

Varsity

This is Professor Gillian Evans. She's just made a scathing attack on the University in her new book. But is she just another disgruntled academic, or has she got a point? - PAGE 5



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Controversial revamp for King's Bar

Amol Rajan

STUDENTS RETURN to King's College today to a radically refurbished main bar. Its overhaul has been widely interpreted as part of a modernising agenda instigated by Dame Judith Mayhew, who was appointed last year as the new Provost of the college.

Since Mayhew's arrival, she and James Laidlaw, who is Senior Tutor at King's, have closed down the Vac Graduate bar and outlawed the sale of alcohol in the college's popular Cellar Bar. This has met with dismay amongst students at the college.

The overhaul of the main bar was decided upon last Michaelmas. It was driven by a decline in the college's conference activity, and its redesign focussed on moving the bar away from King's traditional reputation as a crucible of student politics. Jason Waterfield, Executive Chef and Catering Director at King's, made clear the financial incentive behind the redesign, saying that "I'd be happy to walk away from all commercial conferences and deal with just internal things, but we do it to bring in the money that will be spent on students at King's."

Students at the college caught wind of the plans and called a special meeting of the college council last Easter, to discuss the proposed changes. Representatives from the college's committees began work on a consultation process, with the hope of influencing the final design. The aim was to reach a compromise that suited both students and senior management.

But the consultation process was largely ineffective, in part because

student representatives made insufficient protest to the architects responsible for the redesign, and in part because the college reneged on key areas in which students demanded the bar remain as they wished.

Oscar Leonard, student representative on the College Council, outlined students' main concerns to *Varsity*: "Historically known as King's Red Bar, the the new bar is far from red and its new furnishings make it look like a Holiday Inn." He added that the new beige colour "symbolises to many students another step in the wider process of eroding King's unique character."

The college's refusal to meet student requests in these areas has been largely attributed to the unpopular Laidlaw. He reportedly insisted on a beige décor because he felt the old red discriminated unfairly against right-wing students. The new bar, which has new tables, chairs, and a coffee corner, has however accommodated student requests for all the new upholstery to be movable – ents officers at the college explained that fitted furniture would make holding events such as the termly King's mingle unnecessarily difficult.

Though the new bar has been widely criticised by students of the college, any feeling of disillusion it may have brought to the new term is as much a reflection of the failed consultation process as it is a reflection of student's stylistic preferences. There is concern spreading within the college over Mayhew and Laidlaw's plans to move the college's focus onto conference provision and play down its high state-school intake and liberal traditions. The refurbished bar was opened on September 1.

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We don't like to boast - but, We Saved Gardies!



Chine Mbubaegbu

It's taken nearly a year, but the news that thousands of Cambridge students and alumni have been hoping to hear has finally arrived. Gardies is staying open. Vas Anastasiou, owner of The Gardenia, Rose Crescent, told *Varsity* of his delight that the Greek establishment, which was due to close in December, would now remain open. According to Anastasiou, Gonville and Caius college, which owns most of the property on

Rose Crescent, had planned to turn the restaurant into student accommodation, but changed its mind after developments and a court case during the summer.

Anastasiou was grateful to the students that lent their support to the 'Save Gardies' campaign, headed by former *Varsity* Editor, Tom Ebbutt. "*Varsity* did a big job, a very big job. I will appreciate *Varsity* forever," said the Gardies owner. Despite his appreciation of the 'concern, dedication and warmth from the students and the people,' Mr. Anastasiou does not believe that this influenced

Caius' decision. According to him, Caius paid no attention to the 8000 students who opposed Gardies' closure.

CUSU President, Wes Streeting said "This is great news for students and a victory for *Varsity* and CUSU's campaign. As one of the proposers of the CUSU motion to save Gardies, I'm delighted that student opinion has won the day...I've already been to Gardies to celebrate with a kebab."

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Women's colleges surge in tables

Lucy Phillips

THE UNIVERSITY'S only two all-women's colleges have both risen in this year's Tompkins league. Newnham, Cambridge's oldest female only college, had the fastest improving academic results in the university. The college has risen from 21st to 13th in the Tompkins table, which ranks, by college, the results of all students in the end of year examination results. New Hall also rose by one position in the league.

The results have come as a relief after recent criticism of the lack of academic success of all-female colleges. This year, Newnham students were awarded a record number of firsts, 70, up from 56 the previous year.

Dr Terri Apter, Senior Tutor at Newnham, told *Varsity* that they were all "delighted with the hard work and achievement of Newnham students." She added, "our position in the league was not of over-riding importance since every year we are proud of our directors of studies and supervisors". She emphasised that the difference between bottom and mid-table is not as big as it looks on paper and that "colleges at the bottom of the league have nothing to be ashamed of".

Dr Apter attributes the size of Newnham's leap in the table to "greater resources throughout society for confidence in women and young people", a realisation that "hard work is important and pays off" and that it is an "acceptable, admirable thing to push yourself forward."

"The University as a whole has become

more sensitive to setting and marking tripos work so that a wider range of working styles are appreciated".

Newnham's success comes at a time of great debate over the future of women-only colleges. St Hilda's, the only all-female college at Oxford, has faced several attempts to change to a mixed status in recent years and there was talk of New Hall going mixed last term. Girton, which was all-women until 1977, has slipped down the Tompkins table this year.

On the subject of the future of all women colleges in Cambridge, Dr Apter told *Varsity* that "each institution has to make its best judgment at the time. It is impossible to make a forecast as to what will work long term". She added, "In a single sex college there is still a mixed academic environment. The differences are micro rather than macro."

This year's table shows Emmanuel holding on to top place for the third year running, followed by Christ's, which has also been in second position for three consecutive years. The biggest faller was Churchill, which dropped down ten places to 19th.

The table, compiled for The Independent by Peter Tompkins using end of term graduate exams, awards five points for a first, three for a 2.1, two for a 2.2 and one point for a third.

Mr Tompkins produces another table ranking colleges according to the percentage of firsts in which Newnham came 16th and Emmanuel and Trinity shared the top spot.

| Place (03) | College | % Score | 15 (20) | Fitzwilliam | 62.59 |
|------------|------------------|---------|---------|----------------|-------|
| 1 (1) | Emmanuel | 67.95 | 16 (23) | Robinson | 62.04 |
| 2 (2) | Christ's | 67.24 | 17 (12) | Downing | 61.53 |
| 3 (8) | Trinity | 66.88 | 18 (15) | Sidney Sussex | 61.01 |
| 4 (6) | Clare | 65.94 | 19 (9) | Churchill | 60.92 |
| 5 (4) | Gonville & Caius | 65.83 | 20 (16) | King's | 60.86 |
| 6 (3) | Pembroke | 65.44 | 21 (22) | Peterhouse | 60.74 |
| 7 (11) | St Catharine's | 65.24 | 22 (18) | Magdalene | 59.59 |
| 8 (5) | Queens' | 64.20 | 23 (24) | New Hall | 58.86 |
| 9 (10) | Jesus | 64.18 | 24 (25) | Homerton | 58.73 |
| 10 (7) | Corpus Christi | 63.69 | 25 (17) | Girton | 58.67 |
| 11 (14) | Selwyn | 63.57 | 26 (26) | Lucy Cavendish | 56.55 |
| 12 (19) | Trinity Hall | 62.83 | 27 (24) | Hughes Hall | 55.54 |
| 13 (21) | Newnham | 62.80 | 28 (28) | Wolfston | 55.36 |
| 14 (13) | St John's | 62.77 | 29 (29) | St Edmund's | 54.45 |

Source: Peter Tompkins

Punters take 200 mile trip from Oxford to Cambridge



Oxford Punting Society

Three students spent a fortnight punting 200 miles from Oxford to Cambridge this summer to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Relief. Matthew Cleevely and Steven Holmes, Engineering students from New College, Oxford, were accompanied by their friend Tom Playford of Bristol University. The trio managed to finish the route in 12 days – two days after their ambitious timetable had predicted. Future punting plans for the group include punting over the Pontcysyllte aqueduct in Wales, which is over 100 feet high.

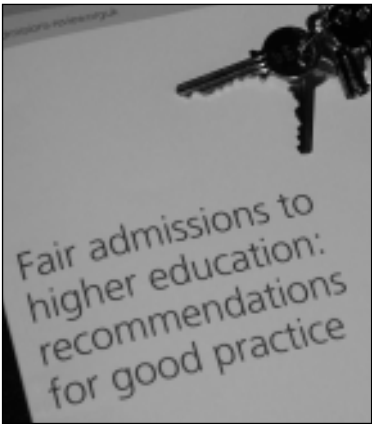
All change for university admissions?

Schwartz Report calls for post-A level application system

Emma Sharples

THE GOVERNMENT is considering drastic alterations to the current Higher Education applications procedure, under new proposals put forward by Professor Steven Schwartz in his radical new Labour-backed review. Schwartz's answer to the uncertainty of the present procedure, whereby students apply to university on the basis of predicted grades, is to replace it with a post-qualification application (PQA) system. Several examination boards confirm that marking could be cut back by two weeks and results delivered earlier, to allow time for students to apply after receiving their results.

The report finds that PQA would not only have the advantages of precluding clearing and risk, but would remove some of the barriers obstructing recognition of an applicant's academic ability. Schwartz asserts that the present focus on predicted grades is not reliable in assessing potential and ensuring that the most able applicants, rather than the most advantaged, are recruited. Although the report recognises previous findings that prior academic attainment is still the best indicator



Lucy Phillips

Reporting for duty: Schwartz's review

of potential, it insists that this does not apply in all cases, especially as social background can begin to negatively affect a child's academic attainment from the age of two.

The ideal method recommended by the review is a holistic and individual approach to student assessment, insisting that each HE applicant should be judged within the context of their schooling and personal background. In order to aid full assessment of a candidate's ability, American-style aptitude testing is suggested as a means of identifying academic talent. This proposal has been slammed by NUS vice-

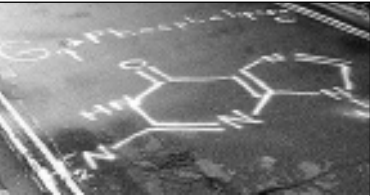
president for education, Hannah Essex, as giving an 'unfair advantage to those who can afford to pay for coaching or are lucky enough to go to a school which would provide adequate preparation for these tests.'

There is further concern that PQA, coupled with an approach that fully assesses an individual's background, would encourage positive discrimination. The Schwartz report, however, insists that this is not the case, but asserts that assessing the limitations of a person's background judged against qualifications is a fair way of selecting applicants.

A statement, issued by the Cambridge Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for education, confirmed that the university is 'in general agreement' with the report's holistic approach in assessing applications and assures that 'this is already the cornerstone of the Cambridge admissions process.'

CUSU Access Officer, Naveed Anwar, meanwhile, maintained that interviews, a mandatory part of the Cambridge applications procedure, are an 'excellent way of treating applicants as individuals', providing interviewers are properly trained and themselves selected from diverse backgrounds.

Academic street art



Lucy Phillips

A GRAFFITI artist spray painted a diagram of a chemical compound found in DNA on Free School Lane earlier this month. The street artist caught the eye of the national press after it emerged that the graffiti was a perfect drawing of a molecule called guanine, one of the structures which makes up DNA. 'Gq- Phospholipase C' was written above the picture.

Dr Jonathan Goodman, CU chemistry lecturer, explained "The text refers to Gq activation of phospholipase C. The 'G' of GQ refers to a guanine derivative, and the molecule drawn below the text is guanine. Guanine is one of the four bases of DNA"

The location of the drawing has led to

reports that it was some kind of tribute to Francis Crick who died in July this year. Crick, together with James Watson, announced their discovery of the substances which could fit together to form DNA upon entering the Eagle in 1953.

Dr Goodman told *Varsity* "I do not know exactly when [during the long vacation] the graffiti appeared. Since it is not really a drawing of DNA, there is not an obvious connection with Crick." There had been speculation that it was the work of a drunk chemistry student, but the University said it thought it was more likely to be a postgraduate, since it happened before term started.

Dr Goodman continued "The information needed to draw the diagram is in undergraduate biological science courses, so hundreds of undergraduates should recognise it, but would probably not have been here in the long vacation to draw it." An anti-graffiti campaign was launched by the council and police in Cambridge in August. The police called the graffiti "clever", but "still criminal damage".

Don's role in Blair attack

Chine Mbubaegbu

THE WORK of a Cambridge politics lecturer is at the heart of a recent report, which intends to bring a Commons motion of impeachment as an indictment of the way the Prime Minister handled the war in Iraq. Newnham lecturer, Dr. Glen Rangwala has co-written the report, entitled *A Case to Answer*, with Dan Plesch, Honorary Fellow of Birkbeck College, University of London.

The report, commissioned by Plaid Cymru MP, Adam Price, presents evidence of 'deliberate repeated distortion, seriously misleading statements and culpable negligence on the part of the Prime Minister' with relation to his handling of the Iraq war.

The first chapter of the document, written by Dr. Rangwala, looks at the statements and actions made by Mr. Blair from September 2001 to August 2004 with relation to Iraq and finds that the Prime Minister made several exaggerated assertions

that were contrary to the intelligence available at the time. Examples of Blair's misleading statements included his assertion in early 2002 that Iraq had "stockpiles of major amounts of chemical and biological weapons," contrasting with the Joint Intelligence Committee's statement that Iraq "may have hidden small quantities of agents and weapons."

