royal couple will receive a series of other titles in addition to the one given to them by the Queen on their wedding day, including Prince and Princess of Wales and Duke and Duchess of Cornwall when Charles becomes King.

The title of Duke of Cambridge is quite rare and usually used for minor royals. The first official use was in 1664, given to James Stuart, the son of the Duke of York by his first wife. However, the ill-fated royal only lived for a few months, resulting in the title becoming extinct.

The most recent Duke of Cambridge was Prince George, grandson of George III. According to historian Dr Dean Lang, Prince George was the most famous royal to hold the title. He is known to millions of people as a result of the countless pubs named after him.

Dr Lang describes him as a "bit of a stickler and a great disciplinarian." Dr Lang added, "If anyone held back the army for 50 years, it would have been the Duke of Cambridge, I'm afraid."

There have been some critics in the past who have doubted the suitability of Kate as a bride for William. As such, it is perhaps fitting that the previous Duke of Cambridge ignored the disapproval of the royal family towards his choice and married Sarah Fairbrother, an actress and the mother of two of his children.

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Michael J. Behe is Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, USA, and has done research on sickle-cell disease and, at the US National Institutes of Health, on DNA. He is the author of 40 technical papers and two widely-reviewed books, Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution (1996) and The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism (2007), which argue that living systems at the molecular level are best explained by intelligent design.

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News in Brief

Historic lectures available online

Thirty Jawarhal Nehru Memorial Trust Lectures have been made available to read online. The lectures, which began in 1966, cover topics ranging from the Indian film industry to human rights and climate change. Past lecturers have included Sir Harold Wilson and HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan.

After graduating from Cambridge, Nehru became President of the Indian National Congress in 1928 and by the end of the Second World War was recognised as Gandhi's successor. In 1947 he became the first Prime Minister of India, a post he held until his death in 1964.

The next lecture will be given by Gopalkrishna Gandhi, governor of West Bengal from 2004 to 2009 and the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. It will be entitled 'Britain, Gandhi and Nehru' and will take place in London on 24th November. **PATRICK O'GRADY**

New building for science departments

Work is underway on a new site for the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy, specially designed to accommodate world class equipment and research facilities.

The £41 million building will allow the Department to be housed on one location designed specifically for its purposes for the first time in its 100 year history. The department is currently spread across five separate buildings in the city centre, some dating back to the 1870s. The resources will include a state-of-the-art electron microscope facility, a cell-culture laboratory, a mechanical testing area, a process laboratory and workshop, and an x-ray diffraction facility. **SAMANTHA SHARMAN**

Fire scare at King's

King's students were awoken at 3am on Thursday morning by the fire alarm and clouds of smoke from one of the kitchens. With the arrival of two fire engines, it was realised that a male student, attempting to cook a midnight snack in the Spalding Hostel kitchen, after a heavy night of drinking, had passed out unconscious and left the meal to catch fire.

A King's student told *Varsity* that she was "just about to head off to bed" when she was "startled" by the sirens and presence of the fire and rescue service. Following the incident, students received a warning from the Lay Dean regarding the "disastrous consequences" of such "anti-social" behaviour. **ABTIN SADEGHI**

Martin Gilbert: The History Teller



Sir Martin Gilbert, esteemed historian and Churchill biographer, talks to **Osama Siddiqui** about the uses and abuses of history.

I have had the pleasure of meeting Sir Martin Gilbert once before, although our meeting then was particularly brief and is likely not to have registered with the esteemed historian. Sir Martin was serving a visiting professorship in History at the university that I attended before coming to Cambridge (the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada), and was due to give a public lecture entitled "Did Churchill Believe in Democracy?"

There was palpable excitement on campus among history enthusiasts at the prospect of hearing one of the world's foremost authorities on Winston Churchill talk about his area of expertise.

Sir Martin's illustrious list of accomplishments was cited in tones of hushed reverence. Author of over 80 books, Churchill's official biographer, knighted by the Queen for "services to British history and international relations". The expectations were high and the talk did not disappoint.

Given this history, I jumped at the opportunity to speak to Sir Martin

on his recent visit to Cambridge. He was invited by the CU Israel Society to deliver the inaugural Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture on the legacy of Rabin.

While I had originally planned for our conversation to be about the challenges and prospects for peace in the Middle East, as a history student, I could not resist asking Sir Martin about the practice of history itself.

We started by talking about how a sense of history hangs over long-standing conflicts, such as the one in the Middle East. "One of the problems in the Middle East conflict is that neither side understands the other's narrative. It is important to see how the other person sees the historical narrative," Sir Martin explained.

According to Sir Martin, it is very important to understand how the other side views itself and its circumstances in the great sweep of history. "The narrative of the underdog needs to be understood both ways," he said.

The public recognition of each

other's history has practical implications as far as the Middle East is concerned. Since the "essence of true history requires both sides recognising the other's side", Sir Martin argued that "parallel to peace negotiations you need educational initiatives."

"One of the problems in the Middle East conflict is that neither side understands the other's narrative."

As an example, Sir Martin mentioned an initiative which involved Israeli and Palestinian women who were suffering from cancer to meet and share each other's experiences. However, since it has become increasingly difficult for there to be travel between the West Bank and

Israel, the frequency of such initiatives has decreased.

"The situation has hardened. It's more difficult for people to meet," explained Sir Martin.

The theme of one side understanding the other's perspective seems to be very important to Sir Martin's work. His latest book (his 82nd), which was published this year, is titled 'In Ishmael's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands'.

Described by reviewers as a "masterful" and an "epic examination", the book is about 1,400 years of Jewish life in Muslim territories. As the book jacket describes it, it is a story of both "co-existence and conflict".

"I spent three years writing it," Sir Martin explained. "And I studied thousands of different episodes."

The book is a remarkable portrait of hope and reconciliation between the two faiths. So much so that, "one reviewer felt it was too politically correct," Sir Martin said with a chuckle.

In this way, the book perhaps reflects the kind of history that Sir Martin is interested in writing. "When you write history, do you inevitably bend in one direction or the other when you choose to write about certain episodes and not others?" he asked.

Explaining his own perspective, he said, "I don't think I would be interested in a subject that highlighted a particularly negative aspect. I chose this subject because it had a positive aspect in it."

Sir Martin's efforts, however, did not stop some from using his historical work for their own ends. "In Ishmael's House was taken up by the partisans of the two narratives," he recalled. "But, nothing is black and white."

This leads us to a discussion of the public uses and abuses of history. "History is a very accessible subject and lends itself to popularising quite easily, as it relates to people's parents and grandparents."

Sir Martin is the unique historian whose works are not only well-reviewed in academic ivory towers, but are also popular with average readers.

"I have quite a high respect for my readers," he said. "I welcome feedback from them, and they frequently email me with comments or points about which they are angry."

Does he think that the general public is informed enough about history? "In some areas," he said. "Military history, for example, is very popular, partly because of the attention given to it by films and television programmes."

However, there are many other areas of historical knowledge that he would like to see strengthened. "It is important to understand the evolution of society, of where our society is and how we got here," he explained.

"In every society, people take for granted where they are. But, it is important to ask, 'how did we get to this point? How did the role of the state evolve?' These are important questions."

They are important questions indeed, and the totality of Sir Martin's work has been asking these questions with deep intelligence and insight for nearly five decades.



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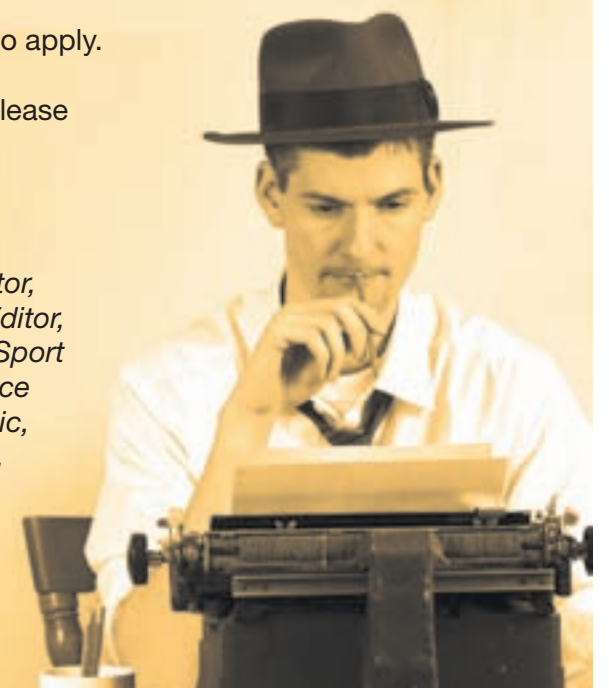
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Comment

@paulchambers: that's a twitter pill to swallow

The prosecution of Paul Chambers is telling of a generational gap in interpretations of how we use the internet



JAMES VINCENT

Friends and fellow citizens, have you heard the good news? Yes, I can't believe it either; another would-be terrorist has been ousted and prosecuted, another budding bin Laden's diabolical scheming has been stamped out by the might of Her Majesty's constabulary and brought to justice! Justice, good citizens, has been done to those who dare to threaten the lives of innocents as a joke. A joke? Well, yes, admittedly it was just a joke, but, I might hasten to add, this was not just any joke, this was a joke published on...the internet!

Ahem. Well, yes, despite all that incredibly biting satire, the

prosecution of Paul Chambers is a sad reality. The 27-year-old accountant has just lost his appeal against a conviction that has now found him guilty of sending a "menacing electronic communication" over Twitter. The offending message reads in full: "Crap! Robin Hood airport is closed. You've got a week to get your shit together, otherwise I'm blowing the airport sky high!"

That this is a joke seems to be too obvious to need pointing out. Even if you don't happen to be a comedy scholar able to dissect the subtle interplay of self-deprecation, hyperbole and mock self-importance in the tweet, then at least the exclamation marks should be a dead giveaway. Not so for Judge Jacqueline Davis who ruled that the tweet was "menacing in its content and obviously so," claiming that "any ordinary person reading this would see it in that way, and be alarmed." Seeing as the ordinary people that the

message was sent to consisted of Chambers's friends and family one would hope that their first thought was a sit down and a quiet chat with Paul, rather than calling in the anti-terror squads. It is obvious that this trial is as much of a joke as the original tweet; not so funny is Paul's loss of a job, a permanent criminal record and a £3,000 bill in fines and legal fees.

However, the issue here is larger than just a single misguided judge. A blind and inattentive application of the law will always result in these aberrations. They are rightly decried by the public, but will remain as mostly harmless one-offs. The lurking evil that prompted such a judgement is far more subtle: it is the widening gap between how those in power understand the internet, and how those who use it do. Our generation instinctively understands that although someone's presence on the internet is partly

an extension of their public life, there remains a key difference between what people say online,

Our generation understands that though someone's presence on the internet is partly an extension of their public life, there remains a key difference between what people say online and who they really are.

and who they are in real life: not everything needs to be taken so damned literally. You don't leap to the phone to confront a friend every time their Facebook status

declares that they "Just throttled a baby, woo", or send off heartfelt consolations when they update with "Now I can't marry Prince William, FML", because you know the conventions – you know it's a joke. The judge in Paul Chambers's case seems to exemplify a generation that thinks that sending a tweet such as Paul's is done with the same seriousness as a threatening and huskily-voiced phone call. These are the same people who wonder how long it will take for their 'Electronic-Mail' to get to you through all those pipes. These are the people in power.

The problem extends to the media as well, with po-faced literalism providing good headline fodder for perennially scandalised shit-stirrers such as the *Daily Mail*. Stephen Fry seems to be a lightning rod for these sorts of thing and was being targeted again on Tuesday because of an outburst against being labelled "opportunistic". And why did he get called this? Because he offered to pay Paul Chambers's legal fees. The generation gap between those who understand and those who don't is slowly closing, but until it does, at least we can show solidarity.

Gap Nah

Tuition fee increases mean sixth-formers and graduates thinking about taking a jolly gap year to somewhere sunny can forget it



SOPHIE DUNDOVIC

With tuition fees set to reach record levels by 2012, we could be about to see the popularity of traditional gap years plummet. It will not be that students no longer value the experience that a gap year brings and the opportunities that it presents, but simply that it is a lot more difficult to justify spending thousands travelling the world when you can expect to be subject to somewhere in the region of £36,000 of debt three years down the line. And that is without taking your year's worth of escalating expenses into account.

Granted, there will be some who are dead-set on the idea and prepared to swallow the costs or find some inventive way of working their way around the world, but these jobs are unfortunately few and far between and becoming increasingly difficult to find. With more and more graduates chasing short-term opportunities or taking post-university gap years, it is becoming quite a challenge for the average sixth-former to secure any sort of well-paid work abroad.

The biggest impact will surely be felt by those currently in their final year of A level study. According to the Browne Report it seems that the higher rate of tuition fees is to be implemented in 2012, meaning that the next batch of freshers will escape the fees hike by the skin of their teeth.

This clearly presents those considering gap years of any kind with some difficult decisions. Those who were planning on working for a year to save up some money for university would effectively be working for free, since by enrolling in 2011

they will be able to lock themselves into the lower rate of £3375

With more and more graduates chasing short term opportunities or taking post-university gap years, it is becoming quite a challenge for the average sixth-former to secure any sort of well-paid work abroad.

as already proposed by the government. Deferring entry could then

cost up to £5625 in the first year alone for home students. Similarly, those hoping to travel will have to decide whether the experiences gained are worth the extra debt accumulation.

Financially it does not make much sense for anyone to defer entry next academic year. For some students other considerations will outweigh the financial implications but this issue is certain to be a hot topic in schools nationwide. So what does this mean for university places?

Increased pressure on an already finite number of higher education places is a likely outcome as students flock to avoid the extra fees. 2011 entry is a comparative bargain but this can only leave more hopefuls disappointed as the competition increases. Those lucky enough to secure offers can relax in the knowledge that they will be able to travel all they like after their degree and be more than £17,000 better off than their 'gap yah-ing' peers.

The lucky ones are those of us safe in the knowledge that our fees are fixed. We had a choice and there



was no price on it. Higher education certainly needs more funding but students are in no position to foot the bill. Students benefit from a university education, there can be no denying that, but so does the rest of the country. It is Britain's graduates who are developing the innovative ideas that enable us to compete in a global marketplace, who are increasing the efficiency of our healthcare system and who are going on to teach the next generation. Surely the benefits to the economy outweigh whatever it costs to subsidise higher education in the long run.



It's a nice day for a hyped wedding

The spectacle of a royal wedding does nothing to enhance our sense of 'Britishness'



GEMMA GRONLAND

The front page of *The Times* on Wednesday read "16-page engagement souvenirs special" atop a lovely picture of the recently engaged royal couple. The *Guardian* had its daily centre spread as a picture of the couple looking regal and the *Daily Mail* naturally went into overdrive, as if it has been waiting for this story to burst for years. All in all, the media have exhausted the story already – and just three days in. There's nothing left to do now, other than to print speculative stories about the cost of the wedding and the bookies' bets on the final date. Thrilling.

It goes without saying that this is an inappropriate time to be revealing to the public that tax-payers' money may be spent on this extravaganza. I am positive no corners will be cut and security alone will cost an obscene amount – yet the splurge of

cash is not all that could potentially aggravate the British public. It is the patronising fact that this announcement might just cheer us up. Well thanks, but it hasn't and won't, and the relentless media coverage is not only mind-numbing but exposes this wedding to have more than just a soupçon of *Hello!* about it.

Jonathan Freedland has written in the *Guardian* that, "It's easy to mock the hysteria of a royal wedding but state occasions help reveal what kind of country we are." I read this assuming he might follow with a diatribe against celebrity obsession, and that the mass hysteria over the engagement (not even the wedding itself) is another sad reflection of what we view as important; forget my pay freeze and the fact my children might not be able to afford university, Wills and Kate are getting hitched! Unfortunately, I was not granted such satisfaction. In fact, he acknowledges the absurdity of the occasion but continues to qualify it by suggesting that such occasions unite us and express something British.

Maybe in ages past the monarchy and their lavish events were once a spectacle that struck a chord with our nation; but now we have gossip magazines and reality TV. I struggle to believe that the majority of people interested in this engagement possess a genuine attachment to the institution of the monarchy,

which the wedding will supposedly reinforce. It is far more likely – and somewhat proven by the media cov-

People will treat the entire occasion just as they treat every other celebrity matching. This is not somehow emblematic of our sense of 'Britishness' – it's an affirmation of our own prurience and voyeurism.

erage – that people are treating them just like they treat other celebrity couples. *The Times* even ran a page that shouted the title 'Dress of the Century?' This is not emblematic of some abstract 'Britishness'; it's an affirmation of our prurience and voyeurism.