Adam Price, supported by 21 other MPs, is leading the call for the impeachment debate. "It is only by impeachment that Parliament will be able to discuss freely, and possessed of all the facts, the very serious issues raised by the report," he said.

"To allow to go unchecked misleading conduct by the most senior minister, on so many occasions; about a war that will influence world affairs for decades to come; is to abandon the cause of liberty that has been so painfully fought for, established and preserved down the generations."

Despite lending his academic expertise to the report, Dr. Rangwala

told *Varsity*: "I don't take a position on the validity or otherwise of the impeachment process. It's up to MPs to decide both whether the procedure is still valid, and whether it is applicable to the current prime minister." Rangwala is a leading figure in academia concerning Middle East politics.

He helps to run the Cambridge-based Campaigns Against Sanctions on Iraq and revealed last year that one of the British Government's dossiers on Iraq was not an original government dossier but a poor copy of an academic article by American post-graduate student Ibrahim al-Marashi whose own work had mainly been based on information which was available in the early 90's.

The call to hold Blair accountable for misleading Parliament and the public over Iraq continues even as Blair defends his actions whilst acknowledging that no weapons of mass destruction have ever been found.

Scentsational natural phenomenon

Exotic plant brings rare stench to the Botanical Gardens



The excitement begins as the red spathe begins to unfurl on September 2.



Inside the spathe: the brilliant colours of the pollen producing male flowers.



In full bloom: the Titan Arum reaches its full height of 1.6 metres.



A picture perfect final image - though not for long.

Courtesy of CU Botanical Gardens

Charlotte Forbes

Visitors to the Cambridge Botanical Gardens this summer had a rare treat as one of the world's strangest plants flowered for the first time in 20 years. The Titan Arum, which bloomed for just three days, emits a strong

corpse-like smell for around 12 hours to attract pollinators.

Over 10,000 enthusiasts came to see the 1.62m Indonesian wonder, which many described as having 'a wafting smell of maggots'. The Garden's website allowed viewers from around the world to enjoy the spectacle, via a live broadcast on its webcam. But for those

who were able to come in person, opening hours were extended until midnight for the first time in 155 years.

The Titan is notoriously difficult to grow and Cambridge is only the third place in this country that has managed to get one to flower, along with the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and Edinburgh. Robert Brett, Glasshouse

Supervisor at the Gardens, said that such an achievement was "great for Cambridge and the whole region". Attempts have been made to produce viable seed from the plant, although hopes are beginning to fade as a fruit is yet to appear.

Students can visit the Gardens free on production of a valid University Card.

THE VARSITY
SQUASH

7-9pm
Coco Bar
Tuesday 12th October

English faculty finds home after 85 years

Courtesy of CU Press Office



Rhys Jones (left) holding his honorary swipe card, presented to him by Professor Richard (right), with Professor Windeatt standing behind.

Lucy Phillips attends the opening ceremony of the new building and speaks to special guest Griff Rhys Jones

CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH department celebrated the completion of its new faculty building on the north side of Sidgwick Site on Wednesday.

For the first time, since the Tripos began in 1919, one building will permanently unite the library, teaching, research, performance and social facilities for staff and students for one of the country's most influential literary institutions.

Professor Alison Richard, Vice-Chancellor of the University, was joined by former English student Griff Rhys Jones to open the building. Over 250 guests were greeted with champagne, canapés and music. Rhys Jones is a building and conservation enthusiast as well as a highly successful comedian and keen supporter of the Faculty's fundraising campaign.

In her speech Professor Richard called the faculty a "remarkable feat", since when she arrived in Cambridge a year ago it was nothing but a building site, and thanked all the English staff for their patience – all 85 years of it. She hailed Rhys Jones "a muse in all this", for all his help in fundraising, and presented him with a 'ceremonial swipe card to the faculty' which will last

until 2055. Rhys Jones joked "Will I be allowed to renew it?" and said that he was honoured to be there.

Rhys Jones told *Varsity* "I very much like it [the new building]. When I was an undergraduate there was no faculty building, only a sort of little house. Teaching was mostly collegiate." He called the building "beautiful and soothing" and "very conducive to study". He went on to quote George Bernard Shaw, "Just think what God could have achieved if only he had the money". It's magnificent." He added that he was especially pleased that one of the architects, Bob Allies, was also a Cambridge student.

Rhys Jones is currently writing his second book after the success of his first. He said that it was an 'unauthorised autobiography' and suggested the name 'Don't go there'. The book will look into his childhood although Mr Rhys Jones jokingly confessed that he had a "very bad memory" and it would perhaps highlight his "inability to remember". The former Cambridge undergraduate has fond memories of the four years he spent at the university during the 1970s and commented

that "Cambridge hasn't really changed that much in the last 30 years."

Professor John Kerrigan, Chairman of the Faculty, and Professor Barry Windeatt, Chairman of the Building Committee, also spoke to offer their gratitude to all those involved in the project. Professor Windeatt said that he hoped a modern building of this distinction would enable students and staff to identify with their "aim to teach the literature of a global language in the 21st Century."

Designed by Architectural Practise of the Year 2004 Allies and Morrison, the four storey English Faculty is built around a central courtyard. It is now fully incorporated in the University's arts, social sciences and humanities campus. As well as uniting all the facets of English, the building brings together parts of the wider faculty set-up with the inclusion of the Department of Anglo-Saxon Norse and Celtic and the research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics.

Funding for the £15 million building came from donations from alumni, the University and its colleges, the HEFC, charitable trusts and corporations.

Loan mix-up causes delay

Charlotte Forbes

SYSTEM FAILURES at the Student Loans Company may leave up to 25,000 students without money at the start of this term, due to 'teething problems' experienced with new computer software.

The cause of the problem is the £30million computer system, Protocol, which was installed at the Student Loans Company (SLC) earlier this year. Its aim was to centralise the applications procedure and save time by allowing the SLC to determine the outcome of applications rather than local authorities. However, many local councils found they were unable to access the programme and then forced to start again due to frequent crashes.

Despite trials of Protocol in 'meticulously planned phases over the past two

years and rigorous testing', the SLC has reportedly taken twice as long to process applications than last year, lasting up to seven weeks. The company, however, strongly denies suggestions of a crisis and claims that only a small proportion of students will be affected by the problems. For this reason, many Local Education Authorities (LEAs), including Cambridgeshire County Council, have devised contingency plans, which will provide up to a third of the requested loan for affected students without means-testing. Any further adjustments can then be made once their applications have been fully processed, which in most cases will take only a few weeks.

The Department for Education and Skills said that problems were localised and only students applying through par-

ticular LEAs would be affected, but would not name those concerned. "We don't want to cause any unnecessary panic. It's far more important that LEAs should be left alone to process any remaining applications quickly, than to run the risk of constant interruptions from anxious students."

First year students and those who submitted their loan applications before the July deadline have been prioritised and will receive their loans on time. The SLC has made it clear that students who apply late are never guaranteed to receive their money in time for the beginning of term. It added that the vast majority of students will encounter no such problems thanks to the tireless efforts of staff and the use of contingencies, and that reports to the contrary were both 'untrue and irresponsible'.

All change at the Junction



BBC Cambridgeshire Online

This summer, one of Cambridge's leading contemporary performing arts organisations, The Junction, opened its doors once again after an 18-week refurbishment programme.

The Clifton Way venue's makeover marks a significant step towards the completion of the first phase of its £5.4 million lottery redevelopment supported by Arts Council England.

According to Robin Townley, the Junction's Development Director, the old Junction will be remembered for "too few toilets, queuing in the rain, the lack of ventilation and cloakroom queues." The major improvements undertaken at the venue over the summer, however, mean that such features are a thing of the past. The refurbishment has brought with it a brand new ventilation system in the main auditorium, which is newly named "The Stripe," air cooling in the chill out bar, new floor surfaces which will encourage keen dancers to strut their stuff by providing sufficient "grip without stick," a new covered outdoor queuing area, extended bar counters and more than double the number of female toilets.

The current lottery redevelopment will ensure that the venue which once played host to bands such as Jamiroquai, Badly Drawn Boy and Coldplay before they made it big, will carry on in its tradition of attracting the best of "music artistes past, present and up coming in every contemporary style". Blur once played there in the early 90's, reportedly for a mere £20 and a plate of sandwiches. Bands performing at The Junction this term include the Zutons, Buffy Clyro and Travis.

Chine Mbubaegbu



A thorn in their side: but will it stick?

Professor Gillian Evans tells James

Dacre of her concerns for the University

A HIGHLY respected academic has launched a cutting attack on the running of the University where she holds a sought-after professorship.

In what has been seen as a great embarrassment by many university figures, Evans candidly attacks the university's management structure; it's internal power struggles and a growing trend of putting research before the interests of scholarship. She dismisses the previous vice-chancellor, Sir Alec Broers, as a "weak" leader disrespectful of university business and regards him as singularly intent on devoting resources towards forging links with industry and pursuing his multimillion-pound building programme.

Speaking to *Varsity* this week, Evans now expresses her acute concerns about Broers' successor, Alison Richards. Describing the Vice-Chancellor as having "gone very, very quiet," she believes that "no-one has any idea what she actually wants to do with the university."

A year ago Evans saw Richards as a figure offering new blood, "trying to build up trust again within the university," and "promising to listen to people." But, "we have lost old fashioned traits like honesty here," she says, tired of waiting for a figure that is yet to assert herself: "you can't run an entire university on a couple of promises can you?"

Evans asserts that the underlying problem shadowing Cambridge is that "we have run into enormous debt," as a result of a decade of misguided administration and neglected fund manage-

ment. "Running on borrowed capital," she fears, "we definitely do stand to lose out on being a top university." Now, "with a crisis on our hands, we need clarity and confidence." This doesn't mean, she remarks, "too many people knocking around in the dome room trying to make decisions."

What is Evans' incentive for exposing the weaknesses of a university that she has an "abiding love" for? "I am a historian," she laughs, "and so much has happened, and so much of it covered by the spin of the press office, that I feel that something needs to be put objectively into the historical record."

And why has no-one else publicly criticised the university in such a revealing manner? Well, Evans certainly has nothing to lose. She is a long-standing critic of the University renowned for never missing an inquiry and to scour the Reporter

"If we try to run ourselves like a business, as others do, then we seek to lose out on what makes us special"

with scrutinising attention for detail.

With "everything nasty that could have been said about me already said," she hopes that "now people might begin to swing round and see that I have been talking a reasonable amount of sense in a reasonably stylish way." And, she adds, before I can begin my next question, "there's a culture of arrogance amongst academics."

After all, who would want to criticise one of the most prestigious insti-

tutions in the world whilst they remain part of it. But the problem of intellectual snobbery runs deeper than this. "Heads of department are very bad at being humble enough to learn things like basic procedures for dealing with students. It is not easy to get senior

Cambridge academics to accept that they did not already know it all," and she feels it is wrong that they are expected to be equipped with management skills in the first instance.

Having been at Cambridge for 25 years, Professor Evans remembers the university as "a place where you had the freedom to do your research thoroughly and teach your students well." She remembers scholarly co-operative endeavour. Now "supervisions are losing their scholarly qualities, geared

only towards teaching topics likely to come up in an exam," and "younger staff are under enormous pressure, bullied into getting stuff published."

In Evans' view, a policy of "sausage machine" academia is at fault; a running of the university as a commercial, research emitting business rather than an academic institution. "If we try to run ourselves like a business, as others have, then we seek to lose out on what makes us special and distinguishes us from them. "Cambridge doesn't need to be a brand. There has been an emptying out of meaningful language because of a brutally oversized press office. If Cambridge can't do what it does, and what it always has, then it's not actually doing what it's there for."

But the most pressing question concerns those who make Cambridge what it is; her colleagues. How have people reacted to these problems? "Most people just conform with requirements," she sighs. She believes very strongly that "we

are in danger of losing a lot of our core body of staff." "People are going because they're fed up and I could name for you at least half a dozen very senior people intent on leaving," she says unhappily, giving the impression that she feels she might be fighting other people's battles for them, but finds herself isolated in the academic community. But, "every day," she claims, "there are people that come up to me to say that they have come to realise that I'm actually right."

There seems nothing aggressive about Gillian Evans' manner, nor her attack on the University. It is a calmly delivered, thoroughly researched piece of academia that asks questions that need to be answered. If Evans is right about the unresponsiveness of the Universities' management to its constituents, then there is a sad likelihood that she will be ignored. When we asked the University Press office, they said they "hadn't even read it."

Professor Evans' five lessons for the University

1. TAKE STUDENTS SERIOUSLY

- The supervision as a genuine conversation has been eroded
- Are we setting this place up for students or are we setting it up for the conference trade?

2. ACADEMICS ARE UNIQUE

- We're in danger of losing a lot of our core body of staff soon. People are fed up
- The younger staff are under enormous pressure and being bullied into getting stuff published.

3. MANAGERS ARENT

- We need clarity and confidence. We have definitely got too many people knocking around trying to make decisions
- There is a culture of arrogance in the University

4. DECIDE WHO WE ARE

- If we try to run ourselves like a business, as others have, then we seek to lose what makes us special
- Cambridge doesn't need to be a brand. If Cambridge can't do what it does, and what it has always done, then it's not actually doing what it's there for

5. STEER A COURSE

- We don't seem to be hearing from Alison Richard what her policies and priorities are... She came in with a lot of promises about equality of opportunity, but nothing much seems to have happened. You can't run a university on promises, can you?