Then there is that slight feeling of

coincidence. On Wednesday afternoon, Cameron was able to deliver what appeared to be some good news amid a period of disillusionment and so presumably upped the ratings on his new happiness index. Maybe the lesser cynic would dismiss this as Freedland does, but coincidence or not, the tone of the occasion is paradoxical. One week there are violent protests and the next there are royal engagements and outpourings of popular joy: the dichotomy is almost laughable.

Who is footing the bill is probably the most common concern among those not too enthralled by the engagement announcement, but for me it's tripartite: the money, the media and the message. It's going to cost an awful lot, we will not escape the endless coverage of it until the wedding (or even the honeymoon) is over, and the announcement comes at a time that leaves a bitter taste in one's mouth.

When Freedland ends his article with "even the most hardbitten republican will be wishing them well," I am reminded of a piece I read not long ago about the scrapping of free admission to swimming pools for the under-16s and over-60s because of the "crippling deficit". Seeing as many who oppose the monarchy do so for economic reasons, a royal wedding courtesy of the public, means that many will not be "wishing them well."

Our Dude in a Mood

OUR MAN IN AMMAN HAS GONE AWOL IN JORDAN. WE WILL KEEP YOU POSTED...



Oh Cambridge, I can see it happening again. Everybody acknowledges the Week 5 blues, that halfway turning point at which the student population's frowns refuse to turn upside down, and the mound of essays which has been piling itself ever higher now looms mountainous above you and goads you to be its Sisyphus. Less acknowledged than the mounting stress and depression of Week 5 is the declining capacity of reason and normativity that characterises Week 7.

Actions which under normal circumstances would be unquestionably illogical now present themselves as perfectly valid. The work mountain which has amassed itself is unerringly omnipresent and now casts a shadow over your social and sexual relations. Maybe I am being more monastic than average, but all I know is this: this week I needed to write something down whilst on the phone and I couldn't find a post-it and so convinced was I that my naked flesh wouldn't be seen by another human until travel day that I scrawled "Meeting at 12, Free School Lane" onto my pelvis. Reasonable in the situation, but still, one feels, symptomatic of something.

By now, all those tiny little commitments you have made throughout term have similarly all clustered together and rather than each being a cute little distraction, they have fused together into an angry mosaic that jogs beside you in the street as you scurry along; it tugs at your shirt-sleeve, begging "You said you'd do me, why won't you do me?" All the small things are those that erode your sense of self – a mailing list you forgot to send out to your society is all it takes to undo an otherwise competent and functional being.

I think my situation is exacerbated by a dissertation with which I become gradually more and more obsessed. I spend my days working in a primary school observing gendered behaviour, and then bound into the kitchen waiting to pounce on some naïve individual who might accidentally catch eyes with me, and then I unload a bucket of Judith Butler over them as I explain my observation notes in detail. This particular problem is borne of the self-obsession that eases its way to the fore by this point in the term; increasingly, all those individuals who once milled randomly around you in college and in the streets become an amorphous shifting unit.

JONNY WALKER

Is Corpus JCR right to disaffiliate from CUSU?



Corpus Christi JCR

YES

The past year has been an eventful one in Corpus. Most Corpus students appeared, banners and placards in hand, on the New Court lawn to protest changes made by the college to student experience. Students lamented the breakdown of communication between them, the JCR, and the college. Reforms have been made at all levels in response to these events, by College and students alike. At a time when the JCR Committee has been placing greater emphasis on transparency and accountability in its dealings, then, the question of CUSU affiliation could not be ignored.

What is surprising is the lack of information available to students detailing exactly what CUSU does and does not do for them, why CUSU affiliation is important, and what provision is made for those JCRs that decide to disaffiliate. Given the recurrent tendency of JCRs and MCRs to question the point of affiliation, this is an odd oversight on CUSU's part. Requests for documentation to the CUSU President yielded some results, as did Corpus's invitation for CUSU Representatives to meet with the JCR and answer questions at open meetings.

On the strength of this information, however, Corpus students could still not find sufficient justification for the cost of affiliation to CUSU.

Affiliation in Cambridge operates on a two-tiered system. On one hand, students are affiliated as individuals, and the University recognises CUSU's claim to represent them on this basis. At the same time, JCRs and MCRs are affiliated as corporate bodies, and are given certain services in return. It is important to remember that Corpus's affiliation fees, at £2,800, constitute over 10% of the JCR budget, but only 0.6% of CUSU's. The onus is on CUSU to demonstrate why affiliation fees will have a greater positive impact in their hands than in those of a JCR more directly responsive to its students' needs, but operating with a far smaller budget.

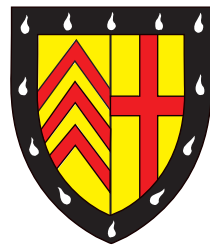
At open meetings, Corpus students struggled to identify any services which they or the JCR used to a meaningful degree. Questions were also raised over how 'in touch' CUSU is with mainstream student concerns – the experience of CUSU Council or open meetings would seem to attest to this. Troublesome too were CUSU's failures to respond to crises in Corpus's past even when asked by the JCR for assistance.

The decision to disaffiliate is not an easy one. Opinions are divided, both within the JCR Committee and within the student body at large. There will be those that criticise Corpus's decision. One charge levied is that Corpus students will be 'freeloading', using the range of services CUSU provides without contributing to their upkeep. Corpus students will go on being individual members of CUSU, and having representation at a University level through that organisation, but they will not as a corporate body continue to contribute to services they do not actually use, or else do not feel they really receive.

Another worry is that Corpus's disaffiliation could restrict CUSU's ability to operate, or impinge on the experiences of students at other colleges. Again, this fear is ungrounded. The financial blow to CUSU is minimal: £2,800 when its budget for 2010/11 reports an expenditure of £547,275. Over 80% of CUSU income comes from sources

other than affiliation fees. Magdalene and Downing Colleges' MCRs have both disaffiliated without seriously undermining CUSU, or precipitating a mass run on disaffiliation. CUSU, and the work it does to represent students, go on. Another charge will perhaps be that these are difficult times for students, and that unity is needed in the face of things like education cuts. However, it must be remembered that these are hard times for colleges too, not just CUSU. Bad timing cannot be used as an excuse to call for homogeneity of student voice: if Corpus students feel CUSU is not responsive to their needs, or representative of their views, affiliation simply isn't justifiable at a time when the resources could be better deployed elsewhere.

Corpus students are not alone in feeling frustrated with CUSU, the costs of affiliation, or the quality of service the organisation provides. The JCR committee hopes CUSU can make the constructive changes necessary to re-connect with student concerns and better address them in future.



Clare JCR President James Tiffin

NO

Student politics, in the wider scheme of things, is not really that important. No one except a student would care about hobs being taken away from gyp rooms, or the intricacies of college finance.

This is the life of a JCR committee member. Much of their work goes unnoticed and is seemingly mundane and pointless: sitting on college committees, discussing the details of common room furniture, filling out trivial paper work. All of this means that we, the Union of Clare Students for example, are representing Clare undergraduates to the College and will stand up for them when College is out of line. However, while I might have a lot of weight in minor college matters, I am powerless to influence the real issues which could have a detrimental impact on the lives of those I represent. How could I have any hope of telling the University that we want a longer Freshers'

Week, a Reading Week in the middle of term or a sports centre?

The concept is simple: JCRs are powerless to bring about real change in the University. We need, like every other university in the country, to have a Student Union. CUSU does this job incredibly well and I will explain how. JCR committees, for one thing, receive unlimited support from the CUSU sabbatical officers. There are fortnightly 'Presidents and Externals' meetings, organised by CUSU, to help JCR and MCR presidents discuss how they can get around any problems they may be having. CUSU provides invaluable training to JCR welfare officers, which they would be lucky to get off their own back. We use a CUSU system for running online elections. In fact, JCRs are almost entirely dependent on CUSU.

As for individuals, just think what the place would be like without CUSU. For a start, would we have any concept of equality in the system? Be it LBGT, disabled, women or whatever, who stands up for minorities? Academics certainly don't. And I don't think JCRs stand much chance there. Without CUSU, there would be no Student Advice Service, which does incredible work, but which those who don't struggle fail to see. Without CUSU, we wouldn't have the country's biggest student-run access initiative. Without CUSU, we would have no hope of getting a sports centre. Without CUSU, the people who run the University would crap on every student who was having difficulties – they just want good results and good money. It is thanks to the dedicated CUSU sabbs, who sit on the ridiculous number of committees through which the University operates, who work 12 hours or more a day, that our lives here are a lot better than they could be. And it is only thanks to the money they receive through JCR affiliation that they are able to do this.

I doubt students at Corpus really worried about this when they voted to disaffiliate. But it's not like they had to: it would be unfair for CUSU to fail to support any individual students, simply because their JCR had decided to disaffiliate. I'm not sure that anyone is really questioning the value of CUSU, and for the reasons stated above I think I have made that clear enough. But what the Corpus JCR is doing is to deprive CUSU of a considerable chunk of their funds, which means that the services they are able to offer could be severely diminished this time next year. If every JCR committee decided that they didn't want to pay, CUSU could not function. We have a collective responsibility to pay for the services we receive from them – it is stupid to expect something for nothing here. It is not even as if each student at Corpus will get an extra £6 off their college bill, or as if the JCR will have a few thousand extra to spend, because the College will probably just spend that money on something else. As it is, however, every other JCR will be funding services which Corpus students can still take full advantage of.

CUSU is the only Student Union in the country which has to put up with this nuisance. Even OUSU is funded through a block grant. CUSU is working on a more reliable way to fund itself, but until this is achieved, I think it is stupid and selfish of any JCR to do something which could have such a negative impact on other students, something which serves no purpose but to kick up controversy.

There is no viable financial justification for disaffiliating from CUSU. It is not only pointless, but damaging, and I would strongly advise any JCR to remain affiliated, for the good of their own students.



UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

A postcard about
Soma **p14**

Yann Tiersen:
grumpy man **p19**

The Varsitorialist
p20



Charlotte Runcie: On Christmas Adverts



“The Saviour is on His way and He’s bringing with Him some super-seasonal savings.”

Oh, joy! Oh, heaven! Oh, rapture! All together now: IT'S CHRISTMAAAAAAAAAAAS! Okay, it's November, but really, you see, it's Christmas. For why? Well, an angel has just appeared unto me, and its name is John Lewis. And it has come bearing gifts, good tidings and great joy, and Lisa Snowdon singing into a hairbrush. Or was that M&S?

Anyway, hark! The herald angels are singing a cutesy cover of Elton John's 'Your Song', because the advertisers, working like busy little elves under the festive command of Santa's Workshop (super-market and department store division), have so decreed that it is Christmastime. All those blockbuster, minute-long adverts have finally arrived, beaming into your laptop and mine, through the little gaps halfway through *The Only Way is Essex* on ITV Player.

These bombastic supermarket adverts are a nationwide memo that the Saviour is on His way, and He's bringing with Him some super seasonal savings. But they're not just a reminder to make our shopping list, and check it twice. They're a blueprint for the mood of the festive

season to come. From watching the big Christmassy ads, we can align our own celebrations with the pre-ordained vibe decided months ago by big business. Now, if you're a follower of these columns then you will know that I've got a dash of the conspiracy theorist about me, but come on, this one's obvious.

We get a choice, of course, of which version of Christmas we will follow. Are you a sentimental, upper-middle-class fan of Le Creuset? Right this way, madam, you will see the comforting syrupy ooze of this year's John Lewis campaign, adorned with a dusting of early snow. If you liked their summer offering – the maudlin, auburn-tinted story of a woman's life told through kitchen and homeware products, to the sound of Fyfe Dangerfield's cover of 'She's Always a Woman', which proved that pedestal misogyny is still at the core of department store marketing – then you will

love this.

Parents sneak a terrifying robotic horse upstairs behind their children's backs, and a small boy inexplicably hangs a bulging stocking, meant for a human, next to a dog. The dog is chained up outside in the snow, looking up mournfully as the boy skips back inside to his rosy family celebrations. It's sappy, with



LOUISE LONG

an undercurrent of menace. If this is the advert for you, then your Christmas will consist of cosy indulgence set against a backdrop of dystopian cruelty. Hmm.

Not convinced? Fear not! Follow me through our winter wonderland to the Marks and Spencer aisle, where I'm sure we can find something more to your tastes. Aha! Myleene

Klass! And Twiggy! You can't say no to them. Here they, and some other minor models and celebrities, re-enact the Strasbourg Dancing Plague of 1518, brought bang up-to-date with cheeky visual references to Beyoncé's 'Single Ladies' video and *High School Musical*. Wisely the recreation stops short of depicting the plague victims' tragic deaths of exhaustion and heart attacks, so your Christmas jollity remains at least partly intact.

No? Well, there's always Iceland. Set in the 'Moulin Blanche' (I know), a gang of those salt-of-the-earth mums do the cancan and sing the praises of £2 king prawns and a dessert, called the Baileys Dome Gateau which is surely a sign of the End Times, for three pounds. A bargain, sure, but something about it all seems a bit skank – wait, is that Jason Donovan?

On second thoughts, maybe these adverts aren't such a great kickstart to the festive season after all. In fact, I'm not even convinced any of them will make anyone buy anything, ever.

I have watched the best Christmas spirit that retail Britain has to offer. And I was sore afraid.

V GOOD

Marks and Spencers' new 140 DERNIER

tights: We repeat ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY DENIER.

They're practically fleece lined. Say goodbye to chilly knees. Oh, and they're pretty hard to make holes in too. Jealous, lads?



Ice Rink season has arrived. Parker's Piece has been transformed into a winter wonderland. The Union is turning a room into an ice rink. Get your skates on and release your inner five year old rather than doing it for free sliding around the Sidgwick Site.



Having dozed off on his surfboard and without *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* to hand, it was lucky for Dick van Dyke that some **neighbourly dolphins** were in the area to push him back to shore. The porpoises were not available for comment



Royal Lovebirds FINALLY announce their engagement:

Yep, sorry girls, Prince William is officially off the market. Find somewhere else to become Queen of.



Fake lifestyles: Jack Wills trying to force their sweaters on the Cambridge population, Cath Kidston opening up on Market Square...

MailOnline

The Daily Mail website is now the most popular 'newspaper' website in the UK – that's 18 million people, and rising, getting ever more bigoted and brain-washed every month.

V BAD

Dear Varsity,

Apparently what our Germanic ancestors liked to do of a Thursday afternoon was to feed castrated reindeer with fly agarics, then drink their piss. The psychoactive chemicals in the agaric, thus filtered clean of poison, yield a magical drink called Soma venerated in bronze-age Indo-Iranian culture. This according to an exhibition Freddie took me to at the Hamburger Bahnhof. They've filled the old engine-hall with live reindeer, giant mushrooms, canaries, one-way mirrors and mice, in a giant experimental recreation of the experience. On the wall, a quotation from the Rigveda: "We have drunk Soma and become immortal; we have seen the light, the gods discovered."

"That sounds rather good doesn't it."

"You think - we should try to score a tab of Soma while we're here?"

There seemed no harm in asking. But the museum attendant told us coolly that Soma was valued at €1000 a pop, and that you had to shoot up at the museum's nightly lock-in if you wanted a go. Nobody knows what Soma was, see - mushroom-piss is some mad German scientist's untested theory, so you have to promise them before they let you at the hallucinogens that you won't sue if you die. And it's not even the real thing. The secret recipe is probably being safely kept out of the clutches of the Catholic Church by wise Rosicrucians in the basement of a chapel in suburban Glasgow.

MAINZ
die Stadt
Gutenbergs



So, despondently, we went to sit with a Club-Mate on some abandoned railway lines. Club-Mate is the Berlin drink, a sort of urine-coloured tongue-tingling dangerously strong ice tea made of hand-squeezed rainforests. Nobody knows what goes into it. It comes in a bottle with a picture of Freddie Mercury in a sombrero on the front. It's made in a factory that can't be seen on Google Maps. Freddie and I turned and faced each other dramatically.

"You don't think -"

"You mean -"

"It was under our noses all the time...?"

We saw the light. We discovered the gods. We drank Soma.

It wasn't as good as they claimed. Legal highs, always such a disappointment.