"It's not easy to get senior Cambridge academics to accept that they did not already know it all" - Prof. Gillian Evans



ANALYSIS
AMOL RAJAN **"It is the response to Evans' attack that will tell the story of Cambridge's current health as an academic institution."**

TWO ASPECTS of Professor Evans' attack on the University are particularly noteworthy. The first is the breadth of her broadside; few of the traditional hallmarks of the University escape severe censure.

Supervisions focus too specifically on exam criteria. Academics have lost their sense of job security; the whole academic climate is one of anxiety and discontent. The University's administrators, who are pandering to commercial interests, are impeding scientific research. The vice-chancellor is the puppet of pharmaceutical companies. A heedless drive for profits is supplanting age-old virtues of honesty and intellectual rigour.

The second aspect of Evans' attack that warrants attention is its timing. Her book, launched to coincide with the start of the academic year, has

triggered considerable debate within the university, where polite disagreement has long been the prevailing orthodoxy. Cambridge's image, both nationally and internationally, is not widely associated with fractious infighting - but Evans's book may go some way to introducing a more brazen and assertive approach to discussion of the University's affairs.

Evans is a maverick. She is the Secretary for Public Policy at the Council for Academic Freedom and Academic Standards, fought with the University for 10 years over her failure to receive a promotion, and went to court half a dozen times to secure it.

A specialist in medieval history, she suggested last year that Alison Richard, then newly appointed as vice-chancellor was undeserving of her title of 'Professor', because she

hadn't received a professorship from Cambridge through orthodox channels.

Evans' critics - and she has several - have made, and will continue to make, predictable accusations. This, they will say (though not publicly), is the selfish politeness of a frustrated academic seeking celebrity status. Evans is compensating through public attention for what she lacks in private success.

These views may carry some legitimacy. With the onset of the new academic year rigorous debate can only be healthy - but the silence of Evans' detractor's risks giving her credence she might otherwise struggle for. Over the coming term it is the response to Evans' attack that will tell the story of Cambridge's current health as an academic institution.



A Greek tragedy with a happy ending



Reports of Gardies' death have been greatly exaggerated, says **Chine Mbubaegbu**

WE THOUGHT it was all over. After tireless campaigning by Cambridge students and alumni around the world, up in arms about Caius' decision to close the Greek fast-food restaurant that has served its 'healthy Mediterranean cuisine' to hungry students since 1961, it seemed that all was lost. The *Varsity* petition had been taken down from Gardies wall and it looked like Senior Bursar, Barry Hedley and Caius college were set in their decision to turn the take-away into accommodation for its

growing number of students. Hedley insisted last year that this did not mean that the establishment had to close, but Vas Anastasiou said: "We thought of taking Gardenia's somewhere else, but it wouldn't be the same...I like the students, I like the place, I like my work."

Cambridge City Council's Environment & Planning Department told *Varsity* that although planning permission had been approved it was up to the discretion of Caius and their Property Consultants, Bidwells, whether



How *Varsity* broke the story

or not they wanted to go ahead. It is not yet clear what changed their minds but Anastasiou says "We're definitely not closing. We are delighted."

This comes as great news to the legendary Gardenia and its fans, including a Trinity porter who told *Varsity* that he visited Gardies as often as he could. When informed of the news that Gardies was no longer closing, he remarked: "Thank Christ for that." Gardies means a lot to Cambridge. Many have had their photos taken by

Vas, who has been at the restaurant for 15 years and recently declined £30,000 from a national tabloid who wanted a particular photograph of a famous Cambridge alumnus in their youth.

Its friendly service and genuine interest in the lives of students makes Gardies so well-loved. Mr. Anastasiou said: "When I do something, I do it with my heart. It's not just my job." This is why so many students and residents of Cambridge will be happy to hear that Gardies will remain open.





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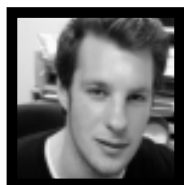
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The victory of extremism over rationality



ANALYSIS
JAMES DACRE

“There exists among many animal rights groups a total demonisation of science that if allowed to flourish will devastate medical and economic progress.”

The university's January decision to close the Huntington Road Primate labs will long be remembered in Cambridge history as a sorry moment of weakness and appeasement of violence. Firstly because it has contributed to a national crises amongst the pharmaceuticals industry; and now because the imminent opening of a similar research facility in Oxford, despite violent protests, makes for a humiliating comparison.

Two of the world's biggest drug manufacturers have threatened to withdraw new research and development investment from Britain as first Huntingdon and then Cambridge appear to have given in to animal militants. Major anti-animal testing groups have hailed the withdrawals of both as major victories advancing the case that violent activism works. Pharmaceutical companies contribute £6.7 billion to Britain's domestic annual income and are one of our major exports. A quarter of the top 100 drugs on the market were discovered in this country. There is now a risk that significant parts of this great industry and expertise will move elsewhere, or even be lost altogether. British GlaxoSmithKline's chief executive, J.P. Garnier is said to have told Tony Blair that he will “not spend another pound” in this country until it has demonstrated a hard-line defence against violent animal right protest and intimidation.

Four years ago Gordon Brown placed research and development at the centre of his drive to create a knowledge-based economy. The closure of Huntingdon is an embarrassment for a Chancellor talking so passionately in Brighton this week of “a Great Britain of aspiration and ambition where there are no barriers to achievement.” Talking of how over the coming years, advances in biomedical research will “touch upon every aspect of our lives and revolutionise our economy,” Brown does significantly not mention a Britain bullied by small numbers of vicious protesters.

Oxford University suffered a major blow in July when contraction company Walter Lilly decided to pull out of the project following violent threats made to the shareholders of their company. Yet instead of giving in to the prospect of escalating costs or bowing to antisocial tactics, the University has declared that it is determined that the laboratory will be completed. As was intended at Cambridge, the Oxford scheme is expected to make significant advances in the understanding of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease and strokes.

On the Oxford University website, a prominent page detailing information about the new biomedical research facility begins by making it clear that “The building is not a replacement for Cambridge's proposed Primate Research Facility.” However, this profound emphasis can be seen as an ironic underscoring of Cambridge's failure. For the website continues unequivocally that “Oxford is open about its scientific research.”

The most disastrous aspect of the whole Cambridge debacle has been that all language offered by its organisers was deliberately ambiguous and largely meaningless. Last October, reporting on the planned project, *Varsity* recorded the promoters as being “economical with the

truth.” From the very outset the project was approached with half-hearted and poorly communicated intentions. Submitting the project to Regent House, the University's parliament, the organisers neglected to mention that the facility, originally called just “Building 307,” would contain a primate research centre. Later, they cowardly justified their error by saying they “felt it necessary to keep the information from the public domain,” to avoid security threats from animal rights activists. Amongst the

were satisfied with meaningless figures without a thorough investigation into what is actually being experienced by research animals.

Robert Cogswell of the controversial animal right group SPEAC warned *Varsity* at the beginning of the year that “actions speak louder than words...we want to hit the University in the pocket where it counts.” The campaign was based upon the successful methods of intimidation, attrition and violence that had succeed at Huntingdon.

saving drugs and treatments unless they are tested overseas, where expertise is not as in this country. Britain enforces the strictest animal rights testing regulations in the world. Before the closure of the Primate labs, an invaluable anti-stroke drug evaluated on monkeys in Cambridge entered large-scale clinical trials worldwide. Since the beginning of the century, 90 Nobel prizes for medicine have been awarded, of which over 60 were contingent upon the use of laboratory animals. In February, the uni-



shouting mob of animal rights campaigning, reassuring voices of reason were never heard.

Research suggests that there are only around 1,000 animal rights campaigners in the UK. It is thought that the closure of the Cambridge science facility was the work of less than twenty core protesters. The university were shown to be pandering to a small if dangerous minority; a tiny group of people intent on illegal methods of intimidation, driven by an argument corrupted by irrational hatred and antisocial behaviour. In contrast, Oxford has taken legal action against such extremists and vowed to unrelentingly protect the interests and security of staff, alumni, colleges and facilities.

Despite generating huge interest, there was a climate of ignorance concerning facts and figures related to the primate centre. The debate was not about the ethical considerations of the dilemma but was hijacked by the discredited, brutal behaviour of those campaigning against the centre. There exists among many animal rights groups a total demonisation of science that if allowed to flourish will devastate medical and economic progress.

Ultimately, the two questions central to this debate must remain “How much do animals suffer in such experiments,” and, “How many animals are subject to experiments that make them suffer.” Neither of these have been satisfactorily answered. Both sides in this bitter debate

By pandering to such tactics, Cambridge has granted acceptability to people whose chosen weapons of “democratic” debate include the firebombing of cars, brutal assault, slander, vandalism and the systematic persecution of professionals trying to achieve considerable medical advances for the greater good of society. A cursory glance through some animal rights websites reveals an eternity of conceited victory speeches.

Furthermore, the university has undermined a concerted Home Office effort to counteract the behaviour of animal rights activists. The university ignored the intervention of both Tony Blair and John Prescott's pleas to push ahead with the facility despite opposition. The Home Office responded that “The Government applauds those companies and individuals who have stood firm in the face of continual intimidation from extremists.”

The ethics of the debate are astonishingly complicated and frequently rehearsed but there are some stark and irrefutable facts. 1% of Britain's population will be affected by schizophrenia. Over 300,000 suffer from Alzheimer's and one in 1000 develops Parkinson's. If Britain chooses (or if her hand is swayed by animal rights propaganda) to abandon research developing an understanding of these disorders, the average Briton will not have access to these life

versity conceded to *Varsity* that extreme groups had made more impact by violent protest than by debate.

In January, Professor Colin Blakemore of the Medical Research Council had told *Varsity* that plans for the Cambridge facility “would not be beaten.” It seems that his words were only heard along the Cherwell, as Oxford's admirable endorsement of its project has sickeningly highlighted Cambridge's defeat.

Science minister Lord Sainsbury suggested at the time that Cambridge would damage its reputation as a centre of “national importance,” by ignoring the potential for developing drugs of the future. A recent press release from Vice-Chancellor Alison Richard declares that “Cambridge has a very distinguished heritage of scientific breakthroughs, of which we are justifiably proud. The University does not rest on its laurels.” Could these words be more inappropriate to a university that has chosen to ignore its history of pioneering science whilst Oxford's achievement in the face of adversity has confirmed hers?

As Cambridge begins work on a new Stem Cell Laboratory, are we in for another long haul of controversy, financial trouble and ultimately failure? Asked about the potential for controversy surrounding this new project, we were predictably told by the university “it's very difficult to say.”

President Wes' New Direction

Archie Bland

Cambridge students return to town this weekend to a new CUSU president, Wes Streeting. The former Selwyn JCR president has been in his sabbatical post for several months now, but the return of the undergraduate population marks his public initiation in the role.

CUSU has not been dormant over the summer, though, producing, among other things, a briefing report outlining recent developments and offering some hints as to the policy direction that the new administration intends to take.

The most striking shift is, inevitably, the acknowledgement that we live in a post-top-up world. Despite occasional caveats which insist that there is more to be done – speaking to *Varsity* last week, Streeting even pointed out that the Welsh Assembly has not agreed to the government's approach and may still be persuaded of the student unions' case – the general tone is one which determinedly refocuses CUSU's energies on matters of local significance. Building bridges after the bitter disagreements of the fees debate is an apparent priority. The document gives an insight into how firmly entrenched the two sides were last year: it is revealed, for instance, that Ben Brinded's monthly meetings with the Vice-Chancellor were cancelled at the height of the row, something which CUSU failed to disclose at the time. Streeting's arrival has led to the reinstatement of these occasions, but the diplomatic language is ultimately lukewarm: the guide promises to be a ‘critical friend,’ which is hardly a ringing endorsement.

Anne Campbell, Cambridge's Labour MP and previously CUSU's bete noire, is similarly reassessed, albeit grudgingly. Streeting has clearly decided that a persistent grudge will win his constituents few favours, and that Campbell's need for the student vote may well make her more likely to return his calls.

Of specific policy there is little, but a few issues seem likely to receive particular attention at some point in the coming months. The Schwartz report (see page 2) is cautiously welcomed, but the caveats make CUSU's opposition to SAT style tests clear, and underlined its belief in interviewer training. The university's currently stated intention to charge year-abroad language students full fees throughout their course is raised: if this intention is confirmed, it may well provoke a stormy reaction.

It is immediately clear when talking to Streeting that ents are his greatest enthusiasm, and the focus on this aspect of student life is made apparent by the space given over to freshers' week promotion in the briefing. This is palpably a presidency which intends to focus on the typical student's regular needs; critics may argue that this will come at the expense of a wider strategic plan. Whether Streeting will strike the right balance is the essential question posed by this document: the answer will only come with time.

Experiments in currency: how

It must be funny, it doesn't grow on trees, and it's

It's Michaelmas Term, the season when bank accounts swell and then empty again after the lean summer months. This week *Varsity* celebrates jacking in the summer job with a look at money and its many uses. Harriet Walker and James Dacre turn out their pockets (overdrafts included) and how they would spend it all if they had to get rid of it in a week; Chris Adams turns up some unusual bargains on eBay, and Ross McElwain navigates the world of 'free universities' in a quest for an alternative to student debt.

£1221.96

A paltry sum, some might say, even if pleasingly symmetrical. So I'm going for an OVERDRAFT, the economic equivalent of *Gone With the Wind* – it lasts forever and makes you feel sad. After a financially rapacious 12 months, I find myself in the unique position of being technically penniless, but actually in charge of several thousands. The beauty of living off credit is the feeling that, because the money only ever existed hypothetically, it is only ever spent hypothetically. Everything bought with a hefty overdraft is a fantastical illusion – here today, gone tomorrow. Just like your credit rating and reputation. Purchases acquire a transient delicacy, which can be ruined by the removal of price tickets, thereby rendering an item un-returnable.

My overdraft is like the Stock Exchange, invisible money of fluctuating worth with a similarly make-believe appeal. But unlike overdrafts, the FTSE has no room for romance or sentimentality. Choosing to invest because a company is named after your sister, for example, is a strict no-no. After careful consideration, I'd lodge my ghostly millions in an eclectic mix of ensured safe returns, like banks, and a few wild cards, just so things didn't go stale. Laura Ashley perhaps, or Aeroflot.

Translating my intangible funds into concrete material possessions is more difficult. Spending money takes dedication, but the immense opportunities presented by my overdraft call for a long, hard think. Research informs me that my resources will get me 389 copies of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, 457 bottles of college Vin de Table or 680 visits to Cindy's. These will, no doubt, improve my Cambridge existence but in the greater scheme of things, I'm not convinced that my overdraft and I can rise together to the lifestyle we both so desperately long for. Predictably enough it will not buy me a house either in Zimbabwe or even Mortlake. It will however get me a rustic gîte with a swimming pool just outside Avignon. For a week.

I could get myself a fantastic Emanuel Ungaro dress, but I couldn't afford to wear it anywhere, or I could get several pairs of Manolo Blahniks, but I might as well just strap fifty pound notes to my old shoes. So it seems to me that there will never be a perfect way to consummate my overdraft. But we're good together – he understands that I'm often clingy and possessive of him, and I know that he will never, ever leave me, no matter how bankrupt I become.

Harriet Walker

£1000.00

An American Credit Card company advertises that "It's not the saving you need to worry about, it's the spending." Ironically (and yes, it is ironic), unless you know what you want, spending everything at once just isn't that easy. Michael Landy, statement-heavy YBA, destroyed everything that he owned during Break Down, an experiment in Oxford Street's C&A (a mecca of commercialism). At the installation's conclusion, Landy, standing amongst wood-chips and paper-mache money, declared emotional fulfilment. However contrived, his event provides a simple solution. Faced with an eternity of indecision regarding how to spend everything I own, perhaps it would be best just to destroy it.

The Barenaked Ladies, cowboy visionaries, understood the problem perfectly. In their ballad "If I Had A Million Dollars" they imagine no longer "having to eat Kraft dinners." "But of course we would," they cheer, "we'd just eat more and buy really expensive ketchups with it." Choosing not to take the Lazarus route, if I knew that I had to spend everything, then it would be on something that I know that I like. So not just buying a Ska album, but buying Ska as a genre; a giant ball-pit of Skittles or a sea of Taramasalata with pink lemonade fountains. It is, of course, vital that people are going to talk about your reckless purchase; that its extravagance becomes notorious. Unfortunately, a student loan probably isn't enough to make someone love me. And if the investment has to be one semi-sensible purchase, then it's actually very difficult to spend £1000.

Indulgence comes at a price either much higher or lower. Either it's cars, castles and catamarans or makeovers, manicures and Mars Bars. £1000 couldn't find me the perfect present, either for myself, or someone else. A projector so that I could type my essays onto the bedroom wall and play life-size *Mortal Combat* cost £1600. A flamingo suit £600. The Easy-Chair, a "male utopia complete with fridge, phone and remote control," £2500. Harder is to know where to begin. How do you go about spending everything you own?

Dilugio, a self-confessed "DVD-aholic" wrote to Amazon.com in exclamation-mark enhanced prose that the complete *Star Trek*, series 1-7 box set was all that he had ever wanted from life, and consequently worth all that he had ever got. He paid exactly £1000 for the rare collection. And so my search ended where it had begun. Not in my imagination, but in the security of surfing, more body-boarding, the internet. £1000 is enough to take you anywhere, and "Given anywhere, where would you go?" is a much better question.



Car Boot + Designer Boutique = eBay

Imagine the world's biggest charity shop, car boot sale, designer boutique, branch of Dixon's, under-stairs cupboard and dustbin all rolled into one. Yes folks, we are, of course, talking about eBay.

eBay can only be described as a phenomenon. eBay Junkmeister Pierre Omidyar founded eBay in his living room back in 1995. Omidyar's wife was an avid collector of Pez dispensers. Wouldn't it be wonderful, the Junkmeister presumably mused one day, if there was a simple, electronic way for Pez aficionados across the globe to trade their plastic treasures quickly and easily?

And so eBay was born. Things have changed: as we all know, eBay's current slogan is 'much more than just Pez'. The company now has over 95 million registered users and employs 2500 staff, with bids made every second of the day across the globe. It turns a profit by taking a slice of the cash won in an online auction, and lets the buyer and seller go off and seal the deal.

Name an item that you own, once owned or would like to own, and you can be pretty sure you'll be able to bid for one on eBay. Fancy a round of golf with Tiger Woods? \$425,000 and it's yours. Or maybe your own Gulfstream II fighter jet? Fine – someone snapped one up on eBay for a measly \$4.9million.

You may not be able to stretch to your own jet, but there are plenty of goodies up for grabs at low, low prices for us pocket-money shoppers. It's difficult to

resist figurative Pokemon costumes (£4.99, 2 bids) and 1986 Karate Kid action figures (£8.68, 11 bids), and before you can say 'Michael Jackson fridge magnet!' (£2.19, 0 bids) you will find yourself frantically bidding for more and more and more items that you simply do not need.

Celebrities help trade along. Someone recently sold Britney Spears' chewed chewing gum for several hundred dollars. It was, apparently, 'of the spearmint variety', though how the seller knew this is undetermined. GMTV presenter Kate Garraway had the

"Perhaps eBay addiction exists because it doesn't actually feel like you're spending any money"

'quirky' idea on air to sell her half-eaten banana skin on the site, and received £1,650 for it.

And, disturbingly, eBay is creating its own celebrities. Bristol University student Rosie Reed made the news last year when she enterprisingly sold her virginity for £8,400 and went on Richard & Judy to tell the world. We wacky Cambridge students jumped on the bandwagon last term. John 'Big John' Elmer of Hughes Hall discovered the price of friendship really wasn't that high when his reached a jaw-droppingly sad £22.

Other delights put up for sale over the years, and mostly swiftly deleted by those fast-fingered eBay staff, include human fingers, numerous souls, somebody's grandma and even, for one lucky bidder, Mexico. eBay is also, apparently, eating itself – there are people selling tips on how to successfully sell things on eBay, including their own selling tips. Surely, this will eventually cause something to explode.

Perhaps eBay addiction exists because it doesn't actually feel like you're spending any money on all of this crap. No cash is ever sighted in any of these impromptu transactions – it's all done by electronic money transfer, or, if you're a bit low-tech, by sending a cheque.

The novelty soon wears off, however. There may be a momentary pang of pride that you're the only person in Britain to own a prop sword from *The Mummy Returns* (£55, 0 bids) or autographed Su Pollard beachball (£4.99, 1 bid), but once you've examined it, showed a couple of uninterested friends and stashed it in a drawer, you begin to wonder if you're using your student loan as wisely as you should be.

Mrs Omidyar is no doubt delighted with her husband's little invention. As well as the billions of dollars profit the happy couple presumably reel in each year, she'd be delighted to find out that there are currently 632 Pez dispensers for sale on eBay. God bless the Internet.

Chris Adams

www.whattheheck.com/eBay/

to make your money matter

the root of all evil. *Varsity* thinks it sounds like fun

Ross McElwain goes in search of an education on the cheap

If you were too money- or time-poor to go to a 'proper' university but wanted a university education, where could you turn? One institution that springs immediately to mind is the OU, or Open University. Undergraduate correspondence courses cost from £200 to £650 (including books and exams) and can be completed anywhere in the world.

A less obvious choice might be the UO, or University of Openess, based in Limehouse Town Hall in London since 2002. Courses are free and there are no exams. Don't expect to study arch and anth or golf course management there. Current regular events include HackLab, courses organised by the Faculties of Cartography, Unix and Fuckology, and the Apocalypse Project concerning the Future History of the End of the World.

The UO is one of the chief 'free' universities in the UK. To an outsider their structures of organisation

resemble those of their brick-and-book counterparts but they are located largely in cyberspace. Their existence in part questions the idea of the university. They involve collaboration between teacher and student, making them stand in the same relation to a traditional university as, say, Wikipedia does to Encyclopedia Britannica.

They consider themselves doubly 'free': it costs nothing to study with them and their work attempts to promote freedoms of various kinds within society. A spokesman for a free university might argue that these two factors are intimately linked, especially for a student.

As of late, the newspapers have tended to consider gaining a degree as an essentially bureaucratic activity tantamount to buying a licence to work. On 16th June *The Daily Telegraph* announced, straight-faced, 'Young people who want to get ahead have to get a degree, and any degree' - for which read 'any old

degree' - 'will do', so drastically has their idea of a university education degraded.

The essential business of paying your way through 'any old' degree has important consequences for students. It involves being acquired into a rat-race in which debt looms until it is allayed and the unlucky are grateful to find 'any old' job when they graduate. Because the eventual need for paid work begins as soon as you accrue your first fresher's debts,

students are 'already workers, not just future workers' as the American academic Marc Bousquet remarks in the current issue of *Mute* magazine. And yet, he laments, while in the USA there is a graduate employee union movement, 'there's almost nothing in the undergraduate population'.

The free university tries to help the willing student to stand outside this situation, with its emphases on remaining as debt-free as possible, learning useful and unusual skills (especially in the realm of the internet) and relentless questioning of the status quo from a position somewhat removed from it.

It may also be a seed-bed for the kind of labour activism desired by Mr Bousquet. Many free universities around the world are heavily involved in political debate, protest

Overdraft OD'd?

If you still need a student loan write at once to your Local Education Authority (LEA). If your LEA pays your university fees, you are entitled to £1000 per year from the Isaac Newton Trust. If you have part fee remission, you may still be entitled to some money. Whoever knew that gravity was so useful? Ask your tutor/senior tutor/academic affairs officer for more info, or look on www.newtontrust.co.uk.

Krystyna Larkham

and agitation, and in fact seem to be 'universities' only in name.

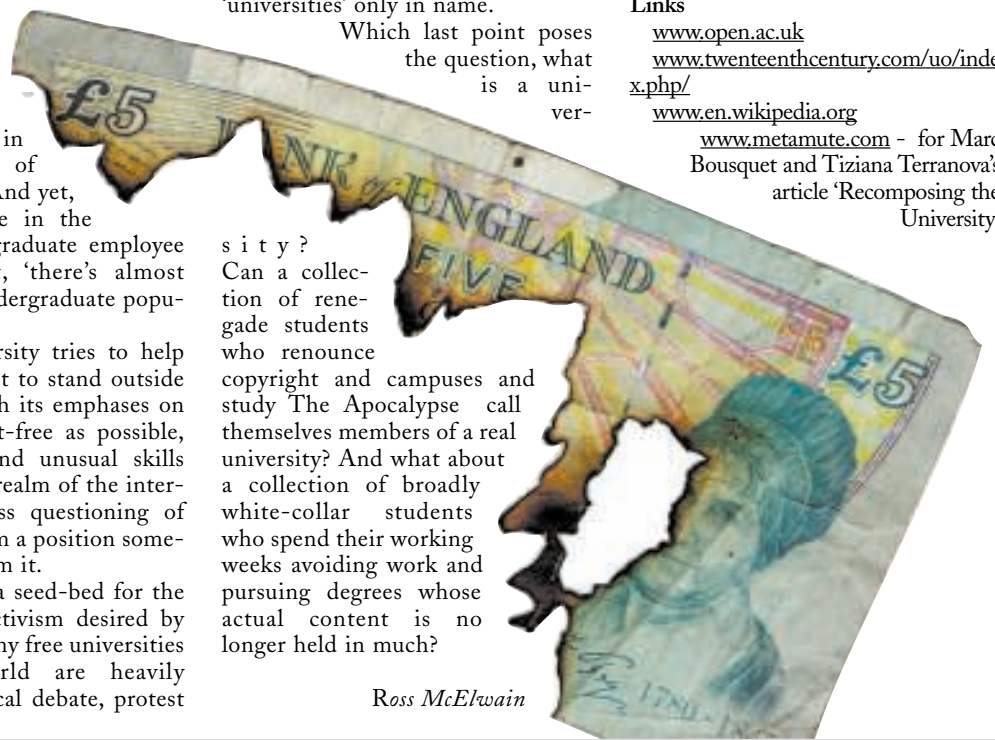
Which last point poses the question, what is a university?

Links

www.open.ac.uk
www.twentiethcentury.com/uo/index.php/
www.en.wikipedia.org
www.metamute.com - for Marc Bousquet and Tiziana Terranova's article 'Recomposing the University'

Can a collection of renegade students who renounce copyright and campuses and study *The Apocalypse* call themselves members of a real university? And what about a collection of broadly white-collar students who spend their working weeks avoiding work and pursuing degrees whose actual content is no longer held in much?