Ali

(Haxie M-B is online)

SOME QUESTIONS FOR:

Tom Davenport, Founder of TWS

Alice Hancock and **Charlotte Wu** talk to the man behind the first national student think-tank, The Wilberforce Society, about the fulfilling life of investment banking that lies ahead

College:
Sidney Sussex

School:
Winchester

Date of birth:
5th February 1989

Date of death:
I'll let you know when it's all over

Sexuality:
Straight

Ethnicity:
White British (is this an ethnicity?)

Religion:
Well, I go to Chapel but largely for the chill-factor.

Emergency contact:
Don't bother. It was probably my fault.

Smoker:
No thanks. I've seen enough of the Footlights for this term.

Number of sexual partners?
I won't comment on number; but they have all been excellent (although numbers 86 and 115 were a little sub-par).

Pets?
About seven (but they are nothing to do with me).

Mental health problems:
Not when I last checked.

Favourite book?
Probably *The Papers of A. J. Wentworth* by H. F. Ellis. It's a sort of more niche version of *Decline and Fall*.

Actual favourite book?:
The as yet unpublished memoirs of the president of my college drinking society: *Beyond the Ale; the Life and Times of a Gentleman Rogue*.

What are you reading?
The Sun.

Where do you live?
In the real world or here?

Where do you sleep?
I make a point of keeping it varied.

Where will you be on Wednesday night?
Probably outside Cindies, desperately trying to appear in *Cindies Stories*.

When did you first realise that you wanted to be a megalomaniac?
When I learned what the word meant.



ADAM HINES-GREEN

Who's your favourite dictator?
The Magazine Editor of *Varsity*.

“On Wednesday I’ll probably be outside Cindies, desperately trying to appear in Cindies Stories.”

What's the working title for your spill-all memoirs?
See answer to earlier question (the one about actual favourite book).

How many copies will it sell?
There is only one person I'd want to read it.

Who's your Cambridge arch-nemesis?
No answer

What's the worst joke you've ever heard?
Q. What is politicks?
A. Lots of small itchy insects.

If you could rule any country (UK and USA aside) which would it be?
Seriously: Zimbabwe. And then hand it over to Morgan.

“If my arch-nemesis can be played by Rowan Atkinson then I’ve got nothing to worry about.”

When you're rich and powerful and the University is offering to name something after you, what will you request?
Murray Edwards should be due a rebranding by then shouldn't it?

What did you want to be when you grew up?
Taller than I was when I stayed down.

What do you want to be when you grow up?
Happy, at one with myself and satisfied with my life (an investment banker).

What's the key to happiness?
Not knowing.

What will be written on your gravestone?
Nothing that the scourge of time cannot wear away.

Who would play you in the film of your life?
I don't really care so long as I get to direct it.

Who will play your arch-nemesis in the film of your life?
Rowan Atkinson. If my arch nemesis can be played by Rowan Atkinson then I've got nothing to worry about.

Which Pokémon would play you in the cartoon of your life?
I don't know any, I'm afraid.

What's next for Tom Davenport?
I would love to be an investment banker for status and respect reasons. Sadly I'm not sure that will happen.

Do you have anything you'd like to ask us?
What is *Cindies Stories*?

The Wilberforce Society is the only student run political think tank in the UK. It has no political affiliations and welcomes members with a broad range of different viewpoints. TWS comes together to discuss and produce pioneering policy proposals with an emphasis on the practical. They are supported by the TWS Advisory Council, a group of senior policy experts who provide experienced perspective on policy assessment. Meetings are held weekly during term at 4.30pm on Saturdays in the Andrew Room at Sidney Sussex.

A Fresh Start

As they near the end of their first terms, we meet the freshers who've done a little more than curry fight in the Mahal and fall asleep in lectures (and one who did exactly that).



HATTY CARMAN

The Journo

Libertine Magazine started its life as a naïve teenage dream, after my efforts to reinvigorate my school magazine had resulted in the majority of the issue being censored. Together, a friend and I started a humble blog, encouraging young journalists and photographers across the World Wide Web to send us their submissions for publication. Our aim was to publish a magazine that would act as a platform for undiscovered young talent, in all its guises, and to present our readers with a fusion of poetry, politics, music and photography, all submitted by young people. Much to our surprise, within days of the website's launch our inboxes were overflowing with submissions from as far afield as Japan and Palestine. In the months that followed, we trekked up the steep learning curve of the magazine publishing industry and put together an editorial team. By October 2009, we were eventually ready to go to print with

Libertine: Issue 0. In 2010 we embarked on a rather more ambitious scheme to produce 10,000 full-length issues of the

“Convincing ad executives that a magazine produced by teenagers was a viable investment was tricky.”

magazine.

I would be lying if I said it was easy. Convincing ad executives that a magazine produced by teenagers was a viable investment was tricky. We'd also overlooked the fact that 10,000 magazines wouldn't just distribute themselves. Oh yes, we distributed each and every magazine by hand.

We were nearly sued on three separate occasions by PR companies who didn't seem to appreciate irony. There was also the slight problem that sex-crazed French people continuously

hijacked our Facebook page. Apparently 'libertine' has slightly different connotations across the Channel... But, needless to say, the hard work was worth it. Over the past year, *Libertine* has developed an estimated print and online readership of over 45,000 and I've been able to do things I never thought I would have the opportunity to do. From interviewing leading human rights activists and musicians to presenting business pitches to hard-nosed investors, working for *Libertine* has given me a wealth of experience that I couldn't have gained in any other way. Luckily, my friend and I both ended up at Cambridge and we're slowly adjusting to the fact that we'll have to squeeze phone calls to distributors and photographers into our lecture schedules. It can be somewhat odd to find myself rapidly oscillating between essay deadlines and frantic email debates with paper suppliers at 2am but, then again, at least I'm an arts student.

CECI MOURKOIANNIS



The Cheerleader



In this atmosphere of academia, where hard-nosed intellect reigns supreme, the last thing one would ascribe to this series would be something as frivolous as cheerleading. After all, isn't cheerleading the

quintessential pastime of American high-school dumb blondes, where foolish chanting and ridiculous dancing are flaunted in an inane attempt to impress mindless jocks? Surely Cambridge undergraduates, hand-picked for their first-rate intelligence, have far better things to do with their time than ponce about with pom-poms?

Apparently not. For a number of years now, a daring faction of radical students has been meeting twice a week to engage in such audacious activities. They call themselves the Cambridge Cougars, and they can be found on the prowl at several sporting events in the city, ready to pounce on their innocent, unassuming prey.

Perhaps it was their infectious smiles, their boundless energy or their dazzling outfits, but within days of joining the University, I too had joined

the dark side. Before I could even give you a 'Why', I was throwing High Vs, jumping herkies, catching cradles and donning spankies as part of the University of Cambridge's cheerleading squad. It was, like, totally awesome.

“Real cheerleaders don't use pompoms.”

Any prior assumptions I had of cheerleading being a lightweight activity were immediately backflipped away. I was plunged into high-impact stunts, tumbles and dance sequences that demanded infinite reserves of energy and unlimited stores of strength. I was placed in a stunt team in which one false move meant the collapse of our unsettlingly trusting

'flyer'. And when I asked about the pompoms, I was met with the sardonic reply, “Real cheerleaders don't use pompoms.”

What, then, had I let myself in for? An hour into my first training session, having been expected to produce multiple jumps, hold complicated balances and display unnatural flexibility, I realised that cheerleading is anything but the sport of hysterical teenage girls. It requires absolute commitment and dedication, and maximum levels of fitness coupled with spirit and determination: hard work, but I love it.

So, boys, next time you ogle the group of girls supporting your team from the sidelines, remember that a huge amount of work has gone into that performance – we've just perfected the art of making it look effortless. **ROSIE SARGEANT**

The Thesp

Freshers are first introduced to the ADC by the back entrance, which is a crying shame, if you ask me. Since auditions at a new university are going to be intimidating anyway, why not go for broke and send them up the front stairs, past the notice telling you that Ian McKellen, Derek Jacobi and apparently every other impressive thesp you've heard of performed there? Which isn't to say waiting for your first audition while a fellow auditionee warms up by perfectly enunciating every syllable of “Modern Major General” under his breath isn't sufficiently off-putting. And then there are the audition slips which require you

to give ‘previous acting experience’, and on which you can't help noticing that everyone else appears to be writing an essay.

At school it was relatively easy to be known as the ‘theatre person’ – all you

My cast-mates all seem to be scions of some theatrical dynasty or other.

needed was to audition for everything and you ended up with that identity. It wasn't a cool identity, no, but at least people vaguely assumed you were good

at something. At Cambridge you are still just as uncool a drama-nerd as you were, but now there are so many better ones that you've lost your trademark.

I admit that I auditioned for plays in Freshers' Week because it never occurred to me not to. But between getting a couple of small roles in this term's plays and performing them, my reason for doing drama changed, and for the better. No longer trying to be impressive (what's the use? My cast-mates all seem to be scions of some theatrical dynasty or other), I can just enjoy making a play for the sheer joy of the process. Within a few weeks, I have come to love the ADC – the discarded Domino's boxes, the feral clubroom kitchen, the people who hang around

without immediate purpose – because it feels lived in.

Even if you are terrible (and my debut at the ADC did not go well – sprinting onto stage in an emotional scene with a dying hero in my arms, I careered into an unexpected box and dropped him, luckily into the arms of another, more competent actor), putting on plays is worth the massive amount of time you put into it because of the sense of community. Yes, I could play a team sport for that feeling, but a) no, I actually couldn't, and b) rugby teams don't sit around a piano at four o'clock in the morning improvising comedy scenes after a match. That may not be everyone's idea of fun, but hey, I'm a theatre person. **FRED MAYNARD**

The Protestor

Last Wednesday I decided enough was enough. I escaped the bubble of Cambridge and went to bellow with fifty thousand students on the NUS demonstration.

As well as fire-fuelled high-jinks, it felt like we were doing something.

I need not inform you that ‘the demonstration’ was in actual fact a guise for the gathering of pyromaniacs with a penchant for beating up policemen. The national press have kindly already done that for me. But as well as fire-fuelled high jinks, it felt like

we were actually doing something, as opposed to doing something in the sense of sitting in a cold room attempting to write an essay but failing miserably. We were fighting to give others the chance to sit in a cold room, the chance to write an essay, the chance to fail miserably.

I crawled onto the London-bound bus at eight feeling slightly worse for wear. I wondered if I was still sleeping when my supervisor greeted me with a high five. To quote the multi-millionaire, welfare-slashing Prime Minister, we were all in this together.

When we arrived in the capital we had ample time to admire the creativity that those nasty politicians are attempting to stifle. Banners reading, ‘Tories! Putting the N in cuts’ and ‘First no letter from Hogwarts... Now this?!’ taught me more about the power of language than a morning of lectures

ever could.

After a good few hours, we presumed it was all over. We had chanted till our cheeks were crimson, our voices hoarse and our stomachs rumbling. I didn't even attempt to disguise my envy as students from Cardiff tucked into packed lunches. Never have crabsticks looked so tasty.

It was during this moment of weakness that we spied a certain restaurant that does ridiculously good dough balls with gloriously greasy garlic butter. I was just tucking in when I got a text: “Just seen the violence on the news: try not to get arrested.” I was too ashamed to text my Mum back to say I was safe and sound enjoying the culinary delights of a high street chain.

I'm a fresher; I still have a lot to learn. Next time, I pledge to forsake food and set fire to things. **ROSA FRIEND**



The Virgin

Having a camera follow me around was fun, and a bit flattering if I'm honest. I'm still not sure if it should have hurt my feelings – you were laughing with me, right? Anyway, life goes on even if it's not being documented, as I'm sure you know. It's hard to sum up a whole term, but by God I'm going to try.

Girls are always on my mind. In lectures, on my bike, on Facebook. But it seems to me like the other boys at

college aren't suffering in the same way. Sure, they go to Cindies and pull nice girls and then probably later have sex with them, but it's all no big deal. If that kind of thing happened to me – that's the biggest ‘if’ there's ever been – then I would need to talk about it with everyone. It's not kissing and telling, it's just being really excited about girls. And the good thing about this article is you can't not listen to me or tell me to shut up. You're reading this. You could stop, but I bet you probably won't.

I was desperate to get into a college

drinking society. What better way to meet a girl and make her my girlfriend? Right? Or at least kiss one. One night I pluck up the courage to approach a few

Could I maybe get your number?

of the society guys in the bar. Somehow I end up challenging the president of the society – a fairly hefty third-year whose name I won't mention – to a drinking contest. If I can outdrink

him, I can join. Brilliant! Fast forward some hours, I'm being sick outside the porters' lodge of a college I've never been to before, being supported by a girl whose name I don't know. Fast forward some more hours, I'm woken up by said girl, presumably on the floor of her bedroom. Plus it feels like I've wet myself. It takes a surprisingly long time for me to get my stuff together and leave. If you are that girl, thanks for keeping it quiet, and I'm obviously very sorry. Could I maybe get your number?

HENRY STAPLES

'I really like Harry Potter. Maybe too much.'



CONRAD STEEL

One of the easiest spells to perform, as anyone who's read any of the Harry Potter books knows, is that which makes light. You only have to say the word "lumos", and your magic wand switches on like a torch. You say, "let there be light," and...well, you don't have to have read the 3407 pages of J.K. Rowling's creation to know the rest: this is in no way an original idea. No, it's *the* original idea, in which speaking, acting and seeing all come together for one impossible moment. Harry finds it very useful.

I really like Harry Potter, maybe too much. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I've enjoyed reading the books far more than *Paradise Lost*, say. What does this say about me? Childish? Short attention-span? Unequal to real life, reading fantasy for release? But then, if it's escapism I'm after, why prefer Hogwarts to Milton's Eden? In fact, I think what appeals so much about the stories is just how close to the real world they are. Any disappointed eleven-year-old can tell you that wizard school is just an anonymous letter away, and once your invitation comes, there's nothing beige suburbia can do to hold onto you. A tiny hole opens up in reality, and pretty soon a giant on a motorbike rides through it (apologies non-Potter-readers, this is all in the first book). Initiation into the magical

"The people you thought were 'everyone' are really 'muggles'."

world doesn't remove you from the non-magical one, though it does unlock a few of its secrets. Hurricanes on the news are really giants. You can walk through a brick wall in King's Cross. The people you thought were 'everyone' are really 'muggles'.

Maybe that word, 'muggle', the only part of Rowling's terminology to have really entered the language, is at the heart of what elicits such strong reactions to Harry Potter, whether adoration or scorn. The author, so careful elsewhere to put her Classics degree to good use inventing names that sound credible and respectable, reflects the real world back at itself in a phrase so juvenile and ungainly that I feel awkward even writing it. But that's the attraction: it redeems the gawky blandness of reality as the flip-side of thrilling fantasy. We readers are renamed muggles, and lovers of the books embrace the word as if it gives the world a new aspect. Like switching on a light.

Join Conrad Steel for the release of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* on Friday.

Artists in Residence

The current economic climate doesn't look promising for artistic communities.

Anna Gelderd travels to Hamburg to meet groups of artists who are fighting back

What you do matters less than where you do it. At least, according to estate agents, government planners and Kirstie and Phil: location is King. However, for artistic communities what they do tends to drastically change where they are. In New York the most sought-after neighbourhoods are former run-down art districts: in the 1990s the expensive apartments and fashion houses moved into Soho and most of the galleries were forced to close down and move out. Art and the economy have more in common than a comparison between a suit-clad economist and a paint-covered artist would have you believe.

Now, after a global recession, the artistic and cultural landscape feels threatened. In New York one gallery after another has closed. In the UK cultural institutions expect to see massive cuts in funding under the new Tory government. So where can art go in difficult times? The artistic spaces of Frise and Gangerviertel in Hamburg offer one possibility.

Founded by 21 art students in 1977, Frise was created out of an abandoned factory. Originally known as Kunstlerhaus Hamburg, the group was helped by their art professor, sculptor Ulrich Rueckriem, who donated his own work to raise funds for the restoration of the factory. Two years later, he was inviting international artists such as Richard Long and German artist Martin Kipperberg to exhibit. Twenty

five years later the owner of the building wouldn't renew their contract and so the artists did the only thing they could: they bought an old hairdressing school. (Frise artist Torsten Bruch points out that the name means curly hair.) In the spirit of renewal, "we just took the letters from friseur institute and put them over our door."

"Of course we have some sort of yoga thing."