Ross McElwain



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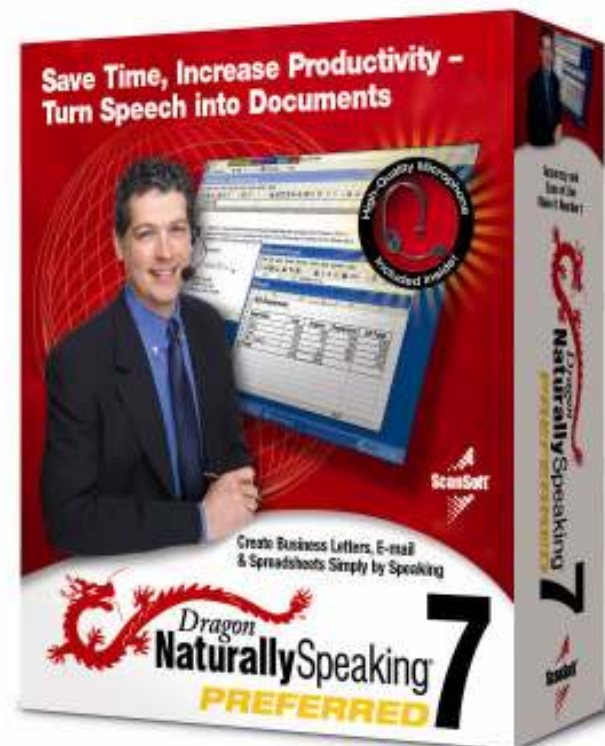
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| Editor | Archie Bland <i>editor@varsity.co.uk</i> |
| Deputy Editor | Amol Rajan <i>deputynews@varsity.co.uk</i> |
| Online Editor | Sam Richardson <i>webeditor@varsity.co.uk</i> |
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| Features Editor | Ross McElwain <i>features@varsity.co.uk</i> |
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Courtesy of Gardies



"an extremely relieved portion of the student body has got to keep its special burgers"

It's time to tell your own story - if you can still remember how it goes

Murder on the box isn't important; but Hollywood's version of love is trickier

There is nothing out there but love and death. Before he or she is eighteen, we're told, the average child will have seen ten thousand on-screen murders. We're meant to be shocked. But who cares? It's irrelevant. Most of us (let's be generous to the *Varsity* readership and say two out of three) will go through life without ever having to whack someone.

What should worry us is that, before they're eighteen, the average child will have seen - let's say - a thousand on-screen love affairs. So before most of us have found a vein in our hearts and shot up even a single gram of potent love-skag (sorry

"for our generation, real love doesn't exist"

for the metaphor but otherwise, at the rate I'm using the word 'love', people are going to mistake this column for a Richard Curtis film) we've seen a small town of people do it.

And these people, from TV, aren't normal people. They are people like Ryan and Marissa from *The OC*. They fall in love because they have no choice; they have no choice simply because they are the two most attractive people in the cast.

The OC tries to portray the daily lives of rich American teenagers without any of the bleakness or the

"None of us will ever have to be rich American teenagers"



Ned Beaman

drugs that we know are there because we've read Bret Easton Ellis. But, as with the violence, this lie doesn't matter, because none of us will ever have to be rich American teenagers. What does matter is the way it portrays love, because everyone has to fall in love.

Maybe *The OC's* writers are all blessed with astonishing literary skill and sensitivity. Maybe their depiction of young love is as real as it comes. I don't have time to list the ways in which I think it's not. (Even if those writers did have any talent, what works on screen is going to be infinitely more important than how people really live.) But there is no way for us to know, because, for our generation, real love doesn't exist. 'Hang on,' you might say. 'I've been in love. I know what it's like.' Yes, but before it happened, you'd seen a thousand times what falling in love is *meant* to be like - the kind of things you're *meant* to feel, the kind of things you're *meant* to say. How, with the interference of the mass media, can your experience possibly be pure or authentic?

Yes, people have always told each other love stories, and *Romeo and Juliet* and *Anna Karenina* are, in

their own ways, just as artificial as *The OC*. But TV characters, the demons in that scan-line hell, are so close we want to reach out and touch them: they're the same age as us, they listen to the same music as us, and yet they're more beautiful and witty than we could ever be. Their lives take place not in the short time it takes to read a book or see a play, but week by week, almost in real-time. And they're almost universal, the only common culture we have left. We have no hope but to aspire to them, to open ourselves and to allow them to alter us. Demons, exit this body.

If you're convinced that television can't change the way we live, consider, as a trivial example, the word 'jock'. This is an American slang term, which has existed only since the Fifties, for the athletic alpha males of a school or college. Of course, I didn't need to tell you that; you already knew what it meant, because you'd seen so many TV shows set in American high schools. And the strange thing is, British people have started using it about each other. Why? We don't need the word. Here, sportsmen are

not elevated above the rest of us, revered and privileged, in anything like the way they are in the US. We can just say 'sporty'. Yet we begin to label certain people as 'jocks'. We almost *want* to have American-style cliques, because all the shiny-teeth TV people do (and they all do because it's such a useful dramatic device). The fake experiences we see on screen have begun to distort the real ones we have in life. And this example is tiny compared to the real damage being done. Our genuine emotions are being murdered by synthetic ones. It's like psychological *Blade Runner*.

We can't fall in love authentically. We can't go to school authentically.

"they're more beautiful and witty than we could ever be"

But we can just about go to university authentically. For some reason university isn't a very popular subject for all the American dramas that ooze out of our screens (apart from some of *Buffy* and, of course, the sublime *Saved by the Bell: The College Years*). We can come here, and some Californian hack at a laptop hasn't told us in advance what it should be like. So let's be grateful for that, because it gives us more of a chance, just when we most need it, to forget what we think we know about love and start telling our own stories.

VARSLTY

Evans is worth listening to

Gillian Evans is easy to dismiss as a cliché. She has had numerous run-ins with the university in the past; she is not shy of publicity; she has, some might argue, grounds for bitterness. When she cries wolf, there will be those who raise a sceptical eyebrow and wonder if the publicity will help book sales.

It is unfair to dismiss her thus. It is impossible to speak to Evans and not draw the conclusion that this is a woman whose engagement with the issues facing this university is genuinely principled, and it is also impossible to ignore her deeply-held affection for the place. *The University Of Cambridge In The Modern World* is not exactly a money-making pot-boiler, and career advancement is not made especially easy by constantly irritating those in whose power it lies to aid the ascent of the greasy pole. Besides all this is the simple fact that she is by no means alone in her discontentment: *Varsity* hears whispers of a significant number of senior academics who are not far from taking drastic action in response to what they perceive as the university's failings. Proof that these issues are more than mere bellyacheing can be seen in three of this newspaper's stories this week: the Primate labs, the refurbishment of King's bar, and the ongoing questions over the future of Gardies all relate to the kinds of matters of governance and consultation that Evans has raised.

So, her arguments, whether one agrees with them or not, certainly warrant a hearing. And they have this to be said for them: they are clear and forceful. Evans is not interested in compromise. A top-down management *must* give way to academic democracy, she says; research funding *must not* come from sources which will exert undue influence on its use. There is, of course, something of Charles Kennedy about these kind of pronouncements, which are easier made when the balance of idealism and practicality weighs less heavy than it does on a leader; nevertheless, the sheer conviction of her position makes a sharp contrast with the university press office's answer to *Varsity's* enquiries, which has been to say that no-one who works for it has even read the book, and that a response would be unwise. This is either untrue or unnerving, and Evans' contentions certainly deserve some kind of answer.

Alison Richard will have an excellent opportunity to offer one in her *Varsity* interview next week. There are two kinds of leaders: those who ignore awkward problems of this nature in the hope that they will go away, and those who recognise that criticism can be constructive, and that the best way to silence your detractors is to engage with them, and to win the argument. It is to be sincerely hoped that the Vice-Chancellor proves herself the latter.

Better red than dead

When one member of the *Varsity* team first saw a photograph of the new look King's bar, her initial reaction was to wonder if it was an airport lounge. Revelation of the picture's provenance was greeted with disbelief and hilarity. It is not hard to see why: a more anodyne design would be difficult to come by, and even walking into the place is hardly enough to convince the observer that this is really the home of generations of Cambridge's most politically engaged student body.

It is, of course, funny in a way: it seems hard to believe that those attending vacation conferences in the college are really such dullards as to prefer the new Forte guesthouse look to the old style, which was, whatever one's aesthetic opinion, distinctive. But there is a serious point here too. One could hardly choose a more symbolic locus for a balancing of the needs of the undergraduate population with the needs of those who hire the facilities: King's, when asked on which side its priorities lie, offered an unequivocal answer.

There is a caveat to this. The college's good is, after all, the student body's long-term good too. But this could prove King's poll tax: if a more insensitive decision has been made by a college governing body in recent years, *Varsity* has not heard of it. It is as politically foolish as it is arrogant, and it may be a decision the college comes to regret.

Gardies can only be good

In a week when the university's disengagement from its constituents seemed to have been proven beyond all doubt, the news of Gardies' new lease of life came as a welcome counterpoint. Even those of us whose reservations about the constituents of the average doner are unshaken even after several drinks cannot fail to be pleased about it. An extremely affable man has got to keep his shop; an extremely relieved portion of the student body has got to keep its special burgers. What a pleasure to have some straightforwardly good news.

This editorship cannot claim any of the credit for that, in truth. And of course those who deserve the most credit for this turn of events are Vas Anastasiou the owner of Gardies, and those at Caius who relented, whose change of heart seems of Scrooge-like proportions; still, at least for a little while, those who decry the media in general and student journalism in particular as sheer cynical hackery should – well, should shut up. We think it matters. If you do, too, and you'd like to be part of the *Varsity* team, email the relevant email address listed to the left, or come to our squash, or try getinvolved@varsity.co.uk. After all, it might be your local kebab emporium next.

“a potage of trepidation, excitement and profound boredom”



Jonathan Beckman

Cambridge. Michaelmas term just beginning, and cavalcades of overloaded vehicles swoop down motorways across the country, homing in on a small, drizzle-spattered town in the middle of the Fens with an ostentatious sense of its own history. Tentative teenagers alighting, bearing textbooks, boxes and whichever free kitchen appliance their student account has foisted upon them. Another year, another freshers' week.

Freshers' week is odd: a potage of trepidation, excitement and profound boredom. It invites much paternalistic and spurious advice. *The Independent's* student guide contained such mother-of-pearls of wisdom as ‘Try to talk to people,’ and ‘There is no pressure to get drunk.’ What bunkum.

Of course there is: and it helps immensely since the rhythmic elevation of glass to mount and the ever-mounting sensation of inebriation provide a faint yet significant distraction from the torpor of most of the conversations you will have to endure).

Before I came up, I had visions of sewing dragons teeth of arch wit to a posse of mesmerised, adulatory admirers. Instead, I found myself droning the same

banalities as everybody else: ‘So you come from Kent – how wonderful’; ‘I like Tom Stoppard too.’ The repetition of the same information takes its toll. Jokes that seemed the pinnacle of hilarity on their first appearance soon turn to dust in the mouth.

A more humane and efficient method would be to have all freshmen branded on their foreheads with their name, subject,

“So you come from Kent – how wonderful”

home town and gap-year activity of choice and allow them to circulate in silence in intense circumspection like an ambulatory Madame Tussaud's exhibition.

The trouble is, freshers' events operate under the dubious assumption that people enjoy meeting other people. Sometimes they do; more often, it is merely wearisome, and magnifies insecurities. ‘Does this person really find me interesting,’ wonders the anxious beginner, ‘or are they bored out of their mind

Fresher's week is the ideal occasion to put away childish things, to bid farewell to adolescence and unveil the new, proper grown-up ‘you’. Family history tells how back in the 70's an Uncle of mine took the opportunity of starting University to change his name from the rather pedestrian Robert to the dangerously sophisticated ‘Peter’. One can only imagine the gasps of his fellow undergraduates when this exotically monikered young man signed up for wine-tasting club at the Fresher's Fair. ‘Look, there goesPeter.’

Being the proud owner of a mysterious middle initial, I have no need to go to these lengths to advertise my new-found maturity – clearly ready-made sophistication is already mine. Perhaps this unshakable worldliness explains why whenever I attempt to recreate the innocent practices of my girlhood, invariably something thoroughly seedy happens, as if to remind me what a ridiculous idea it was in the first place. Only a couple of months ago, for instance, I was happily frolicking by the side of a motorway when I stumbled upon – oh joy of girlish joys! – a litter of abandoned kittens. Like an over-zealous, over-grown girl-scout, I took it upon myself to care for the poor motherless things, and as soon as I could, I returned to the spot with half a can of whiskers. I half expected my compassion to be rewarded with wild deer wandering up to me and songbirds spontaneously perching on my fingers. Instead, the local sex deviant,



Ellen Jones

cycled past me several times before racing on ahead and setting up camp in the bushes alongside the path so he could jump out and wank furiously at me as I tried to return home. I'm sure Jackie and Bunty never had to deal with this nonsense when they were helping the needy. I tried to ignore him and go on with collecting flowers to press make into charming little bookmarks, but by then my innocent enjoyment of nature had been irreversibly tainted.

A genuine teenage girl, in my place, would not have been flustered at all. They're used to the constant onslaught of uninvited exposures and put up with it with admirable fortitude. As far as I remember and for some reason best known to the deviants themselves, the sight of three or more school uniforms was always too much excitement for them to bear, and if you were a schoolgirl, they'd be hurling themselves at you non-stop. On the way to or from school, they seemed to materialize out of every bush and

and thinking about how they're going to see out the remaining two hours of superficial chattering?’ Friendships emerge organically, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, but rarely in the particle accelerator of a dingy college basement as individuals hurl themselves against each other desperately hoping to produce a Higgs boson of mutual fascination. (Yes, that was a particle accelerator analogy. You're at Cambridge, after all.)

There are certainly potential plus points. You might, for example, shag someone really fit, a remote but nonetheless real possibility, and this kind of luck will negate whatever indifferences were felt towards the relentlessness of newcomers' rigmarole. Unfortunately, most of us don't, and it is quite possible to end the week more at sea and isolated than at its inception. The best approach to Freshers' engagements is a sceptically raised eyebrow and absolutely no expectations at all.

Ultimately, you are unlikely to emerge from the week with a fully-formed circle of bright young things. Of my current band of aesthetes, wits, rakes and libertines, I remember talking to only two of them in my initial week in Cambridge.

Perhaps I am overly sceptical. I certainly didn't hate Freshers' week, despite the endless chat. But after it you emerge in the drabness of East Anglian autumn with the burden of work rapidly augmenting, still having to nurture precariously budding friendships. The transformation into a social butterfly that many hope will be the automatic consequence of leaving the cocoon of home is unlikely to occur. Have as much fun as you can this week; the inevitable anticlimax is really nothing to worry about.

sidle round every other corner, like trouserless aliens from those Space Invaders arcade games. Nothing so threatening it couldn't be resolved by a quick thwack with the hockey stick or a well-rehearsed put-down – ‘Hmmm, it looks a bit like a penis....only smaller’ – but it was still kind of inconvenient when you still had to get the stench of fags out of your hair, finish your maths homework and go through a full bulimic cycle – and all before assembly time.

Channel 4 recently aired a programme about flashing in which a rather aristocratic-sounding veteran of the practice took a camera crew on a tour of his preferred haunts, while describing the infighting between flashers and a closely related sub-species of perv, the voyeur. ‘We all used to hide in the bushes behind a bench which was a known spot for courting couples. Then after a while, I'd walk out and expose myself. This was a big ‘no-no’ for the voyeurs, but then of course that was what I was into’, he explained, matter-of-factly with a shrug and a slightly patronising smile, as though he were a much revered commentator on French New Wave Cinema and not, in fact, a filthy old perv.

Being reduced into unwilling and often unwitting sex object by a selfish, bonkers old man is certainly enough to cure anyone of a fleeting nostalgia for their teenage years. Flashing is only a more extreme and more unpleasant example of the characteristic experience of female adolescence – the frustration of being forced to play a starring role in someone else's fantasy. In the flashers' world, that role is the Britney-esque sexualised schoolgirl, but the image of young women found in teen magazines and TV shows, as eye-shadow obsessed morons who genuinely believe that ‘shopping’ is an acceptable hobby, is equally inadequate and limiting. I may have moved out of home, be about to graduate university and even occasionally do my own laundry, but as long as there are perverts lurking in bushes, in some sense at least, I'm afraid I'll be forever young.

Letters

letters@varsity.co.uk

We haven't got any letters to publish this week, because you were all still sunning yourselves on exotic holidays and the like while we produced a newspaper. So pull your collective finger out, fire off an incensed missive or two, and win yourself a pair of tickets from our fine friends at the Arts Picturehouse. You know it makes sense.

Arts
Picturehouse

A voice louder than bombs

Britain's most famous anarchist tells his tale to **Ronojoy Dam**

At the age of 18, Stuart Christie was arrested for the last attempted assassination on the life of General Francisco Franco - legend and history that has been washed over with time but still stinks of relevancy. Christie radiates a full-blooded passion for a way of life he truly believes in.

"Anarchism is a vision — and ideal. What is important is that no matter what the odds or how difficult it may be to extricate humanity from the morass in which we find ourselves, we are obligated to continue the fight against infamy for freedom and right."

In 1964, the teenage Christie set sail from this fair isle and made his way across the French-Spanish border, complete with kilt and explosives. The Argentinian press would later report this would-be assassin as "a Scottish transvestite". As Christie explains, "Franco made me a 'terrorist' because there was no alternative way to ameliorate the situation. There seemed no other way to create an international awareness of the brutal nature of the regime than by attempting to kill Franco and breaking the source of reactionary power."

These views proved to have their repercussions. "I faced the mandatory sentence, which was death by garrote-vil, a vile death by manual strangulation and a bolt through the spinal column." As Christie recounts his experience, it appears obvious that his idealism never forsook a grounded reality and a strong pragmatic vein in him emerges. "In prison, I got on with my life and made the most of my situation. Because of its lack of formal extradition treaties with most of the rest of the world, Spain was also a safe haven for global criminals and desperados with nowhere left to run. Before I went to prison my worldview was simple and clear-cut but the ambiguities in people's characters I came across there made me uneasy, and I began to question my assumptions about the nature of

him money using the only English names that came to mind: John, Paul, George and Ringo.

More than just youthful enthusiasm and bold polemic, Christie became recognized around the world overnight as a representative figure and hero of his cause. He sharply attests that, "The Franco regime was detested internationally across the political spectrum. My arrest and conviction was a powerful reminder that the last of the Axis dictators was still among us. I had a lot of support from all sorts of people, mainly ordinary people, but also important support from European intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Bertrand Russell, even though the latter was a committed pacifist. Personally, I think it was because anti-Francoism was the last great cause of the time."

Christie has a strong and assured belief in humanity and mentions his Grandmother's "secular Calvinism" as a formative influence upon him: "By her example and wisdom, she provided me with a clear moral map and an ineradicable ethical code which in the political sphere I only found replicated in anarchism. It was the only honest non-religious ideology which aspired to social justice without seeking social, political or religious dominion over others."

After finally returning home he became a victim of major police harassment and surveillance. He was then arrested for the alleged involvement in an urban guerrilla group, The Angry Brigade, and, specifically, its bombing of the house of the Minister of Employment. The Angry Brigade were iconic and notorious, responsible for striking at the heart of the British Establishment during Edward Heath's Conservative government through the 1970s (with Cambridge affiliates ripping up their finals papers as a political protest). "I was a 'likely candidate' — I had the knowledge, the experience and the connections. The jury acquitted me on all

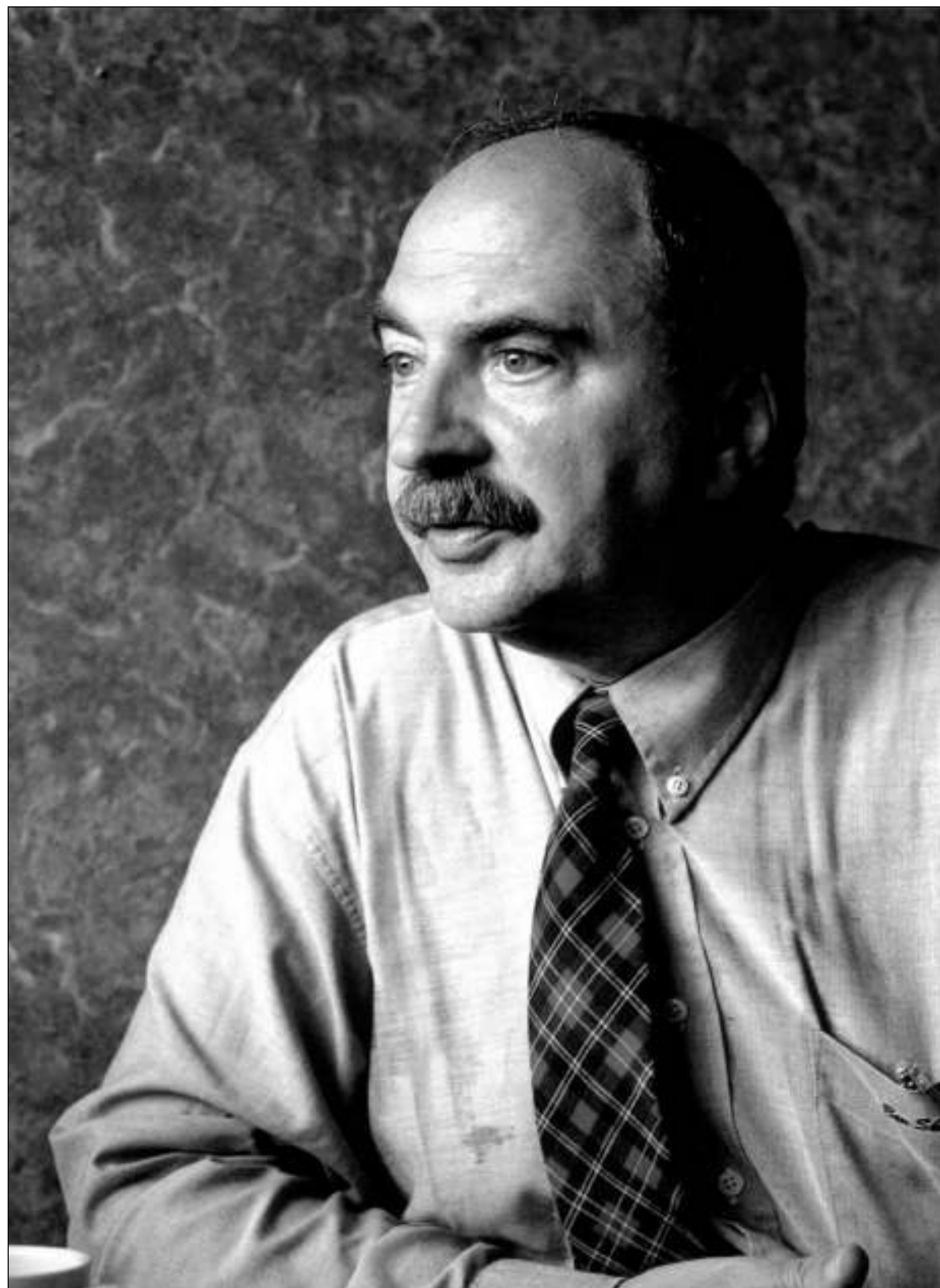
"I faced the mandatory sentence, which was death by garrote-vil"

good and evil. The ethical template in my head no longer seemed to fit reality and my clearly drawn moral blueprint became somewhat smudged and fuzzy when I was brought face to face with what Hannah Arendt termed 'the banality of evil'. I also took advantage of my time in jail to sit 'A' levels."

During his prison term, Spanish authorities believed that he was being funded by the Beatles. His Spanish anarchist associates sent

charges, including possession of two detonators which the police had planted in my car. One positive and important thing that came out of the case in my view, was — apart from the trial providing us, the defendants, with a public platform — the fact that the jury system shone out as the last defender of justice over law. Once the jury goes, we all go..."

In a world that is increasingly having to deal with the threat of terror, I'm intrigued to know what



Eamonn McCabe

Stuart Christie plans to set up a publishing imprint specialising in quirky detective fiction

Christie's views are upon the subject and how he feels current terrorist events contrast with what he was involved with. "The role of direct action remains the same — the option of last resort. It will never disappear. If a wrong cannot be righted by persuasion then there will always be people prepared to go beyond the limits of 'legal' protest. The problems with many of the international counterparts of the Angry Brigade began with the clandestinity which became inevitable following shoot-outs in botched bank jobs, or bombings which resulted in deaths, and have a dynamic of their own. Once people adopt a clandestine lifestyle they remove themselves from the very things which motivated them in the first place and the inexorable spiral into criminality begins."

"A good society can never be built on the blood of innocent people. The currency of that particular form of gestural protest has been debased

with the murderous campaigns targeting innocent bystanders run by the IRA and ETA, culminating in the crusade-like slaughters of 11 September and the recent Madrid train-bombings, which is exactly the same as Franco's old Foreign Legion commander, General Astray, whose constant watchword was 'Viva la muerte!' (Long live death!)."

It is obvious that the political climate of his youth, which witnessed the Cold War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the student riots of May 1968, was seminal for Christie, and is still very much embedded in his ideas and ideals. "Most of my friends were radical, certainly politicised, as was a large part of my generation, but we were also interested in music, girls and fashion. It was part and parcel of everything that was going on at the time during the 1950s and early 1960s. For us it was an apocalyptic world run by shabby and deceitful politicians for their own self-serving ends. There was a

dynamic and enthusiasm for change in the air. The future was ours. You could see it in our dress and hairstyles, the music, television, cinema and satire. We no longer deferred to authority."

While Christie will always be remembered for the actions of his youth, he has moved with the times and used to be Day Editor on Arab Television (ATV). The network was closed down by CIA machinations at the height of the Iraq War last Spring: "They didn't want an independent English-language Al-Jazeera broadcasting from the Urals to California." He is currently "looking for a proper day job".

And does Christie believe in any foreseeable future for the state of world politics? "There is always hope, there has to be."

Granny Made Me An Anarchist, by Stuart Christie, is published by Stribner

A Rail Life Adventure

Natasha Anders says the best way to see Europe is by train

Inter-railing is fast becoming a popular choice of holiday for the student. A group of friends and I decided to opt for the Zone G Inter rail pass in July. This took us through Slovenia, Italy, Greece and Turkey.

Armed with an 80 litre backpack that nearly crushed my spine, we started from Trieste and made our way onto Aquileia, which proved to be a welcome alternative to the hard worn tourist trail.