By contrast, the Gängeviertel started life in 2009 as a festival exhibiting between 300 and 500 artists' work. It now includes twelve houses and amenities on a scale that would be astonishing for any cultural institution, but is especially impressive for one that just celebrated its first anniversary. Sitting in the Gängeviertel food co-operative media artist Fabian Nitschkowski and sculptor Jonas Brandt described what's currently on offer. "We have three galleries, we have a café, there's going to be a big club in the basement, there's theatre production, film production and photographic studios on the top floor." The collective is designed to help artists in both their life and work but most intriguingly, Fabian also refers to "some sort of yoga thing."

There has been an attempt to evict the artists but the city's desire to promote a creative image undermined it. Fabian recounts that they had such extensive media coverage "all over

Germany, in such a short amount of time, that it would have been really

bad publicity for the city." In fact the city paid for basic repairs when it was reported that many of the artists were using uninhabitable studios. Fabian strongly feels that the benefits brought about by the artistic community deserve the city's recognition. Hamburg presents a glossy artistic image and rents have dramatically increased in certain, now desirable, neighbourhoods, and so the artists have responded with "we can't always feed you and get nothing back."

The structure developed by Frise of individual artistic production, exhibitions by outside artists and studios available for artists from all over the world, has proven to be a successful model. There are now around 16 similar organisations in Hamburg and the balance between city, property owner and artist is crucial. Frise artist Sabine Mohr points to the attempts by the city in the 1990s to establish its own artists houses which "were not founded by artists, not self-organised, so they didn't work out as well." Hamburg-based artist and curator Michel Chevalier also highlights a "long tradition of art in public spaces" as part of the success of these collective art spaces. A result, he believes, of the high number of conceptual and performance artists such as Marina Abramovic and Joseph Beuys who have taught at the famously open-minded Hamburg Art Academy.

Although these two artist-run organisations were formed within a specific context they provide nourishing food for thought in the debate over how to maintain cultural activities in the face of spiraling real-estate costs and damaging economic fluctuations. As artist Fabien from the Gängeviertel notes, you won't have a lively inner city in Hamburg if you don't accept the artists.





Va Va Gloom?

Isolated, mournful and disconnected from his homeland, Yann Tiersen makes music in his own melancholic world. **Madeleine Morley** caught up with him to find out, “Why the long face?”

It takes a long time to find Yann Tiersen. I finally locate him after he’s played the final show on his current UK tour, a show that was incredibly powerful, featuring many voices, many instruments, many sounds. I’ve had the problem of trying to find Yann Tiersen before - earlier that day in fact. In the Cambridge Fopp record shop I track down his new album *Dust Lane* - where heavy songs start out bleak but evolve into vast, dusty, entrancing soundscapes – in the ‘world music’ section. He is not in ‘pop/rock’ where he would most like to be, nor filed under ‘soundtrack’ where he could easily fit, having written the dreamy, evocative soundtracks to *Amelie* and *Good Bye, Lenin!* To be in the world section implies Tiersen’s music would not be of interest to Arcade Fire or Nick Cave fans. This is daft. It’s worth the journey it might take you to find him and his music.

“I’m pretty sure Lou Reed is a big twat.”

When I do find Yann Tiersen, lurking backstage after his performance, he doesn’t seem to want to do the interview. I can’t tell if this is shyness or boredom or arrogance, or all of that, but he quickly becomes chatty. He sees no resemblance between his music and Arcade Fire’s, but he is outraged by where he has been pigeonholed; “I think the worst place to be is in world music.

I hope it’s just Cambridge.” Sadly, it isn’t just Cambridge. Tiersen’s sound invokes what we’ve heard before and a lot of things we haven’t, very French sounding and yet opposed to the French, a soundtrack to everything and nothing like a soundtrack. Like most unclassifiable music from abroad it tends to be simplified as ‘world music’.

Tiersen is full of contradictions. I ask if he feels it important to be a French composer to which he wearily replies: “I am not fucking French, I hate French people, it is the worst country in the world.” He is actually from Brittany. The first cities he visited were London, then Berlin; not Paris. London and Berlin seeped into his sensibility more than Paris ever has.

“When I started touring, France was like a foreign country to me,” he says. Historically, French pop music is a disaster. Yann Tiersen did not want to make French pop, so paradoxically created a radical form of French music by rejecting his nationality, yet embracing its intellectual history; the likes of Sartre, Cocteau, Satie and Baudelaire.

I’m shocked to hear that he hates making soundtracks, as he’s fantastic at writing music for films. I’m even more shocked when Tiersen tells me he does not particularly care for *Amelie*, and wrote its music seven years before it hit the screen, not knowing it would become the (perfect) soundtrack. “It’s not easy for me to work with someone, especially for a movie. To create, I need to be on my own. When you make an album you are free, you can spend years on it. If you’re doing a

soundtrack it is just for a short period of time, there is pressure.” Tiersen mentions Jim Jarmusch’s *Dead Man* as the only type of soundtrack he’d be even moderately interested in, where Neil Young improvises an electric guitar over the director’s self-dubbed “Acid Western”. I ask if there is anyone he would like to collaborate with, but Yann Tiersen really does value privacy: “I’m really a big fan of the Velvet Underground but I’m pretty sure that Lou Reed is a big twat.”

“I am not fucking French, I hate French people, it is the worst country in the world”

Despite liking to work alone, when he collaborates he reflects his personal taste in sound. On ‘Dust Lane’, Tiersen assembled an impressive band, including Dave Collingwood from Gravenhurst on drums and Matt Elliott – formally of Third Eye Foundation – contributing melancholy vocals.

The album is steeped in death and mourning, recorded during a time when he lost several of those closest to him. One of the most intriguing songs on the album, *Chapter 19*, reflects this theme with its lyrics being an excerpt from Henry Miller’s *Sexus*. “When I was a teenager, I lost my father. Miller became like a father figure, his books

were very important and very special to me.”

I went into the interview hoping he’d tell me about an unnamed movement of musicians that he belonged to, but instead found that he is not looking to be a part of any scene, and reaches not just to the past for inspiration but to what is around him. “It has always been my dream to construct. When you walk down the street and hear beautiful sounds – that is freedom. My goal is to try and reach that kind of freedom with random sounds and noises.”

Perhaps this is because he’s a musician thinking not only philosophically but about the state of the world. “We are living in a strange time. With Cameron in the UK, Sarkozy in France, Berlusconi in Italy, these are strange, strange days. Music is quite abstract, but even so, those political things are all in the album, only subconsciously.” What Tiersen has seemed to do in ‘Dust Lane’, is move away from film soundtracks in favour of a rich and powerful set of sounds that reflect life, death, love, magic, hope, sadness, fear, desire. He doesn’t want to sound French, but has an exotic and extreme sense of Frenchness.

When the interview is over I still feel as if I haven’t found Yann Tiersen, and I think I don’t really want to either. In finding Yann Tiersen, in boxing him into a genre, a movement, a country, he would not be Yann Tiersen any longer. I decide the best place to find him is in his music, where he is lost in his own world.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE VABSITORIALIST, EMAIL: MAGAZINE@VARSITY.CO.UK

Varsity

Listings

Pick of the Week



Kambonk: The Sequel

WEDS 24 NOVEMBER, KAMBAR, 22.00-04.00 (£3 BEFORE 11/£4 AFTER)

Kambonk returns for another night of bump and grind, proving that you can't go wrong with a combination of cheap drinks and party tunes. Promising music with words all night long, expect Hip-Hop, Garage, Dancehall, R&B and anything else you can shake a leg to.



The Pied Piper

ADC MAINSHOW, 19.45, TUES 23 NOVEMBER - SAT 4 DECEMBER (£6-10)

Billed as "ein Über-Fest of REVELRY, ROMANCE and RODENTS" and featuring some of Cambridge's finest funny-men and women, this year's offering promises high-camp hilarity, close-up magic and lots and lots of rats.

Film



Just keep reaching, Harry, you're nearly there

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1

VUE CINEMA, FRI 21.00, 23.30, SAT-THURS, 20.00, 21.00, 22.30.

It's the moment you've all been waiting for. Well, almost. You'll have to wait until next summer to catch the final instalment, but Harry, Ron and Hermione do at least get to make a start on defeating evil.

Chico & Rita

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, 21.10 DAILY (22.00 SATURDAY)

Cuba 1948. Chico plays piano, Rita sings. They fall in love, out of love, back in love. Animated movie catches it all to an impressive Latin/Jazz soundtrack.

Sunday 21st November

Christ's Films: Scott Pilgrim vs. The World

CHRIST'S COLLEGE, 19.30, 22.00 (£3)

One of the summer's big-hitters, Michael Cera (*Juno*, *Superbad*) battles an army of his girlfriend's exes.

Monday 22nd November

ArcSoc: Nulepsy/Julien Donkey Boy

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, SCROOPE TERRACE, 18.30 (£2, FREE FOR ARCSOC MEMBERS)

Jessica Rinland presents her short film, *Nulpesy*. It's followed by a Q&A session with the film-maker and a screening of Harmony Korine's *Julien Donkey Boy*.

Thursday 25th November

Roman Holiday

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, 17.00

Classic style and oh-so-nearly-end-of-term escapism from Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn.

Pick of the week Film



Music & Nightlife

Friday 19th November

CUSO: Brahms/Glazunov/Sibelius

WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL, 20.00 (£12/£8/£5)

James Henshaw and Christopher Stark conduct a mixed programme, featuring Sibelius's fifth symphony and Glazunov's Violin Concerto.

Clare Cellars: Raffertie

CLARE CELLARS, 21.00 - 00.30 (£4/£3 FOR CLARE STUDENTS)

Expect heavy basslines as the Birmingham-based DJ and producer plays a mix of dubstep, garage and '90s rave anthems.



Raffertie: super wonk.

Saturday 20th November

JCMS Michaelmas Term Concert

JESUS COLLEGE CHAPEL, 20.00-23.00, (£4/£2 CONC./£1 FOR JESUS STUDENTS)

Jesus College Music Society presents a selection of music by Haydn, Beethoven and Stravinsky.

Plastique

J1, THE JUNCTION, 22.00-03.00 (£6 ADV)

Filthy Dukes preside over the staple mix of Techno, Electro, House, Dubstep, D&B and Grime.

Tuesday 23rd November

Truly Medley Deeply

SOUL TREE, 20.00 - 23.00, £5

TMD play their last show as their original line-up.

Wednesday 24th November

Kambonk: The Sequel

KAMBAR, 22.00-04.00 (£3 BEFORE 11/£4 AFTER)

See Pick of the Week.

Friday 26th November

VoOdOo RAVE 2o1o: RE\$URRECTION

THE FOUNTAIN INN, 20.00 - 03.00, (£2 BEFORE 12, £4 AFTER)

The Voodoo Soundsystem returns to Cambridge for a night of Dark, Mashy and Bashy rhythms. Rude.

Pick of the week Music

Theatre

Blackbird

CORPUS PLAYROOM, 19.00, TUES 23RD - SAT 27TH NOVEMBER

Dissecting the relationship between Una, twelve, and Ray, a family friend thirty years her senior, David Harrower's 2006 play is a challenging look at the taboo neither dare name.

The Pied Piper: ADC/Footlights Pantomime 2010

ADC MAINSHOW, 19.45, TUES 23 NOVEMBER - SAT 4 DECEMBER (£8-10)

See Pick of the Week.

Ecclesiastical Perks

CORPUS PLAYROOM, 21.30, TUES 23RD - SAT 27TH NOVEMBER

A Catholic priest takes up a new position in an inner-city school and soon finds himself at the centre of a row that compromises his reputation and his faith. Dark new comedy from Michael Christie, the play poses difficult questions about religion, accusations, and the unforgiving nature of the British media.



Pick of the week Theatre

Passing By

ADC LATESHOW, 23.00, WEDS 24TH - SAT 27TH NOVEMBER (£6/£5)



Romantic comedy following two men whose hearts draw them

together as their lives pull them apart.

Blithe Spirit

ARTS THEATRE, 19.45 MON 22ND - SAT 27TH NOVEMBER (£15-35)

Noël Coward's classic comedy comes to Cambridge before a West End run. Featuring Alison Steadman and Robert Bathurst.

The Real Inspector Hound

FITZPATRICK HALL, QUEENS' COLLEGE, 19.45, TUES 16TH - SAT 20TH NOVEMBER,

Farce, metatheatre and whodunnit combine in Tom Stoppard's one-act play.

Arts

Ongoing exhibitions

Kings, Satraps and Shahs: Persian coinage through the ages

FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, UNTIL 30 JANUARY

Some tiny coins that tell big history: the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire under Alexander the Great, the stories of the great Persian dynasties. Milk the mint for epic history at the Fitzwilliam

The Unilever Series: Ai Weiwei

TATE MODERN, UNTIL 2 MAY 2011



The turbine hall filled with sunflower seeds. But be warned: this will not be a blackbird's field day, because every single seed is handcrafted and painted in porcelain.

Wednesday 20th November

AS SO CI ATIONS

KETTLE'S YARD, 20TH NOVEMBER - 9TH JANUARY 2011

Film and video works curated by Tanya Leighton, exploring the gaps in the relationship between language and history, words and images. There's a tour of the exhibition on Thursday lunchtime.



Pick of the week Arts

Talks & Events

Sunday 21st November

Free University of Cambridge: Teach In

KING'S AND CLARE COLLEGES, 13.30 - 18.00

A day of talks and workshops to stimulate the debate on education spending and galvanise resistance to budget cuts. More information from www.defendededucation.co.uk.

Pick of the week Events

Wednesday 23rd November

Tim Minchin

J1, THE JUNCTION, 20.00 (£15) (ALSO THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER)

The Australian comedian and musician takes over the Junction for two warm-up gigs before embarking on an arena tour in December.



Sailing the Wine Dark Sea

CYPRIOT GALLERY, FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, 18.30 - 20.30 (£8/£6)

Agamemnon left you wanting more? Aeschylus, Homer, Sappho and Sophocles read in the original Greek, surrounded by Greek sculpture. Appropriately, wine is included in the ticket price.



Thursday 24th

November

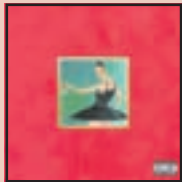
This House Hates Human Rights

CAMBRIDGE UNION, 19.30 (FREE TO MEMBERS)

Another provocative motion from the Union promises intense debate. Speakers including Shami Chakrabarti and Peter Hitchens slug it out.

Album Reviews

My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy
KANYE WEST
★★★★★



When Kanye made his toast to the douchebags at the BET Hip Hop Awards, a galling comeback began. Bringing into the studio such diverse talents as Mos Def, Bon Iver and Nicki Minaj, Yeezy struck out at the haters (the NY Times! Obama! Taylor Swift?) and set out to reclaim his ostentatious throne. In doing so, *MBDTF* was created, a defiant middle finger aimed at his narrow-minded critics, and the clearest indication yet that if Jay Z is Batman, Kanye is The Joker. In 'Power' he snarls, "I ain't got a power trip, who you going home with?" Narcissistic, charismatic, and still decidedly self-conscious, Chitown's favourite is the closest hip-hop will ever have to a rock star. **SAM GOULD**

The Lady Killer
CEE LO GREEN
★★★★★



Famous for being the fat bloke who sung about being 'crazy', Cee Lo Green unfairly garnered a reputation as a frivolous pop singer. Yet this lightweight tag rested on the serious misunderstanding that Gnarls Barkley's massive single was anything other than a three-minute peep into Green's own documented depression; however this album sees Green in a much cockier mood. Yet in a Mark Ronson-infested era, where even East London rappers are sounding like Smokey Robinson, the album's brand of Motown sounds bland. This isn't helped by Green's refusal to deploy his precise and provocative rap – indeed most of the album, 'Wildflower' and 'Please' in particular, pass by without leaving any impression. 'Fuck You' and 'I Want You' are subsequently left to prop up an album that is at best unremarkable, at worst a let down. Cee-Lo, you can do a whole lot better. **NATHANAEL ARNOTT-DAVIES**

Back to Basics

Back to Basics now has its own website! Check it out on

<http://varsity.co.uk/basics>

John Cage's *Musicircus* ★★★★★

Ben Ashenden experiences a new approach to performance in Kettle's Yard



"THIS IS NOT A CONCERT", declares the programme. If you wandered into Kettle's Yard last Wednesday by lucky chance, you did the right thing, because that was sort of the point of the night. An event fuelled by "chance operation", John Cage's *Musicircus* was a bizarre evening indeed.

What on earth was it then? Well, Cage described his original 1967 *Musicircus* as "nothing more than an invitation to a number of musicians, who perform simultaneously anything or in any way they desire". So in 2010, on a drizzly, dark November evening in Cambridge, a museum and adjoining house came to life with the sounds of guitars, violins, radio static, spoken words and laptops in one of the most surreal musical evenings I've ever witnessed.

The twenty musical acts, spread across the museum, were under strict instructions: they must start and stop playing according to a second-by-second 'time-chart'. These spasmodic periods were utterly randomised, so a performer might smash away at their string, skin or brass-based instrument for three minutes or barely three

seconds. The audience was free to wander around and listen to whatever they liked. The result of this, we are promised, is "sonic chaos".

At times, the experience was a little chaotic, but this was what made it so engrossing. I sat for some time on a comfy chair-cum-stool of the type Kettle's Yard so specialise in, and consequently positioned myself between four competing, simultaneous musical performances vying for my attention. Facing me, the

The effect was profoundly original, to say the least

folksy reassurances of Josephine Stephenson's guitar were battered down by the impossibly crouched Freddie Brown's amusing plonkings upon his toy piano. Meanwhile, in the two rooms that flanked our sonically befuddling piece of



LYDIA MORRIS-JONES

hallway, the scores at the fingers of Andrew Goldman's saloon piano fought bravely with the full gusto of The Staircase Band, which dominated the House's landing and provided the entire building with a jubilant heartbeat, at times heaving, at others fluttering.

As these sounds cascaded over each other I couldn't help but smile. The effect was profoundly original, to say the least, and the whole event had a rare charm and personality. A noticeable glint appeared in the eye of a performer when he or she was obliged to stop, leaving the nearby listeners with only an abrupt, uncanny silence. There was a sense that they were breaking an unwritten contract with the listener; both musician and audience member were, without compromise, at the mercy of an ambiguous 'chance-determined' scheme of sound.

There were, of course, moments of frustration. With such unabashed randomisation, there were corners in which, at the wrong time, you could find yourself being treated to a lot of unwanted sound. I tried hard, but ultimately failed to warm to the orchestra of

radios at the entrance. They were enthusiastically conducted to alter their volume and frequency, and although one could occasionally take purchase on a sliver of distant, fuzzy melody, the overall result

It was an orchestration, if such a thing can be formed, of chaos

tended to hurry people along to quieter corners of the building. Similarly, the varied smashes of the huge gong proved overly aggressive.

But even when the *Musicircus* was unsettling it remained charming; it was an orchestration, if such a thing can be formed, of chaos. The New Music Ensemble and all the performers ought to be congratulated for their initiative and originality – especially the chap found whistling, alone, in the toilet.

MUSIC

Yann Tiersen

The Junction

★★★★★

Something about Yann Tiersen has definitely changed. As I arrive at his last UK show at The Junction, I notice that the stage setup is quite different from what I expected. Having written the wistful, spellbinding soundtracks of *Goodbye Lenin* and *Amelie* there should surely be a grand piano and no doubt an accordion. In reality, there are synths, quite a few synths, and many, many microphones. I suppose this makes sense now that Tiersen has signed to electronic specialists Mute. There are also all the components of a typical rock band: two shiny guitars and a massive drum kit, played by Gravenhurst drummer

Dave Collingwood.

At times during the show you can hear the serene, Parisian swells and swirls present in *Amelie*. But at other times Tiersen (who, as I learn in an interview later, hates *Amelie* and hates the French) rejects the Parisian simplicity and instead embraces a deep, pounding 'Progginess'. The show becomes a sort of rebellion against what

The show becomes a sort of rebellion against what people think he is

people think he is: he proves himself to be a wild and unpredictable multi-instrumental musician, not just the soundtrack writer I had pigeonholed him to be.

Tiersen has enjoyed experimenting with sounds and voices

on his new album

Dust Lane, and watching him perform live allows you to see the extent to which he enjoys this experimentation. Support band Syd Matters accompany him on stage, playing the part of a sort of deranged choir. At times during the show, in the vast, atmospheric tracks which layer voices, synths and guitars, there are so many melodic lines on the little stage at The Junction that it seems not to be able to hold them all up.

At other times the stage is barren and it is only Yann and his violin, which he plays speedily, strangely, eerily. Tiersen must be both on his own with his instruments and surrounded by many



Yann Tiersen: "a wild and unpredictable"

HELEN SIMMONS

vocal lines and sounds. I get the impression that he makes his music completely alone, that what we are hearing, seeing, watching is not Tiersen and his band, but Tiersen and his voices, his instruments. His performances suggest that music is about loneliness: accepting it and fighting it.

MADELEINE MORLEY

FILM

Un Lac

Architecture Faculty

★★★★★



PHIL MAUGHAN

Housed in the cooler-than-your-average Faculty of Architecture and History of Art, ArchSoc are screening modern, challenging films that push the avant-garde in a time of mainstream cinematic sluggishness, presenting works which resurrect the age-old question: what is a film?

This week's offering, *Un Lac* (Phillipe Grandrieux, 2008) is a mystifying, beautiful and overwhelming cinematic experience. There are less than 30 lines of dialogue in the whole piece, which is set in a bleak and snowy nowhereland, and focuses on a tightly knit family group dealing with an epileptic son, incestuous urges, a violent, punishing climate and the arrival of a young man from the outside world.

The most shocking feature of the film is its cinematography. The camerawork is up close and personal, shaking and lunging about. We are seldom allowed to see more than a face, or hands, or a small rectangle of the sublime, stark mountainous horizon, backed up with emphasised seismic rumbles and heavy breathing. While watching, you find yourself terrified, but wondering if anything in the least bit frightening is actually taking place.

You should have realised by now that this is not your average



Phillipe Grandrieux, *Un Lac* (2008)

90-minute rom com. It is an artsy piece, with a lot of posturing from its minimal cast. However, a disconcerting psychological energy makes it highly memorable, drawing more on the ferocious landscape than the tiny humans within it. Anyone interested in seeing what film can really do as a medium should get hold of the DVD, pop on some earphones and turn off the lights. You will be shaken.

ArchSoc's free screenings take place every Monday. Next up is *Julien Donkey Boy* by edgy American director Harmony Korine (he wrote *Kids!*), prefaced with a talk and screening by upcoming short film director Jessica Rinland. The following

A mystifying, beautiful and overwhelming cinematic experience

week's session, on Monday 29th November, will see the last event of 2010, David Lynch's dark psycho-thriller *Fire Walk With Me* (1992) – the movie that precluded his TV drama *Twin Peaks*.

Wang quietly suggesting “the one with two girls and one cup” kept the audience on its toes.

Other Footlights acts reached similar success: Alex Owen gave a brief discourse on pillow talk, (“I’d had two partners before, so I was able to refer to myself in the third person”); Phil Wang’s performance was consistently funny, and Ben Ashenden’s Dr Answer had his moments successfully mocking Nick Clegg. One couldn’t help but feel that the Footlights’ undisputed victory was a result not of partisanship, but of their talent and good material.

The Oxford Revue undoubtedly faced a more difficult task in defending love against cynicism, but their unpolished performances made matters worse. Molly Hart’s song “Phil Wang, won’t you wang me” was something of a highlight, though she had already lost the audience with some rather predictable jokes earlier in her act – something about how she’s American, so she doesn’t like tea. Max Fletcher and Adam Lebovits were similarly inconsistent: too many ill-conceived, badly executed jokes and funny hats marred what could have been an excellent performance which, at its highest points, had Fletcher echoing Alan Bennett. By the end, the jokes resorted to seemed rather tedious and appeared devoid of any real verve or flair. However, these more infelicitous moments of the debate did not spoil a great evening at the Union. **JONNY BARLOW**

DEBATE

Comedy Debate

The Cambridge Union

★★★★★

The Footlights sustained an assuredly funny tone in the Union last Thursday while emphatically persuading a lively audience that love is a myth. Mark Fiddaman was the highlight of the evening, opening a well-structured, wide-ranging set with a false syllogism: “idiots believe in myths, idiots also believe in love, therefore love is a myth.” Much of the Footlights’ performance fizzed and sparked with an unpredictable *élan*. Just as the trope of having Fiddaman chat up a member of the Oxford team seemed to be reaching the end of its lifespan, they segued neatly into a song of his favourite *Friends* episodes; and when this began to tire, the sound of Phil

Molly Hart’s song “Phil Wang, won’t you wang me” was something of a highlight

ARTS

Epic of the Persian Kings: The Art of Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh

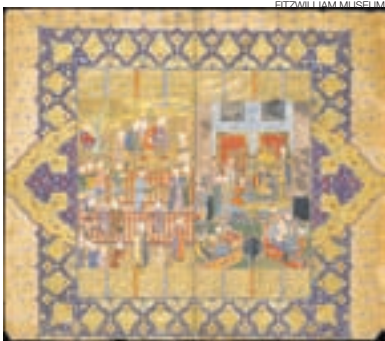
Fitzwilliam Museum

★★★★★

Literary jewel, the *Shahnameh* heaves with tales of kings and conquerors, demons and dragons. A Persian Book of Kings, it is an epic poem twice as long as the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* combined, written by the poet Ferdowsi 1,000 years ago. This scintillating new exhibition displays nearly 100 paintings from illuminated manuscripts of the poem, created in the centuries after the epic work was completed.

The *Shahnameh* blends myth and reality. Split into three sections – myths, legends and history – it serves, according to museum director Timothy Potts, as “the pre-eminent compendium of legend and knowledge about Iran’s past”: a past which can be charted from the mythical Kiyumars through the legendary exploits of Rostam, described by the exhibition as ‘the Hercules of Persian folklore’, to the conquest of Iran by Alexander the Great and the history and collapse of the Sasanian dynasty (c. AD 224-651).

These illuminated manuscripts are a fitting tribute to Ferdowsi’s work. Regardless of whether the scenes we see are real or fictitious, the effect on the senses is always



S. Shiraz, *Lohrasp enthroned*, 1540s

dazzling: the viewer is greeted with a multitude of colours, created from crushed precious stones and wild plants. A generous portion of gold leaf is also applied across the pages. As if this were not enough, there is also a selection of metalwork and ceramics, including medieval armour and daggers of the sort found in the *Shahnameh*.

An ornate table top decorated with tiles depicting the tale of

The viewer is greeted with a multitude of colours, created from crushed precious stones and wild plants

Rostam shooting Ashkabus is the largest and most recent item on display. Made in Tehran in 1886-87 for a British Army officer, it is a testament to the long-term influence of Ferdowsi’s work.

KIT HILDYARD

ARTS

Clive Head: Modern Perspectives

The National Gallery

★★★★★

I never thought I’d be disconcerted by a cup of cappuccino. But the offending mug in Clive Head’s painting *Cottage Delight*, which looms out of the picture, alarmingly tangible but disarmingly flat, certainly did. If Head managed to make the terribly middle-class drink almost disturbing, what he does to the café in which the coffee sits is even more startling.

Head uses unique perspectives which lack vanishing points rather than the conventional one or two, thereby creating a visual experience akin to real life: reality isn’t just mirrored but actively recreated. By eschewing a hierarchy of pictorial interest, which had been the basis of ‘realistic’ art since the Renaissance, Head’s works cause the eye to actively focus on certain objects without being passively led to particular elements within the picture by perspectives with vanishing points. The effect, then, is like looking at a slice of reality in which the eye and not the picture plane is the active ordering component. This gives our sight, and



Clive Head, *Haymarket* 2009

indeed ourselves, a peculiar agency which is perhaps largely unknown in the history of painting. Cubism got there before him in representing the world from all corners, but while Cubism is fragmentary, Head manages to bring together many disparate views into a seamless whole. It is as if he views the world with a monocular vision, making it our task to complete and complement the work by reliving the reality that he has literally re-presented.

It is a startling novelty and a testament to Clive Head’s innovation in the history of Western Art that his tiny exhibition has broken attendance records. People queued to see three paintings. They would never do so (I certainly wouldn’t) to go to look at the shabby corner at Haymarket, or a sad underground exit on a miserable London day, both of which he represents. But Clive Head, like all good poets and artists, has made an apparently mundane reality startlingly new and beautiful, so much so that a cappuccino will bowl you over.

YATES NORTON

Overlooked



ALICE BOLLAND

As the days get shorter and the nights longer, darker and a whole lot more foreboding, this week I’m thinking about the top 5 greatest villains ... and I mean, real villains. Not just any run-of-the-mill bad guys, but those truly vicious, evil characters that send a shiver down your spine. Here’s what I’ve come up with.

5 The Octopus - The Spirit
Samuel L. Jackson is disturbingly convincing as the power-mad supervillain, The Octopus. Ruthless and indiscriminate, Mr O, with the help of his expendable lackeys, plots to destroy and dominate the city, thus defeating the virtuous Spirit. He also kills a kitten, which seems unnecessarily mean.

4 Norman Stansfield – Leon
In this classics 90s hitman thriller, Gary Oldman stars as the impeccably suited Stansfield, corrupt detective-cum-druglord. Pitted against Jean Reno as Leon, the hitman, and 14-year-old Natalie Portman as Matilda, Stansfield is the embodiment of true evil; Oldman is outstanding.

3 Jafar – Alladin
Creepy beard? Check. Weird hypnotic snake staff? Check. Evil laugh? Check. Disney’s ultimate villain, Jafar, makes it onto this list due to his unwavering cruelty. With his eyes fixed firmly on the prize Jafar knows what he wants, and will stop at nothing to get it.

2 Captain Vidal – Pan’s Labyrinth
This twisted fairy tale from Spanish director Guillermo del Toro enters the realm of ‘good vs. evil’ on multiple levels. Yet, whilst del Toro conjures up a whole host of monstrous mythical demons, it is the sociopathic fascist leader Vidal whose pleasure in the infliction of pain and torture is horrific yet utterly realistic.



1 Anton Chigurh – No Country for Old Men
Javier Bardem scoops first place for his terrifying performance as the cold-blooded killing machine Anton Chigurh in this phenomenal film from the Coen brothers. He plays a hitman hired to track down drug money, armed with a silenced shotgun and a cattlegun; a man who kills without emotion or hesitation, sometimes flipping a coin to decide the fate of his victims...



View from the Groundlings



EDWARD HERRING

[The following note was found among Mr Herring's papers early Wednesday morning shortly after he was reported missing by the police. His body is yet to be located.]

"To Whomever It May Concern, I am leaving you. With a heavy heart I packed my bindle, stuffing it glumly with my treasured thesaurus and back issues of *Varsity*. And now, with trembling, wetted lids, I sit to strangle some truth from my hack's pen, urged to clean the slate, put the record straight. (Oh, see how I yield to such horrid clichés when addressing my indiscretions!) For I, dear concerned party, have been breeding a hoard of unprovoked fictions, half-truths, fantasies, lies. Each week I sit down to author that hideous column and squeeze from my troubled loaf a series of sentences misshapen by fakery and repeated deceptions. The truth (I cannot, no I cannot bear it!) is all too disturbing to put in writing, but by whatever gracile slice of conscience I am forced to confess: "I, Edward Herring, know NOTHING about Cambridge theatre.

"Oh, do not admonish me too harshly! Turn away your loathsome glare of moral reprimand! Could you not intuit that I was a fraud, a phony, a hoodwinker from the off? This week I was going to remind my wool-eyed public to watch *Blackbird* (Corpus Playroom, 23rd-27th) because of the great duo acting in it, but I cannot remember their names. I only know them as 'Him From *The Tempest*' and 'Her From *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*', neither of which I've even seen! I was also on the verge of suggesting my devoted readership go see *Passing By* (ADC Lateshow, 24th-27th) but why, why when I myself have no clue as to its content, dialogue, directorship or dramaturgy? (Oh, look away! the hurtful shame is too much!)

"So, the humanity of it all being too much to bear, I must steal away through fen and by bog, by field and through thicket, to find a new theatre column whereby I might begin afresh and self-flagellate with the birch branches of truth, sobriety and wretchedly lucid diction.

"Wiping my cheeks of their sorrowful dew, I must creep humbly into the world and kiss my hand to the sordid, salivating community of Camdram. (Do not lament or mourn my passing, please. If you can find the strength to carry on without me then do.) Yet not before one final ball-wrenching adieu to SIMON HAINES."