The next leg of our journey took us into Slovenia, a hidden gem of a country with a population of only two million. Ljubljana, the capital city, is remarkably beautiful. We visited the mouth watering food market and also the panoramic Ljubljana Castle Tower.

We then based ourselves at Lake Bled which, despite sounding like the name of a third rate horror movie, is somewhere you can truly appreciate Slovenia's stunning scenery. From here we explored the Postojna caves and Bohinj. I really appreciated the remarkable variety Slovenia has to offer in such a small vicinity, from admiring the "spaghetti hall" of stalactites in the caves, to slippery grog thousands of feet up in the Bohinj mountains to the background of cow bells.

We then began our trip through Italy, venturing from Venice, and working our way down south towards Sorrento. Venice's majestic architecture, coupled with Gothic style gondolas and gastronomically orgasmic ice cream, won me over immediately. St. Mark's Square at night with a string quartet thrown in is something not to be missed, nor is a night journey by water taxi down the Grand Canal.

The next few steps of our inter-rail trip took us through Florence, Bologna, Rome and Sorrento. The Uffizi Art Gallery was definitely a highlight of the trip for me, despite my not being an art buff. Bologna, however, was a disappointment. Despite



David Adamczyk

From the hills of Slovenia to the Coliseum of Rome: inter-railing lets you explore a chunk of Europe in a couple of weeks

being a student city, prices in bars were sky high and the Bolognese we tasted was mediocre.

From Bologna, we took the train to Rome. First impressions shouldn't

cloud your judgement. The sheer size of Rome makes it difficult to appreciate - at least until you get into the central area. The architectural juxtaposition is worth noting: one minute you may be walking along streets whose worn exteriors shelter overpriced tourist trash, until you are unexpectedly confronted by some

ancient beauty such as the Pantheon. No trip to Rome would have been complete without a visit to the Vatican City but I could not help but feel disappointed; no sightings of the Pope

Olympics. You cannot fail to be impressed by a new and clean metro system and smart and sophisticated city planning, which includes new squares and smart eating and drinking places.

To squeeze every last drop of blood out of our inter rail pass, we began the marathon train journey to Istanbul, Turkey, which took nearly two days by train. Surrounded by the ambience of haunting Minaret calls we managed to see the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia and the Harem, as well as taking a boat trip to the Asian part of Istanbul.

However, my sole reason for visiting Istanbul again would most certainly be the Hamam. One of our group found it to be such an "invigorating" massage that they decided to inform us that they "were touched in ways they never knew how!" If that isn't encouragement to visit Turkey, I'm not sure what could be.

"First impressions shouldn't cloud your judgement. The sheer size of Rome makes it difficult to appreciate"

cloud your judgement. The sheer size of the city makes it difficult to appreciate - at least until you get into the central area. The architectural juxtaposition is worth noting: one minute you may be walking along streets whose worn exteriors shelter overpriced tourist trash, until you are unexpectedly confronted by some

and a glass encased desk posing as a post office.

Ignore the horror stories about the ferry crossing from Italy to Greece which conjure up images of Amistad. Despite sleeping on the deck, we had a great time. The ferry took us into Patros, from where we travelled to Athens, recently spruced up for the

Overworked, underpaid, and over there

Michael Fordham

It all happened so quickly. One moment I was browsing a website advertising American summer work, and the next I was jetting off to the USA.

My role was to be that of a camp counsellor, which has been described as a hybrid of elder brother, teacher, and Indian Chief. I was not alone as an international counsellor; staff

were to be found from five continents. I worked with several other British staff, one of whom had 'Rule, Britannia!' played from the loudspeaker on Independence Day. This the camp didn't mind, though we were told not to mess with the American flag in any way.

The camp was set in the heart of the Adirondack National Park in upstate New York and its setting was breathtaking. The lake, on which I taught sailing to 6-15 year olds, was surrounded with some spectacular hills and forests. I took a trip up the highest hill on one of my days off - you get six in total - and was suitably appeased by the view.

Although working in such a contained atmosphere was unnerving at first, the initial apprehension soon passed. The hours were long: three times a week I was on duty for 24 hours; three more were 20 hour days. Sometimes it felt like hard work. Most of the time it didn't. On my days off I would sail around the lake,

content to do on my day off what I was doing every other day of the week. That's when you know you're in a good job.

Camp counsellors are remunerated little, international staff even less so, though the camp did pay for flights, board and lodgings for the length of my stay. Worth more than the money, though, is watching a child develop and knowing that you had an integral part to play in the process.

The agency fees you pay before leaving swallow up any money you do earn. All the agencies recommend using the money you earn to travel in America for a while, making the most of the remaining time you'll have on your visa.

This is not for those who desire a cushy summer job. But if you're interested in a cheap way to see America and experience some of its culture then two months on a summer camp could be one of the best summers of your life.

Michael Fordham



Escape

The hills are alive

Michael Ashdown

Sitting almost 3000 metres above sea level at the summit of the Schwarzhorn, looking out over the awesome snowy peaks of the Swiss Alps, watching my friends attempt a tricky *via ferrata* ascent, and still slightly breathless from the demanding ascent, I realised what a long way I had come with the Hillwalking Club - from that first day trip to the Peak District, through many memorable weekends away, to this amazing eyrie.

The Hillwalking Club provides many great opportunities for memorable walking and travel in both Britain and Europe. We fill the gap between the climbing of the mountaineering club, and the easy walking of the ramblers, and welcome hillwalkers of all abilities. Some are keen to tackle difficult scrambles in Snowdonia, others enjoy easy walks over the moors and dales of Yorkshire.



Michael Fordham

Since we run a trip every other weekend, there will usually be something to suit everyone, and during the year a wide range of areas will be visited - the Lake District, Snowdonia, the Highlands of Scotland, Dartmoor, and the Brecon Beacons, to name just a few. In the vacations longer trips away are possible, including trips abroad in the summer, most recently to Switzerland and the Pyrenees. Together with the regular weekends in Britain's upland countryside, these are a great way to travel around and explore new areas with friends - and to do so with the safety provided by an organised club.

Although hillwalking is our main business, our trips will be remembered by their participants for all sorts of reasons. Recent highlights have included lying on the cold, frosty hillside in a remote Lake District valley at midnight, snuggled under a duvet watching shooting stars overhead, building an igloo and skating on frozen tarns in February, and being persuaded by a group of cavers to have a go at their chosen activity. No-one present will forget giving up the serious business of ice-axe practice in January in favour of putting, to excellent use, the sledge we had carried up the hillside, or a cold and snowy walk in February ending with a black tie dinner for eighty.

www.cam.ac.uk/societies/cubwc

Why not try...

INTER-RAILING

<http://www.raileurope.co.uk>

SUMMER CAMPS

<http://www.campamerica.co.uk>

<http://www.bunac.co.uk>

/what's on

WEEKLY PLANNER

SUNDAY 3

FEZ DJ Yoda

MONDAY 4

| | | |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| LIFE | Life is live | International Student Night |
| FEZ | Fat Poppadaddys | A mix of funky groves |
| BALLARE | Back to School | Cheese tunes |

TUESDAY 5

| | | |
|---------|------------|---------------------------------|
| LIFE | Unique | Cambridge's No. 1 Lesbian Night |
| FEZ | Ebonics | DJ Kayper presents pure RnB |
| COCO | Licked | RnB, Hip Hop & Dancehall |
| FITZ | Red Shift | Freshers Ent from Fitz College |
| BALLARE | Top Banana | Cambridge's best cheese |

WEDNESDAY 6

| | | |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|
| LIFE | APU Student Night | |
| FEZ | International Sounds | From DJ Jacques |
| PURE | Pure Vybez | |

THURSDAY 7

| | | |
|------|--------------|---------------------------|
| LIFE | Ladies First | It's ladies night at Life |
| COCO | Urbanite | CUSU Hip Hop and RnB |

/the rest

WEEKLY PLANNER

FRIDAY 1

19:45 ARTS THEATRE Comedy Jeremy Hardy £5/£12/£14

SATURDAY 2

19:45 ARTS THEATRE Comedy Jeff Green £5/£12/£14

/gigs

WEEKLY PLANNER

MONDAY 4

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|--------------|-----|
| 19:00 | THE JUNCTION | Bliffy Clyro | £10 |
|-------|--------------|--------------|-----|

TUESDAY 5

| | | | |
|-------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 19:00 | THE JUNCTION | The Bees | £9 door/ £10 in advance |
| 19:30 | CORN EXCHANGE | Kings of Convenience | £15 |

THURSDAY 7

| | | | |
|-------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 19:00 | THE JUNCTION | Pitchshifter | £12 door/ £11 in advance |
| 19:00 | CORN EXCHANGE | Bowling for Soup | £12.50 |

/stage

WEEKLY PLANNER

MONDAY 4

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 19:45 ARTS THEATRE | Man and Boy | £5/£18/£22/£24 |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|

TUESDAY 5

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 19:45 | ARTS THEATRE | Man and Boy | £5/£18/£22/£24 |
| 19:45 | ADC | CAST <i>presents</i> As You Like It | £7/£5 |
| 23:00 | Footlights | Beyond a Joke | £5/ £4 |

WEDNESDAY 6

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 19:45 | ARTS THEATRE | Man and Boy | £5/£18/£22/£24 |
| 19:45 | ADC | CAST <i>presents</i> As You Like It | £7/£5 |
| 23:00 | Footlights | Beyond a Joke | £5/ £4 |

THURSDAY 7

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 19:45& 14:30 | ARTS THEATRE | Man and Boy | £5/£18/£22/£24 |
| 19:45 | ADC | CAST <i>presents</i> As You Like It | £7/£5 |
| 23:00 | Footlights | Beyond a Joke | £5/ £4 |

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Hold on to your trousers: Varsity Arts is here

Let **Henry Bowen** be your guide to the wonders of the Cambridge arts scene

A friend of mine told me recently that more people are killed by their trousers than die in aeroplane crashes. How did he know? He'd read a government study on it. Apart from taking extra care with my flies every morning, this made me reflect on how many completely useless studies must be carried out every year. I thought I'd found another 'joke' study when I read a sensationalist headline in the *Independent* last month. "One in four students sleeps in lectures"! it proclaimed. Was anyone actually surprised by this?

But as I read the article in question, I realised that these figures were serious, and meant to signal a crisis in Higher Education. With "10 per cent admitting to attending a lecture while drunk," and "20 per cent of students admitting to skipping at least one in five lectures" ministers were getting worried, lecturers were expressing concern, and fee-paying parents were weeping in the streets. Surely they don't think university is all about going to lectures?

Mark Twain once said "I never let

my schooling interfere with my education". But with the current government's near-fanatical pursuit of educational results through continuous testing, it's easy to forget that there is a difference between the two. I'm not trying to suggest that we aren't in Cambridge to get degrees, but there is

fee-paying parents were weeping in the streets

a lot more on offer here than lectures and supervisions. And although I fully respect the pursuits of sportsmen,

hang-gliders and bell-ringers, the side of Cambridge life which I enjoy the most is the arts.

Over the next few pages we summarise for you the most interesting and exciting events going on in a range of fields, from music and drama to literature and film. We let you know about upcoming events and review the things you may have missed. And of course, as well as enjoying these events as spectators, there are hundreds of opportunities to get involved and make things happen yourself.

The range of standards in the Cambridge arts scene is extremely broad. Most activities have openings for even the complete beginner, while for the more experienced there are

opportunities to get involved at a very high standard. A production of *As You Like It* has just returned from an American tour, and the legendary Footlights have been taking their show to venues around the country this summer. Top musicians regularly play at local venues and even clubbers, who are notoriously deprived in Cambridge, can catch some great nights if they keep their ear to the ground.

So peruse these pages and try out as many things as you can: there's certain to be something that takes your fancy. Make sure that you take best advantage of your time outside the lecture hall, the laboratory or the library. And remember to be careful with your trousers.

pick of the week

Out of ideas? We're not, lucky for you



The Life and Death of Peter Sellers
Vue Cinema, from 1st October

Feature adaptation of Roger Lewis' book about the turbulent life of the legendary actor and comedian



As You Like It
ADC, 7.45pm, 5th - 9th October

This CAST production returns successfully from an American tour, to be performed on the opening night of the newly refurbished ADC.



Rear View Mirror
Kettle's Yard, until 7th November

How do we relate to the past? How are our memories affected by the cultural context that shapes our present? Go to this multimedia exhibition to find out presumably.



DJ Yoda
Fez Club, Sunday 3rd October

If you're looking for fat beats and dope rhymes, you should wait for Ghostface in a fortnight. But until then, this comedy hip-hop deejay should keep your head nodding.



Jeremy Hardy
Arts Theatre, 1 October, 7.45

If you're quick enough to catch this Perrier Award-winning ex-Guardian columnist you'll be enjoying some politically charged comedy tonight

image of the week



photo courtesy of
PHOCUS, the university photographic society

Trinity lane at dusk. By Sean McHugh

A CASTing call to American audiences

Alice Harper previews a long-awaited production of *As You Like It*

As You Like It is this year's offering from CAST, the company which takes an annual tour of a Shakespeare play to America and Canada.

Seen by over 2000 people across the pond, *As You Like It* will be returning to Cambridge in Week 1 to open the newly refurbished ADC. The first performance will be attended by a specially-invited selection of theatre greats, including agents and CAST patrons. Nicholas Hytner, the National Theatre's Artistic Director and ADC regular in his Cambridge days, will be giving a talk.