Relative Values

ADC Mainshow

(until Sat 20th)

★★★★★



Relative Values, the first play of Noël Coward's written in the nineteen fifties, is a brilliant comedy of manners, full of snobbery and acidic wit. Though his wife-to-be still harbours feelings for fellow actor Don Lucas (Arthur Kendrick), Nigel, Earl of Marshwood (Will Chappell) is about to marry a Hollywood star, Miranda Frayle (Charlotte Hamblin). But Frayle is the younger sister of Mrs Moxton, known as 'Moxie' (Jennie King), the long-time lady's maid of Nigel's mother, Countess Felicity Marshwood (Claudia Blunt). Thus it must be pretended upon Miranda's arrival that Moxie is Felicity's equal, a "companion-secretary", instead of a servant. Very much of its time – and the script, in fact, often suggests the play should

The accents required in this play range from conservative RP to Cockney, but the quality of the accents here was extremely mixed.

be set even earlier than the early 1950s, its own contemporary era – this production nonetheless attempts to highlight, as the programme puts it, 'the relevance it possesses today'. An early line of Crestwell's (the butler of the house, played by Stephen Bermingham)



delivered rather archly, "You don't have to be conservative to vote Conservative", is one of the the most successful and most specifically zeitgeist implementations of this intended tone.

This being the freshers' main-show, there's opportunity to check out who's likely to be consistently gracing the stage over the next three years or so. The annual show generally yields no shortage of talent, and *Relative Values* is no exception. The cast (numbering ten in total) was strong: Bermingham inhabited the role of Crestwell, absolutely finding all of the mannerisms and humour of the role; Hamblin was good at exhibiting her character's melodrama; Kendrick immediately conveyed the offensiveness of his American over-familiarity in a great scene alongside Bermingham; Blunt's crisp and biting Matriarch was a joy to watch.

Denys Robinson, secretary of the Noël Coward Society (due to discuss this play in a pre-show talk on Friday), told me in the interval

that he would have expected Nigel to have been played, "more 'rugby player', more butch". In this production, he is instead portrayed as petulant and childish. It works well, especially in contrast to the charming and strapping Don, and his unattractiveness makes Miranda's return to Don much more believable – important when played to an audience no longer wishing for a return to the status quo of marriages within one's own class for the sole reason of the system's own self-perpetuation. Perhaps Nigel walking onstage in the second act wearing jodhpurs and a riding hat did something to re-assert his masculinity.

The accents required in this play range from conservative RP to Cockney, but the quality of the accents was extremely mixed. The American accents were surprisingly good, as were Blunt's efforts. King as Moxie was far better at putting on a bad-on-purpose RP accent and pretending to be socially superior than playing her character's true self. There was

There's opportunity to check out who's likely to be gracing the stage these next few years.

a greater than usual number of mangled lines and minor slip-ups from several actors throughout, but hopefully these will disappear in later performances.

The crew must also be congratulated: the set and costume design were very good, and blocking was successful (though not innovative). This production was successful in keeping this play fresh – no mean feat. Nor did it suck the humour out of this comedy; it even regularly accentuated it. Some mistakes and mixed abilities of the performers do not excessively detract from an immensely enjoyable performance. **HELEN YOUNG**

Donkeys' Years

Howard Theatre, Downing College

(until Sat 20th)

★★★★★

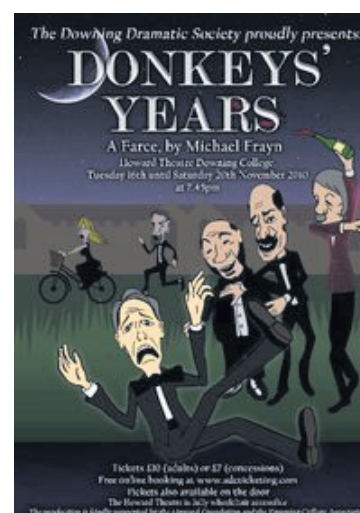
When you are greeted at the entrance of the Howard Theatre a vanguard of statuesque ushers kindly tell you to relax in the sepulchral clinician's bar. After ten minutes spent spaciouly detached from your fellow man in this white cavern, you then move, at the advice of a chilling overhead tannoy, into the theatre. However much I might have suffered such early discomfort at how needlessly slick student theatre seemed to have become, I was comforted somewhat by the rambunctious comedy that ensued onstage.

As Alex Lass states in his director's notes: it is something of a surprise that Michael Frayn's *Donkeys' Years*, in which a group of wintry graduates reconvene for a reunion at their Oxbridge alma

mater, has never been performed in Cambridge before. The play's mixture of madcap upper-class characters tirelessly minced through the well-worn machine of farce seems to fit well with Cambridge's sometimes woolly brand of conservatism. And the script, though fattened with a number of knee-slapping jokes, could have seemed laboriously frothy if not for the assured series of performances which prevented it from forming into a tooth-sugaring strip of theatrical candy.

The raucous energy of Johan Munir's Headingly (especially in the second half) was at points

The acting, for all its nuanced depictions, ultimately failed to stop this play from becoming anything more than a genteel romp.



wonderfully excessive. Yet this was balanced out by a number of subtler motifs: a blend of obnoxious sniggers, surreal looks into the near horizon and several pathetic, wimpy physical quirks saved for the character's bathetic fall. Similarly, Holly Olivia Braine's well-timed shifts from collected ease to sickly angst proved another example of comic control. She injected into her role the kind of grace one would not expect to be present in such a foppish drama.

Behind these performances lay

a phalanx of brightly vivified caricatures. Harry Carr as the snarkish clergyman, offering the odd camp witticism and bizarre sexual allusion, successfully managed to contort himself into a sly depiction of this velvet-clad weirdo. Craig Nunes committed to his potentially two-dimensional role as the bumbling nobody and, resultantly, produced a brilliantly volcanic clown. Finally, Theo Hughes-Morgan as the skulking, sulking Quine loomed over the proceedings with an oozing, sardonic set of deliveries.

The acting, for all its nuanced depictions, ultimately failed to stop this play from becoming anything more than a genteel romp. While a good friend of mine presently reminded me that the production had nothing more to offer than fun frippery it seems frustrating that any theatre team would start from such a premise. The Howard Theatre is well built to host sturdy comedies such as *The Relapse*. But its design can seem needlessly plush when putting on farce and, consequently, makes one wonder about the financial benefits of this clean yet genre-restricted little playhouse.

EDWARD HERRING

GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS: ★★★★★ About as Valuable as a Vindaloo Enema ★★★★★ Something a Little Less Worse than That ★★★★★ Relatively Valuable ★★★★★ What's the Value of Making Up Another One? ★★★★★ Value-Added Theatre

Now, Now

Corpus Playroom

(until Sat 20th)

★★★★★



Poor Jason Derulo became one of the many subjects of popular culture to be picked apart last night by the comedy sketch group Care of Douglas. From Tesco Clubcards and facial cream sales assistants to heroin-addicted Biology lecturers, not one of the all too trivial aspects of our normal lives

The performance was smooth and everybody seemed to laugh at everything.

was deemed by the sketch-group as incapable of being made ridiculous. The final scene was a synthesis of all our favourite component parts, the team knew what we would like best and handed it all right back to us at the end. It was just that obvious what would be deemed

funny, though I wonder if the group ever had a back-up plan for the final sketch if the audience had responded differently.

Emma Sidi seized the stage, her agility only rivalled by that of Jason Forbes. Some of her most beautiful moments were when the energy in her limbs was held in one brilliant facial expression, however. Lacking all dignity at points, she showed all the hallmarks of a committed performer, and could command our attention whether she was jumping in front of us or not.

Pierre Novellie and Lowell Belfield had a more understated presence onstage, which was a vital contrast; Care of Douglas know that to truly win over the audience you must engage them in more ways than one. Ahir Shah displayed an impressive versatility, varying his expressiveness according to what the scene required of him. You could tell which mode he was in by how wide his eyes were open: if he was staring out at us, he expected us to be staring at him.

All the boxes of a comedy sketch-show were ticked. The performance was smooth, longer sketches were appropriately broken up by shorter, snappier ones, and everybody seemed to laugh at everything. Every time a

sketch ended, the team had banked more points and the less likely it became that the next one wouldn't turn out better.

Some of the sketches, however, were a little too long. For instance, in one sketch the point where the end should have been was literally marked out by applause, an approval of the scene that seemed to be undermined by a character re-entering. Yet, much like the girl in Jason Derulo's video, I see no major flaw where someone may be more pedantic.

The atmosphere in the theatre



Emma Sidi showed all the hallmarks of a committed performer.

was lively; the nature of the comedy scene here is such that performers need not necessarily begin talking before the audience are on board. George Potts certainly knew what everyone was finding funny and adapted well to it, there is nothing so rewarding in comedy as when the people onstage respond to the laughter and immediately reinforce it. If his face hadn't slightly revealed this awareness, he could've pulled it off more seamlessly. Jason Forbes, equally, perhaps betrayed too much of his inner thought processes. He appeared in so many different forms throughout that it seemed a shame to have the illusion broken, and see what was underneath.

So it's four stars for Care of Douglas. Don't just happen to see them in a Footlights Smoker. Like last year's Good. Clean. Men. this band of comics are much better in concentrated volumes.

HELEN CAHILL

Pickwick and Nickleby

ADC Theatre

(until Sat 20th)

★★★★★



James Swanton is, by now, a familiar face on the Cambridge theatrical scene, but I did wonder how anyone could pull off a show involving at least 20 characters without it getting a little repetitive – but this show has given me my answer. Apart from one moment where the voices of two characters seemed to blend into one, the rest of the performance was marked by its great range and variety.

The set is marvellous: cascades of pages, photographs, curtains, top hats, wigs and canes combine in a chaotic tumble that bursts into the audiences' eyes as they enter the room, and the humbugs on seats were a lovely touch.

Once the lights went down, we were greeted by a record of Swanton's vocal acrobatics taking on the first of his many characters and setting the scene for us admirably,

I want to see more of Swanton's straight acting – these were among the most moving performances I've seen in Cambridge.

with a hurtle through nineteenth-century London theatre, an affectionate homage to Dickens, on whose public readings this is

based, and an introduction to our actor for the evening. At this point James, scuttling about onstage, turned around and burst into the opening of his show.

The first half is a comic masterpiece. It started off in a bit of a tangle, and took a few minutes for me to decipher what was going on (which is probably attributable to first-night tension) but once Swanton had settled into his various roles the piece literally took off, with our hapless actor flying about the stage, from judge's throne to witness-box to courtroom floor, all managed marvellously by James Hancock-Evans's brilliant comic direction.

The second half took on a much darker tone, with the tragic story of Smike and the neglected boys of Dotheboys Hall being its central point. I must admit I want to see more of Swanton's straight acting – these were among the most moving performances I have seen in Cambridge. The cold lighting really added to the tone.

This is a production with very few flaws, of a supremely polished standard, but with a familiar, affectionate air, as if you're watching an extremely talented uncle capering about your living room. It is worth every minute, every gravity-defying twist of limbs, and I agree with the grudging praise of one of the many guises of Swanton himself: "excellent use of hats... he must be commended for that." Go and see it if you can.

ANNA DAGENHART

The Real Inspector Hound

Queens' College

(until Sat 20th)

★★★★★

To review *The Real Inspector Hound* just after watching it is not easy as the play does not readily invite criticism. In fact, it mocks it.

Once the curtain is raised the audience are presented with the quintessential country house drawing-room and, just beyond, a row of auditorium chairs uncannily similar to those you're ensconced in. Within these sit two 'critics', Moon (Oliver Marsh) and Birdboot (Kit Hildyard), who proceed to offer hackneyed reflections on the action of the play from the other side of the large mirror that seems to have been wedged through the middle of the stage, simultaneously exposing the messy details of their own messy lives (Birdboot appears to have indulged in an extra-marital affair with an actress in the 'play', whilst Moon is enveloped in existential anguish over his own Borgesian doppelganger, Higgs.) The play in hand is a clichéd whodunit in the style of Agatha Christie and, as it develops, audience members turn into cast and vice versa; the lines between art and reality become blurred (these critical platitudes are difficult to avoid).

One might assume that meta-theatre of this kind is tricky to perform, but what this production proved is that a play of such intellectual calibre largely sustains itself. The wit and wordplay are so self-consciously fledged and flown that one wonders whether poor delivery can bring them down (in fact the burden of effective execution was something that the actors

seemed aware of, forcing occasional errors from the sheer weight of the linguistic material).

Not that the performances were bad at all: Marsh and Hildyard played Moon and Birdboot confidently, the former with a lethargic energy that leaked and lapsed accordingly and the latter with a wonderfully distorted sense of sanctimony. Pete Skidmore's Inspector Hound was suitably droll and shifty, while the other murder-mystery archetypes being satirised (Felicity the provincial beauty, Magnus the crippled half-

Wit, puns and comic absurdity.

brother) carried their singular dimensions with obvious gusto. The show was stolen however by Oliver Marsh whose concentration never wavered; there was a continuity of action and voice that shaped his Moon more smoothly than Hildyard's Birdboot and rendered his performance quite engaging. At the point when Moon and Birdboot become involved in the action of the murder-mystery and two of the players take on the role of critics, Marsh managed to establish a dramatic connection between his murky roles where his companion did not. Technically the performance benefited from the dramatic possibilities offered by the Queens' College Fitzpatrick Theatre. A booming PA facilitated the various auditory props (samples that included ringing parlour telephones and suspicious police newscasts) and the cues were perfectly on time.

What this performance didn't lack was laughter and for wit, puns and comic absurdity, it certainly delivered. Whether we should attribute this to the play or the performance is unclear, however it is clear that the production was an overall success. PATRICK MAYER

Incoming



Ecclesiastical Perks is a play about a Catholic priest who moves to a tough comprehensive in a big city in which he struggles to contain his classes. So far, so clichéd. He's a bit creepy, and he has a strange habit of saying things that make him sound an awful lot like a paedophile. Eventually, reports reach the police and the head teacher of the school that he has sexually assaulted one of the children. It's a comedy, naturally.

In writing the play, I suppose I proved myself a prophet. There was something in the water (media) towards the beginning of this year about dodgy Catholic priests, and lo and behold what comes out but all sorts of revelations about years and years of abuse and cover ups. I guess I felt vindicated. Not in a "Ha, ha! I told you so! Kiddy-fiddlers, the lot of 'em!" kind of way, but more in what I saw in the fallout. With morbid curiosity, I couldn't help but read what the tabloids had to say. When describing the horrors of secret abuse they wrote with grim comic relish in the chaos of it all. One cursory search on a well known tabloid's website brings up phrases like 'Scotland's most senior Catholic to say sorry to the victims of attacks by perv priests'. Great alliteration! What I found both horrible and horribly funny was the way that these revelations opened the door for a big old point-the-finger-athon.

So, yes, the play is a comedy. But it's a serious and black comedy. Sometimes the humour is uncomfortably nauseous and close to the bone, but that's really the point: making the audience implicit in the kind of finger-pointing that tabloids are so expert at, is sometimes the best way of engaging people with the issue at hand. A comedy about child abuse shouldn't always be easy to watch.

Hey, enough about me. The actors we've assembled are great. They're all natural comic actors, so it's less obvious if the script ever lingers upon its soapbox, but they've also been really adept at bringing out the sadness of the play. Underneath the bleakness of the subject matter, the actors have done well to bring out the humanity, gentleness and warmth of the characters. There's one scene that chokes me up like a big baby. Every time. So, come and see it: it's a pretty unusual play, if I say so myself, and it's not the kind of thing you'll see every day.

MICHAEL CHRISTIE



DAYS OF HEAVEN

*Photographed and styled by
Louise Benson and Jess Kwong*



Clockwise from top: *Braid cable necklace* THE NORTH CIRCULAR. *Cable hood scarf* THE NORTH CIRCULAR. *Dark knight's hood* THE NORTH CIRCULAR. *Cape* COS.

With special thanks to The North Circular.

FOR MORE IMAGES GO TO [VARSITY.CO.UK/FASHIONBLOG](http://varsity.co.uk/fashionblog)



Clockwise from top left: Fur hood NICHOLAS K. Jumper VINTAGE. Boots (worn throughout) FRYE. Dark knight's hood THE NORTH CIRCULAR. Cape COS. Hat VINTAGE.



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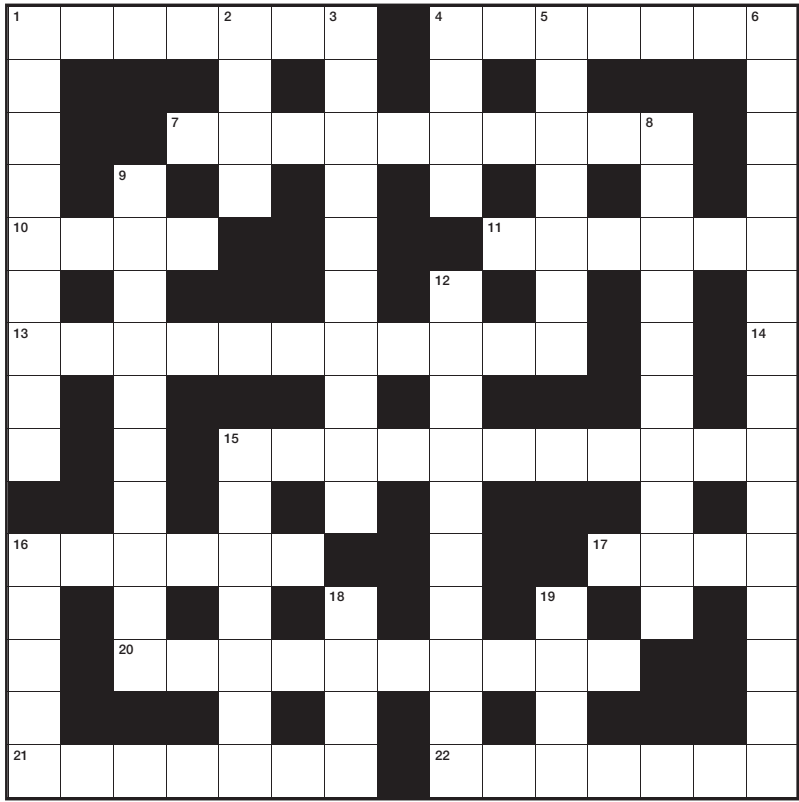
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VARSLITY

Games & puzzles

Varsity Crossword

no. 535



Down

- 1 Bad guy with time to receive order (9)
- 2 Community hooker's a nymph (4)
- 3 We are preceded by our claim to be weird and wonderful (10)
- 4 Hit the floor (4)
- 5 Extreme role taken by actor playing God (7)
- 6 Rib damaged during sixth note of the scales (5)
- 8 Fish gives girl food poisoning (10)
- 9 Hopeful of light surrounding me, overcoming fog (10)
- 12 Green ivy twists round the pointless universe (10)
- 14 King Cole - your friend, of course (9)
- 15 Dance around the country getting lucky (7)
- 16 Not interested in a clown somersaulting (5)
- 18 Beginning and end of soliloquy about what once was beautiful (4)
- 19 Father of surrealism? (4)

Across

- 1 Exam dubiously trimmed (7)
- 4 A fraction claimed to be reborn (7)
- 7 Legal documents about account figures (10)
- 10 Stare east beyond canyon (4)
- 11 Wife-beater not quite exemplary (6)
- 13 Zoophile article I'm very enthusiastic about (6, 5)

- 15 Glowing mineral with smell of disease at first (11)
- 16 With Vader beheaded, you are king (6)
- 17 Slight mispronunciation (4)
- 20 Legendary primate with no tail meets two men (10)
- 21 Scapegoat oddly frail, ugly eccentric (4, 3)
- 22 Attraction: it's covered in sauce (7)

Answers to last issue's crossword (no. 534):
Across: 1 Misinformation, 8 Negate, 9 Ampere, 11 Scamper, 12 Serpent, 13 Lolita, 15 Metis, 17 Olmec, 19 Eaglet, 22 Leopold, 25 Tattoo, 26 Vixens, 27 Identity crisis
Down: 1 Ministry of Love, 2 Signal, 3, 24 Not up to scratch, 4 Mimes, 5 Theorem, 6 Operetta, 7 Photosynthesis, 10 Ursine, 14 August, 16 Imported, 18 Crouton, 20 Earlier, 21 Athens, 23 Dhoti

Crossword set by Hapax.

Sudoku

The object is to insert the numbers in the boxes to satisfy only one condition: each row, column and 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 through 9 exactly once.

		8	5		9	7		
4				1				2
		3				6		
	7	5		9		2	8	
9								7
	1	6		3		5	9	
		4				3		
6				8				5
		1	6		2	9		

The Varsity Scribblepad

Last issue's solutions

1	3	7	6	7	4	7	2	4	7	1	6	5	8	3	9
3	4	3	1	6	1	5	9	5	1	8	3	2	7	4	6
3	7	5	4	7	2	7	8	1	4	9	5	7	2	6	3
6	2	7	3	1	1	4	7	3	5	2	1	6	9	8	4
4	1	2	1	5	6	7	6	9	2	3	8	4	5	7	1
1	2	8	6	7	3	4	9	5	1	2	8	6	7	3	4
4	6	9	5	2	8	3	1	1	7						
2	6	1	7	3	5	7	5	7	3	4	9	1	6	2	8

Kakuro

Fill the grid so that each run of squares adds up to the total in the box above or to the left. Use only numbers 1 through 9, and never use a number more than once per run (a number may reoccur in the same row in a separate run).

			33	8		14	17		
		28							
		15							
	7								10
10						14			
8						4			
			4		8				
		19							
			3						

Hitori

Shade in the squares so that no number occurs more than once per row or column. Shaded squares may not be horizontally or vertically adjacent. Unshaded squares must form a single area.

6	3	7	5	2	4	2
4	6	1	7	5	1	3
7	4	2	6	2	1	7
3	6	4	7	6	5	6
6	5	3	2	7	1	1
7	2	1	4	1	3	6
2	5	6	7	3	7	4

College Sport

MCR Football

Grad football is just as good as college leagues

JONNY SINGER

The MCR Football League is considered by many to be a bit of a joke. One ‘grad-lad’ mentioned a few weeks ago that he ‘couldn’t play in that team, it didn’t even resemble football’, and if you ask around, this is a view that’s widely held. Having seen Engineering FC, a team with an age range of 15-50 (and that’s being conservative) and a win record which doesn’t look out of place next to that of American Samoa, take on a St John’s MCR team which only managed to put out eight men, I was inclined to agree with that consensus.

That was before this weekend. Throwing myself into the world of college football I saw three games this weekend, in the First Division, Second Division and MCR league. Whilst Downing and Trinity played out a dour 0-0 draw, on a cramped pitch where the sides cancelled

each other out, Selwyn/Robinson MCR were involved in a fantastic match against Clare/Fitz MCR.

The pitch was vast, the fitness levels poor, the enthusiasm fantastic and the spirit of the game hugely refreshing. Instead of seeing the referee lambasted for every call as in the top-flight clash, both teams just got on with playing. In fact, when one captain began complaining, his own ‘keeper and centre back, as well as the opposing captain, all politely told him to ‘play some football and leave the rest to the ref’.

But what struck me the most about the game was just how much quality there really was on show. Misplaced passes were rare, close control was fantastic, some of the finishing was top-drawer, and while the goalkeeping left something to be desired, both defences stood up to stern for the majority of the game.

The boggy pitch meant that players really tired towards the end, giving more space to the ‘flair players’. A delightful back-heel nutmeg left the visiting captain looking a shade embarrassed, and 60-yard cross-field passes became commonplace. This was not schoolboy football, this was men (and one woman) playing properly.

A final minute goal meant that Clare/Fitz nicked the game 3-2, having lead three times and still only holding the lead for an aggregate of three and a half minutes. The result hurt for “Robwyn”, but you felt that each player probably had more important things in their lives to redress the balance.

Would either of these teams compete in the college leagues? Not in the top two flights but they could probably hold their own in the middle leagues. But the match was far more enjoyable a spectacle than Downing vs. Trinity.

Results

Men's Rugby

First Division

Trinity 0 - 50 Downing
Jesus 48 - 10 Magdalene
St John's 16 - 10 Queens'

Second Division

Pembroke 34 - 12 St Catz
Clare 12 - 7 Girton

Men's Football

First Division

Emma 6 - 0 Christ's
Downing 0 - 0 Trinity

Second Division

Jesus II 3 - 2 Corpus Christi
Pembroke 2 - 3 Selwyn
Queens' 2 -2 St John's

Fourth Division

Fitz II 1- 6 Caius II
Downing II 1 - 2 CCCC
Jesus III 1 - 6 St Catz III
Darwin II 3 - 3 Trinity Hall II

Fixture List

Men's Rugby

First Division

St John's vs. Trinity
Queens' vs. Jesus
Trinity vs. Downing

Second Division

Trinity Hall vs. St Catz
Robinson vs. Girton
Pembroke vs. Clare

Men's Football

First Division

Downing vs. Emma
Christ's vs. Fitzwilliam
Caius vs. Girton
St Catharine's vs. Homerton
Trinity vs. Jesus

Second Division

Darwin vs. Jesus II
Corpus Christi vs. Long Road
Churchill vs. Queens'
St John's vs. Pembroke
Trinity Hall vs. Selwyn

VARSITY SPORT

Last weekend saw a run out for a team that have not even made it into the bottom division. Emma IVs (a team not yet officially in existence) played a friendly match against bottom division side Caius IVs at Barton Road.

Emma were certainly up for the challenge of playing as illustrious opposition as a mid-table Seventh Division outfit and arrived at the ground a full 40 minutes early to get a pre-match training session-cum-warm up going. Caius IVs, by comparison, perhaps slightly arrogantly, turned up late and engaged in a warm up consisting of little but kicking balls at their star striker Mike Judey.

Such arrogance, however, was not completely misplaced with Caius running out comfortable winners by nine goals to one.

This game, however, was not about Caius IVs. They have already shown their inability to

play football this season. This game was about Emma whose enthusiasm and sportsmanship throughout must be commended.

Turning up in a bizzare mix of bright lurid colours - mostly pink and orange - Emma looked like they may well belong in the Bottom Division, where the quality and aethseticity of the kit is extremely dubious. The displayed all the hallmarks of a Seventh Division side: mistimed tackles, a terrible first touch and no pace anywhere on the pitche. They would fit in with the other riff-raff of the bottom division.

Indeed, despite the scoreline, they were not completely outplayed by Caius and managed to hold their own particularly in midfield with captain Paul Maynard putting in an admirable shift.

To enter the league, Emma IVs need Emma IIIs to be promoted. This is grossly unfair based on Sunday's display. A 9-1 loss is a typical result in Seventh Division and Emma IV should not at all be disheartend. Here's hop-



Emma sadly didn't look like this in their pink kit

ing that they putting in similarly horrible tackles and skewed shots in real matches next year.

View from below the Bottom Division

Botswana Meat Commission – Round up



DAN WELLBELOVE

The past six months have been a tumultuous period for Botswana Meat Commission F.C. who will be hoping that the second half of the season brings about a period of much-needed stability. The Club are searching for

their third manager this year, amid reports of backroom dissent and treachery. Daniel Nare appeared likely to succeed Kaizer Kalambo, after resigning from his job at Extension Gunners, but has declared that he has no interest in returning to football until the New Year. Enos Mmes, the former assistant manager, should now be considered the favourite to inherit the role. Nevertheless, chairman Sonny Phiri may question the logic of appointing a manager so intrinsically linked with the old regime, and instead opt to start afresh. Meanwhile, Kalambo looks set to return to the game straight away at First Division-strugglers Kanye Swallows.

Kalambo may have considered himself unfortunate to be dismissed only ten games into his reign, but the BMC board believed that they had to act swiftly to halt the slide down

the league. Expectations of a top half finish appeared justified after only four games. The side had already obtained eight points, and enjoyed wins over a strong Gunners team and an admittedly poor Motlakase. However, this good form deteriorated immediately after *Varsity* began their coverage, as the team struggled with the increased media scrutiny. The past seven games have seen four losses and three draws, as the team has slumped to eleventh, and only kept from sliding into the relegation zone by the ineptitude of those below them.

Nonetheless, the BMC side should not be overly disheartened by the season so far, as there have been numerous positives which they can take from it. The team is still rebuilding, after considerable losses to the playing staff over the off-season. The defence has proven to be one of the

strongest in the league, as only three other sides have conceded fewer than the thirteen that BMC have let in. Scoring goals has been more of a concern, and the team will look to provide greater support to the talented but unpredictable Kenano Kgethohletsile, who has found the net six times already this season.

Therefore there is no reason for BMC to fear the months ahead. They are still adjusting to their new home, and will be hopeful of converting the draws obtained there into wins. A new manager will bring fresh impetus to a team that is approaching a series of winnable games against TASC, Police XI and Black Peril. Only a few points separate the teams in the middle of the Botswanan Premier League table, and one good month will see the team from Lobatse back where they believe they belong.

Sport in Brief

Rugby

There are only three games left for the Rugby Blues match before their early December clash with Oxford University at Twickenham. Next Wednesday at Grange Road is the traditional Steele Bodgers match where Cambridgewill throw down the gauntlet to their old rivals and challenge them to the match next month. For this tradition alone, the Blues are anticipating getting 3,000-4,000 spectators down to Grange Road, which itself reflects the importance of the Varsity Rugby match to the students of Cambridge. The Blues are looking good ahead of the next month's clash, but there are several injury concerns for captain Jimmy Richards. The Blues need Greg Cushing to be fully fit to take up his role as first choice fly half, and Ben Maidment, ex of London Wasps, is currently struggling for full fitness. Dan Vickerman is certainly not going to be playing at Twickenham having had an operation on his knee.

Lacrosse

The Cambridge Women's Lacrosse team continued their excellent season by notching up yet another comfortable victory. This week it was Exeter who were put to the sword despite putting out a relatively strong first team. It was the strongest team the Lacrosse Blues had to face so far this year and despite a shaky start they comfortably dealt with whatever Exeter had to throw at them. Goals from ex-captain Ellie Walshe kept the scoreboard ticking over. Exeter performed better in the second period of play, but some excellent goalkeeping restricted them to scoring more than six goals, not nearly enough when Cambridge were in such potent attacking form.

Rowing

Russian Justice minister Alexander Konovalov rowed with the Blues squad on Wednesday. Mr Konovalov went out in a boat directed by the Blues' head coach Donald Legget. It was a welcome relief to the Blues squad after a relatively disappointing performance over the Thames between Mortlake and Putney. The Cambridge Elite coxed four (consisting of Rasmussen, Nash, Cubasch and Nelson) finished the course over three seconds behind the Oxford crew. Oxford also managed to win the Elite coxless four category. Although it is not fair to judge either crew based on the fours race, it can certainly be suggested that currently Oxford have a psychological advantage going into the Christmas break.

UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Women Blues through to compete in the FA Cup

Cambridge's women see off Thorpe in the last qualifying round to make it through to the FA Cup proper

	THORPE UTD	0
	CAMBRIDGE	3

SARA HAENZI

Cambridge University Women's Blues have made it through to the FA Cup competition proper after a comfortable 3-0 victory against Thorpe United. Resplendent in their new kit – with especially pleasing striped socks – Cambridge produced a competent display to dispatch a team only one division below them.

Full of bustle the game thus began. Cambridge started off unconvincingly: Thorpe shut them down in their own half for the first five to ten minutes. Shape and organisation soon improved, though, and the first chances fell to Cambridge. Mandy Wainwright finished brilliantly to give Cambridge a well-deserved lead. Only a little later, two subsequent corners should have doubled this advantage, but Leesa Haydock's header was cleared off the line by a defender, and then Wainwright's was blocked by a good effort from the Thorpe goalkeeper.

It did not take long, however, for the second goal to come. Some nice work in the midfield by Bethany McGee and a precise cross by the captain Maisie Byrne found striker



The Women's Blues team pose in their new strip and in action against Thorpe United

Wainwright, who took her opportunity superbly to double Cambridge's lead.

Cambridge finished the first half poorly, however. A breakdown in communication and a slightly lethargic work rate allowed Thorpe to get in their first shot on goal. It was a long way off target and the Blues' goal was never really threatened, but the strength of their team means that they should have comfortably controlled the whole of the game. It was only a lack of concentration that led to this short period of pressure from Thorpe. Yet the scoreline remained unchanged and Cambridge went in at the break two goals ahead, reflective of their domination of the half.

In the beginning of the second half, the Blues players seemed somewhat inattentive, giving Thorpe room to play. It remained that way for most of the second half, although the best Thorpe could achieve were a couple of corners and one weak shot on target.

Towards the end, Cambridge managed to get stuck in the Thorpe half again, and through Manon van Thorenburg's persistence, Wainwright was able to score her third goal of the day to complete a superb hat-trick.

The three goal to nil scoreline remained unchanged, ensuring that Cambridge could face their long journey home in a cheerful spirit.



The game was not brilliant, and the skill in the side was not evident as often as it should have been. However, all you want from a cup match is a win – and win Cambridge did. They are therefore through to the FA cup proper.

The next round is to be played on 12th December away at Norwich City Ladies, who will no doubt prove to be a sterner test than Thorpe did last week. The fact that the game is played out of term time is also no help to the Blues as some of their players will be missing. Nonetheless, morale in the camp is high, and the Blues are confident of pulling out a strong performance against a very useful Norwich City outfit.

Cambridge's Route

First Qualifying Round

Bye

Second Qualifying Round

Hethersett Athletic LFC 4
Cambridge 4
(Cambridge won 4-3 on pens)

Third Qualifying Round

Thorpe United LFC 0
Cambridge 4

First Round Proper

Norwich City Ladies v.
Cambridge



Nice to meet Blue...

Polly Checkland-Harding, women's water polo captain, Caius

When did you start playing water polo?

I probably started in about Year 8 - our girl's team at school started

with me and a few friends when they took on a new sports teacher who knew how to play. I was reluctant at first: the idea of chucking a ball around in water wearing a silly cap didn't seem that appealing, especially as at that point we were training with the guys! However, I soon saw past that and began to love it. We built the team up over the years, and by the time that I was captain in my final year of sixth form we had a really strong set and were doing well in school competitions.

Why did you choose water polo as your sport?

If I'm honest, it's the only sport I've ever been very good at! I doubt that at school many people would have thought of me as 'sporty' but I decided I wanted to play something at University so stuck with that. I found it incredibly tough at first as there was a big jump in ability and fitness but I stuck at it because it's so much fun to play! It's fast-paced, physical and it gets you super fit very very fast. It combines so many different disciplines and is most

importantly a team sport – the team has to work together otherwise it all falls apart.

"It's fast-paced, physical and it gets you super fit very fast."

What is your favourite personal sporting memory?

Scoring my first goal for Cambridge felt pretty awesome but my best memory has to be winning Varsity last year! It was a close match, even though we'd beaten Oxford by an impressive amount earlier in the season, so the elation when the final whistle went was incredible! We play a lot of other matches through the year, some of which are equally important in terms of the success of the team, but there's nothing quite like the celebrations after beating Oxford.

How did you feel before your first university game and how did the game go?

I was absolutely terrified! I hadn't been playing for very long and felt miles behind the standard of the rest of the team. I ended up really enjoying it though: because a match

squad is thirteen players, the newer players get a chance to play early on without being put under too much pressure. I probably made loads of mistakes but I was just proud to be picked.

Who is the best player you have played with?

We've got some incredible players on our team, but I think the absolute best for me would be Jeanie Ward-Waller, who played for us last year. She was very experienced having played over in the States, and what set her apart was her ability to bring up the standard of the entirety of the rest of the team. She could handle being tackled by about four of the opposition at once, and still calmly make sure that you were ready to receive the ball!

What is the dressing room like before a game?

Our coach is always complaining that we talk too much during training, but it gets pretty quiet before a match. We try to get everyone pumped up before a game, though, and not let it get too serious.

Who are the characters in the dressing room?

Liane Grant has got to be one - she is always having a laugh with someone, which invariably

means that she takes an AGE to change! And then she wonders why the lifeguards are annoyed. But we love her.

What motivates you to get out of bed every morning and go to training?

I think all in all it's got to be my team. Being captain this year has so far been incredibly rewarding. Everybody works very hard, plus they are great fun to be with! We've taken on a lot of new players and seeing how they're improving from week to week is brilliant.

What are you hoping for in the coming season?

We were promoted into the top division of BUCS in my first year, so staying there is naturally a priority! We are up against some of the best universities in the country for sport – they have great facilities and their teams play at the top level so it's always a challenge but I think that if we keep pushing we could do really well. We are going abroad on tour over Christmas for the first time in several years, which just shows how committed the team is. I just hope we get the success we have worked so hard for.

Will you beat The Other Place?

Hell yes! Nuff said.

Sport Comment

Varsity matches are not the be all and end all

University sides should stop concentrating so much on the Varsity match and concentrate more on playing competitively all the time



MIKE BENJAMIN

Arguably there is nothing bigger in university sport than a grudge match between Oxford and Cambridge. They litter the Cambridge sporting calendar and all university sporting societies will have put a big red ring around the chosen date. And with tens of thousands flocking to the rugby Varsity match at Twickenham, a similar number attending the Boat Race with even more watching it live on BBC, and with huge numbers turning up to even the polo Varsity, its importance in Cambridge life is clear. However with many teams now playing in leagues and national competitions, the importance of one yearly spat can be heavily questioned. Considering that most other universities have adopted their own 'varsities', have the two institutions become too insular in their outlooks?

Much of the allure of Varsity derives from its history; many of the most important fixtures date back to the nineteenth century. The first ever recorded match between the two universities dates inevitably

“With many teams now playing in leagues and national competitions, the importance of Varsity matches can be questioned”

back to Lord's, the most British of sporting institutions, where in 1827 they played a two-day cricket match. The historic Boat Race followed two years later, while the first football and rugby fixtures took place in 1870s. Yet not every Varsity match has such a long history, for example the women's rugby Varsity match only started in 1988. It is undoubtedly true that the match has the same intensity

simply because of the sheer weight of the two intuitions, yet without the historical importance attached to the event, there is less of a furore surrounding it.

Yet those matches that do contain a certain historical significance have offered promoters key opportunities for marketing and exploitation. Some of the encounters have drifted into the public conscience. The Boat Race is live on BBC every year, the rugby Varsity live on Sky Sports, as is the rugby league fixture. They are ideally suited to the live broadcast: readymade one-off affairs where the winner takes all.

This is something Blues rugby captain Jimmy Richards alludes to: “the Varsity match is all about one match and the success of the whole years hinges on just 80 minutes”. Rugby union is one of the few sports where the Blues do not compete in a league and Richards admits that all other matches are essentially practice games. He argues that “if we were to change to a league set up, we would lose a lot of the mystique and tradition and this would dilute the whole occasion”

Stirring stuff and music to promoters hears but from a fan's point of view, it would surely be better to see the Blues compete in a nail biting and exciting league campaign. Indeed, it would surely

benefit the club as much as the students, for a critical league clash between the Blues and another top rugby side will surely fill more benches in Grange Road than a friendly between Cambridge and Blackheath.

Indeed, as much as the prestige of Oxbridge counts, real challenges can be posed by other sporting universities. It is something revealed by Skylar Neil, RFUW Blues captain, when she not only says that opposition in the women's rugby leagues is possibly tougher than

“As much as the prestige of Oxbridge counts, real challenges can be posed by other sporting universities”

against Oxford but also that victories against Loughborough can mean more to the players. Indeed, she adds that “CURFC has placed greater

emphasis on our performance in our BUCS and RFUW leagues and, as a result, have been very successful in our Varsity matches as well”. There is clearly a mutual relationship which the Blues have profited from. Teams such as Loughborough will always be stronger than Oxford: it would surely benefit the men's rugby team to compete against such teams in more than just a 'friendly' capacity. The Boat Club similarly train simply for the Boat Race. Engaging in a more competitive environment beforehand would surely benefit them.

Consequently, the issue of Varsity is a hotly debated topic amongst players themselves. In this case, both captains clearly feel their respective set-ups benefit them the most. There is a tension between wanting to keep the symbolism of the Varsity fixture but also realising that there may be other challenges out there, some of which can be immensely rewarding.

Varsity will always be the fixture for the season but it must be realised that a league campaign complements it rather than detracts from it. There are benefits to both the club and the students. For the player, the chance of further glory. For the supporters, the chance to support the best university in the country. That cannot be offered simply by a comfortable victory against a weak Oxford side.

UNIVERSITY GOLF

Golf Blues show promise in early season

Cambridge narrowly come second to Oxford at the annual Doxbridge match

ANDREW DINSMORE

The Blues have been hard at work in laying the groundwork for looks to be a very promising year. The first fixture was a preseason clash with Oxford and Durham in the annual Doxbridge match held at Aldeburgh Golf Club. The final score was Oxford 12, Cambridge 11 and Durham 4. It was a good effort to show Oxford that the club has recovered well since its 9-6 defeat in Varsity last year. Durham were unable to keep pace with the Oxbridge teams, despite having recently been promoted to the Northern Premiership. Cambridge rarely get the opportunity to play other university sides, with their only fixtures usually being against Oxford and golf clubs, and so competing against a rival university was greatly relished by the players.

It was an extremely promising performance from a team that has benefited from an influx of talent and enthusiasm into a club that has become truly international. Last year's Varsity disappointment seems a long way away as the team

has changed significantly from last year. The new star of the team is undoubtedly Ben Wescoe, former Captain of Yale golf team, who plays of +3 and recently shot level par at Augusta. His love of golf stretches beyond the golf course and into his studies as his M.Phil in History of Art and Architecture allows him to give presentations on “golf course architecture and the picturesque.” The Club is also fortunate to have Paul Schoenberger, from Germany; Geordie Ting, from Singapore; Lucas Birrell-Gray from Holland and Louis Caron, also from the States. The core of the team is as strong as ever with Ruairaidh Stewart, a Scotsman and four time Blue, going strong and looking for a fifth Blue, a remarkable achievement in any sport.

The result of this new found strength has been a solid performance so far with two wins, two draws and four very narrow losses. “It's tough for the guys as we have to get up at 5.30am both Saturday and Sunday to play against teams on their home track and they often have a much wider and more experienced



Dinsmore Teeing off at last year's Varsity

pool of players to choose so to get a win is really a great result.” Alex Silver, the Secretary of the Club, said.

The team spirit this year is high and although Varsity is a long way off at the end of March, the prospect

of victory in the oldest match in golf keeps the guys grinding hard at their game. At times it can be tough during the early morning practice sessions and what can only be described, at times, as an SAS survival mission in the lashing winter wind and rain, but the end goal is always in the forefront of the team's mind.

With the end of the term looming the team is looking for a couple of big wins to finish, which should inspire them to practice hard over the break. It would be just reward for the effort that they have put in so far this year. Next year will see the 122nd Varsity Match, which is to be played at Royal Cinque Ports this year, a former British Open course, and will be a perfect location to show Oxford the light.

It is without a doubt the best Cambridge team in years and the prospect of a Varsity victory is very real indeed. If the Blues are able to keep their level of performance high there is no reason why they cannot defeat a very similarly talented Oxford side.

College Rugby

CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

Secondly, they managed to maintain this pressure with more incisive and powerful play in the midfield. Two further penalties were probably less than they deserved, but it still put significant breathing space in-between them and Queens'.

Yet in a display typical of their season so far, John's were unable to to completely close out the game. Credit must go to a spirited performance from the Queens' team, who have shocked a lot of rugby followers this season, but it must be acknowledged that they were only allowed back into the game due to some sloppy John's defence and and silly indiscipline at the breakdown. A powerful run by Roberts allowed Sharples to scamper over in the corner with Blencowe scoring soon after in similar fashion. A John's sinbining came too late for Queens' to do any further damage.

This was another victory for John's, but a far from convincing one. They will need to significantly improve if they wish to continue making back the ground that they lost to Jesus in the first rounds of the season.

VARSITY

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Comment

p31

The Varsity match – it's nothing special



SPORT

Women's Football

p30

Light Blues make it into the FA Cup





John's seal unconvincing win

Red Boys once again fail to impress against Queens'



Strong John's defence halts another Queens' attack

	ST JOHN'S	16
	QUEENS'	10

MIKE BENJAMIN

Despite passing the half-way point in the season, John's rugby is still struggling to recapture the form of previous seasons. Their second victory against Queens' this season neatly sums up their season's performances. They managed to ground out a victory but again failed to impress, with Queens' outscoring them by two tries to one. The John's juggernaut is still finding this year's Division One

tougher going than usual.

Yet it was a strong start from the Red Boys with John's quickly able to establish themselves in Queens' territory, retaining possession and moving solidly through the phases. However, the blight of northern hemisphere rugby that is a lack of expansive play can be seen in the way John's have used the ball this season. Phase after phase was played narrow with the remnants of rucks scattered all over the pitch. This did John's no favours as it left too few players in the line and slowed their play down. Their appetite for contact was stopped on the occasions where the ball was moved out into the backs, but one threatening move came to a halt as they failed to exploit an overlap.

After surviving the initial heavy

forward bombardment, Queens' worked themselves into the game. Over the next ten minutes, the game descended into a messy affair with both teams unable to hold onto possession for any length of time, often kicking it away.

The rest of the half proved crucial for the outcome of the game. Queens' continued to enjoy the better of play, launching several attacks on the John's try line only to be denied by a strong defence. Much of this impetus was based on another dominant scrum with Queens' winning numerous times against the head with hooker Layfield showing good skill. If there is anything that Queens' will be able to take away from this campaign it is probably the best college scrum. They really have shown other colleges how it's

done and their dominance over both Jesus' and John's pack is particularly impressive.

Nevertheless, it was the boot that crucially divided the teams at half time. While John's were able to land one of their two penalties, Queens missed both of theirs, with the second one particularly achievable.

The second half was almost a carbon copy of the first, only this time the John's attack was more damaging as the juggernaut crashed its way through. First John's finally managed to show some real incision with the forwards finally generating some quick ball, allowing space for the back line to operate in. The ball was shifted through the backs effectively and a try was scored in the corner.

CONTINUED INSIDE

Redboy Reports

Our man on the inside of the St John's 1st XV tells it like it is



With just a couple of weeks to go before we can finally take leave of this weird and wonderful world we, and indeed everyone else, calls "Cambridge," inevitably thoughts turn to the Chrimbo holls.

Obviously the biggest social date in the calendar is the 9th of December, the Varsity Match, which I've marked out in my diary in eight different coloured highlighters (two of which though turned out to be invisible ink ones, which is annoying.)

First up I'd like to say I'm proud to be writing for the student newspaper that has sponsored this match every year since it began in 1873, and long may it continue. This year, unlike 1873, which I bet was practically Victorian in its restraint, should be brilliant, with so many of the John's lads taking to the field: Bunter, Dooley, Abercrombie, Toffo, Hollamache, Dorington, Lovelace and Rodderwitz, and those are just the guys with ridiculous names.

I sadly didn't make the blues squad this year. The coach said I had an attitude problem, so I wrapped him in jelly and threw him down a flight of stairs shouting "eat the jelly then, go on, eat it if you're such a big man." There's always next year. I obvs want to be giving the boys all the support I can anyway, so I've arranged for about a hundred of us from John's to be taken in a coach to Twickenham, stopping off along the way at the top twenty rugby themed pubs in Britain to get us in the mood. If we're sharpish with our ordering and leave on time in the morning we should be able to catch the last ten minutes of the game. I've prepared a few chants as well for when we get there: "Come on the boys in light blue, play the game well and do your best to score the tries, we can win if we play to the best of our ability, so let's bloody do it then eh lads?" and "Rugby!" are my favourites.

After the match there's a brilliant after party lined up at Mahiki. Toffo's manning the guest list and the dress code is "Snow white and the seven dwarfs." I've managed to capture five so far so my entourage is almost there.

Rugby league boys prepare for tour to Malta

THOMAS BREWSTER

Cambridge University Rugby League have announced their New Year Tour to Malta from 12th – 16th January 2011. Trips to destinations such as Malta are seen as highly important within the coaching set up as it permits players to gel as a squad in pleasant surroundings. Locations are not just picked for their sports

facilities, but must also offer good working environments should our students wish to work between sessions. This is a departure for the club – the Rugby League tours have traditionally been to Carcassonne in the south of France, however due to the adverse weather in the past couple of years, they have decided to look further afield to Malta. Rugby League in Malta is currently at an

unprecedented high, and importantly for the Blues, it can provide the quality of facility that the club requires for such a camp.

For the tour, CURL Head Coach John Evans (Ex-Head coach of Midlands Students, GB Emerging Students), and Assistant Coach Thomas Brewster (Ex-Head coach of Durham University & Assistant Manager of GB Student Rugby

League XIII) are joined by Brian Chambers (Warrington Wolves Performance Coach).

The training camp starts in Cambridge for a training day on 12th January, before they then travel to Malta on the 13th. The team will train twice on the 14th before playing the first ever international test match for Cambridge University Rugby League vs Malta Rugby League.