Not just a comedy in the Shakespearean sense, the play is a delightful comedy by any modern standards, complete with jokes, cross-dressing protagonist and forest romps.

CAST is committed to making Shakespeare

An impressive cast, studded with veterans of the Cambridge theatre scene

accessible to a modern audience, an aim which informs the production at every level. The emphasis with regards to design has been to keep it simple and atemporal, not least because of the demands of a touring production.

But costumes from the pastoral scenes in the Forest of Arden are dominated by earthy colours, while the court scenes are monochrome with a hint of red. A sense of continuity, underlining the differences between the two contrasting locations in which the play is set, is maintained by coloured ribbons which appear throughout, as well as an English-county-house feel to all the costumes.

Because of the practical demands of a touring company, director Abigail Rokison has been as eco-



Conrad Mason (Orlando), brandishing his knife, as Ollie Rickman (Oliver) and others look on

nomical as possible regarding her cast, with most actors appearing in at least one other role. At times, this can feel particularly daring as an actor leaves the stage only to come back moments later as a different character in a different costume. An awareness that this would have happened in Shakespeare's day

In fact, many of Rokison's choices seem to bring an extra dimension to the text, such as the doubling of the Duke Senior and his brother Duke Ferdinand, assuredly played by Richard Kelly.

It is a testament to the hugely talented cast that the audience is convinced of the change. This goes

some way to explaining such appreciative audience reactions in American universities as, "I have never seen such professional student drama."

In some instances it is clear that Rokison draws on her research as a PhD student of Shakespeare. Her interests lie mainly in metre and how the text should be spoken and, unlike many amateur or student productions, her cast tackle the Bard's words with ease. Here again, CAST manages to fulfill its aim of bringing Shakespeare to the masses.

For the original score, Rokison has decided to work with Tim V. Isted, the Musical Director for two of her previous Cambridge productions, John Kinsella's *The Wasps* and the Mayweek success, *The*

Complete with jokes, cross-dressing protagonist and forest romps

Golden Ass. A choral scholar at King's, Isted's music manages to evoke both the pastoral and court scenes with equal virtuosity.

With such an impressive cast - studded with veterans of the Cambridge theatre scene - and a director with experience both of Shakespeare in performance and drama in general (she has studied at LAMDA), it is no wonder the ADC has chosen this play to kick off the season in the brand new theatre.

At the ADC Theatre from 5th - 9th October at 7.45pm

Are Footlights cracking up?

Social misfits and dysfunctional relationships are *l'ordre du jour* for this year's Footlights tour-show. From incestuous teenagers, to a father who might feel more at home in the SS, to a nineteen year old boy talking about his sado-masochistic relationship with a sixty-three year old woman; this world-famous comedy troupe has audiences giggling with pity, tittering with guilty amusement and guffawing with astonishment.

But it is not just wacky characters that are this group's strength: they manage to pull out all the comedic stops. Gags such as "oh how I miss her loosely fitted face... She looked like a twix melting", visual gags and text-book inter-sketch references abound in this sparkling show.

A highlight is Nick Mohammad's 'Mr. Swallow' sketch in which, in keeping with his usual style, he speaks at lightening speed. He bombards the audience with malapropisms, spoonerisms and general grammatical inversions, giving an exhilarating effect. It reminds you that these guys are not just great performers: they sure can write.

Jonny Sweet flits effortlessly between tugging at heart-strings as a lonely, failed pianist, and shocking as a lascivious Catholic. He delivers his *pièce de résistance* in a chilling sketch more reminiscent of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* than the usual Footlights fare.

Raph Shirley has 'sullen teenager' down to a fine art, while Ed Coleman's eyes deserve a prize of their own in his sketch of a motorway-tailback loving, Lemsip quaffing freak.

Sarah Campbell does an admirable job standing in for Sarah Solemani, but particularly shines when performing her own material.

The directorial gamble to unite otherwise unconnected sketches by setting them around the fictional snow-swept village of Flishinghurst has paid off. Indeed, it has

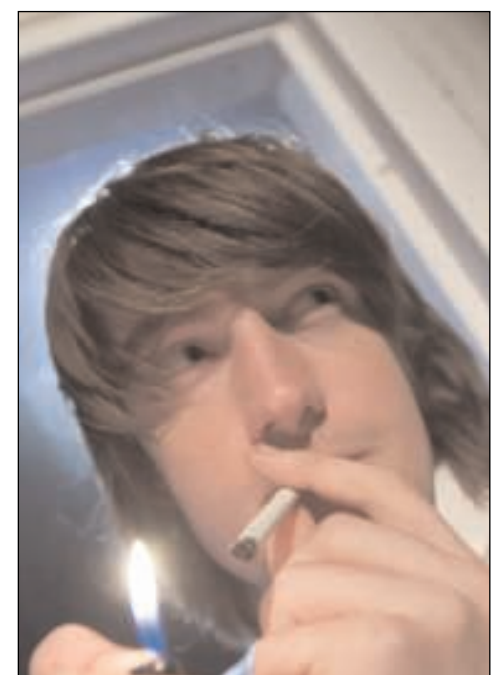
benefited from references being tweaked and refined throughout the shows run, which began in May this year. The Spring Revue proved that the formula of a play with jokes attached was unworkable and this compromise allows for genuinely funny sketches to be linked by a common theme.

The troupe demand respect for fighting back after less than favourable reviews in Edinburgh, to deliver punchy new material that ticks all the comedy boxes.

Promising a home run that offers the best of the best - the weaker sketches will be ditched (and believe me, there are some) - to leave a perfectly distilled show. Cambridge audiences are bound not to be disappointed by this immensely talented group.

At the ADC from 5th - 9th October at 11pm

Alice Harper



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Five visions seen in Edinburgh

Oliver Tilley had eyes wide open

The ADC's Edinburgh Fringe production of Torben Betts' *Five Visions of the Faithful* was a significant, if inevitably modest success at the cultural festival in Britain, attracting a strong response locally and nationally with its uncompromising approach to a provocative play.

James Dacre's energetic, dark production was clearly a notch above the stock Cambridge student theatrical fodder and he managed to orchestrate a professional, tight performance, coaxing some assured performances from his actors which prompted one hardened *Observer* critic (Michael Coveney, August 15) to say "one of the best acted student shows I have seen in a very long time".

Indeed the actors and director did well to explore and master such an enigmatic, powerful play, prompting much head-scratching from audience members as they are forced to struggle with such a volatile mix of Godless immorality, existential indecision and stark emotional desolation.

This is the ultimate post-modern play, depicting a shattered world, a realisation of Nietzsche's fears at the death of God, with a destitute Virgin Mary and recalcitrant Jesus bewailing their social decline in a particularly powerful scene midway in the play's episodic structure.

Of course the sources of attention

and provocation are easy to stumble upon: the production – rather wickedly – inserts masturbation simulation (reminiscent of Dacre's previous ADC production of *Christie in Love*), prolific hard swearing and in a particularly astute, overtly political move, Dacre chooses to dress a torture victim in a Guantánamo orange boiler-suit.

This is clearly a well chosen piece, keying into the moral uncertainty intimately associated with the current political climate and yet it does not cohere as

Clearly a well chosen piece, keying into moral uncertainty

well as more talented play-wright's work and I felt (rather indignantly) that much of the audience bewilderment was unnecessary, being the fault of the dramatist, who seemed to make his material wilfully, almost pointlessly opaque.

Regardless, the approach of the cast and crew was exemplary and much of the production's achievement must be attributed to the backstage staff, with Lucy Styles as set designer and



Jonathan Styles, whose revelatory use of sound provided an additional facet to various scenes, with the second vision, 'What the Butterflies Said', benefiting hugely from a jarring cuckoo sound, lending a comic, satirical dimension to the scene.

Altogether, this was as slick as they

come and a considerable accomplishment for those involved, who represented Cambridge and the ADC to merited plaudits.

At the Cambridge Union from 8th - 11th October at 8pm, £3.50 for members, £5.50 for non-members.

A fresh approach

Reviewing's a funny idea, really. If we're honest, there doesn't seem to be any particular reason for thinking that the staff of a newspaper like *Varsity* is any better informed, or wiser in judgment, than its readership. After all, we're all (whisper it) mere undergraduates, sadly lacking in the weight of accumulated experience of your Benedict Nightingales and Michael Billingtons. And there's a deeper structural flaw: because *Varsity* appears on a Friday, our reviews are relevant to two nights of a five night run. Their principle function seems to be to provide some kind of official retrospective rating for productions – and this is a completely bogus construction, particularly in a community with the kind of limited press which means that two opinions are enough to uniformly exalt or damn a play.

Reviews, it seems, are not nearly as useful to audiences or productions as they could be. Instead of focussing validation for thespians or column inches for budding Kenneth Tynans, *Varsity* should be providing the student population with accurate and timely information about productions, and help them make their minds up about which show to see.

The answer? Previews. The idea is that previews will appear the Friday before a run begins. Reporters from the *Varsity* theatre team will attend a rehearsal or two and interview directors, who will have a chance to hawk their wares to potential audiences. Pulling audiences is surely a director's priority.

Disagreement will be cheerfully listened to

This isn't a move made lightly. *Varsity* has consulted the theatrical community as fully as possible, and whilst there is inevitable debate, with some firmly opposed, the overwhelming balance of feedback has been positive. The idea has been endorsed by the ADC's actors reps. directors' rep, and president, as well as the president of the Association of Cambridge Theatre Societies, among others.

Disagreement is expected, and will be cheerfully listened to: we aren't zealously wedded to this approach, and will operate by the guiding principle of trying to make the section as useful and entertaining as possible to the people that read it. We believe this to be the best way of doing that, and we hope you do too.

So, audiences well informed. Editors satisfied. Directors understood in a way they never dreamed possible. But what's in it for the cast member who finds their performance being judged seven whole days before the curtain goes up on their eventual success? To scratch that validation itch, first-night audiences will be quizzed by reporters on the ground and their opinions will appear in a vox pop column. Everyone's happy, we hope. The only question is, why didn't we think of this before?

*email letters@varsity.co.uk
with your thoughts*

Cross-dressing seduction madness!!

Georgia Walker-Churchman visits *The Lunatic* in Edinburgh



I went to see *The Lunatic* because an enthusiastic young man, sporting a t-shirt emblazoned with, 'Does this pink suit me?', advanced on me, wildly thrusting a flyer, shouting 'Prostitutes! Nakedness! Good-looking actors!' then disappeared into the crowd. I was sold. It is in many respects a schizophrenic production, by turns obscene and lyrical, violent



and tender. The plot is a gritty examination of corruption in a number of different incarnations: the physical seduction (if the word is appropriate for a liaison between a gender bending businessman and a cross-dressing prostitute) of Doris, played by the superb Laura Stewart, leads to an exposé of the moral turpitude in which the characters are

mired. The unreason of Ben Hadley's lunatic seems, in some way, to offer a release.

A strength of this production is that it remains ambiguous about the exact nature of this escape. It is never articulated by the other characters or by the lunatic himself: it is up to the audience to ponder how their redemption may be brought about.

However a uniformly excellent cast manages to retain a remarkable lucidity of detail. Billed as an absurdist comedy, the dialogue and psychological depth of the characters would in many ways be convincing in a more naturalistic play. The production never brutalises, despite the brutal setting: it retains its humanity without excusing or apologising for the lives the characters lead.

I was deeply impressed by this production (described by Robert Dawson Scott of *The Times* as 'a glimpse of triumph'), more so when I discovered that the director, Rachel Briscoe, had resurrected this particular piece because of its success when it premiered in the 1968 festival. Edinburgh is the place for plays such as this. Resolutely uncommercial – disdain for mercenaries being right at the heart of the text – one feels that as long as productions such as this are being staged, the Fringe will never lose sight of its purpose. Although very much a festival play, I urge you to see the Cambridge run without delay.

At Pembroke New Cellars from 7th - 9th October

Other Shows...

Cambridge University was well represented at the Edinburgh Festival this year, with many productions being performed for the first time there.

However, there were a couple that had been resurrected. The absurdist play about Nietzsche,

How to Philosophise with a Hammer, along with a fellow BATS production, the original piece *Greenworld: the Musical* reappeared in Edinburgh. The cast and musicians of *Greenworld* were a regular feature performing in *Forest* cafe. How appropriate.

Musicals were a favourite with Steven Sondheim's *Putting it Together* being performed in the same venue as *Jazzmatazz*, new writing with music by students Dom Carter and Simon Temple.

The Ariel Society's now annual presence at the festival was

cemented with a rock 'n' roll production of *As You Like It*, set in the 50's.

The might of Foolights was challenged with the appearance of a satirical sketch show, *Away from Apathy*, written in part by Matt Purves, who also appeared in and

wrote much of *The Medics Revue*, another revival.

Audiences can look forward to a home-run later in the term of the ADC production of *Peter Pan*. Performed in its centenary year, the tale delighted adults and children alike.

Underground Sound of Gown Town

The best of the Cambridge music scene by **Jessica Holland**

There's two things they'll say when you ask about the music scene in Cambridge. And they're not wrong, but they're not totally right either. 1. 'Sorry? What? I thought you said *music* scene, you must have meant sports or drama or drinking. I think Fitz may have a barbershop quartet.' And 2. 'Cambridge may not have decent clubs, but we make up for it in college entz!' This is like saying eating chocolate makes up for getting dumped. It's nice, but it's not quite the same thing. The truth is that a lack of midsize venues means that gigs are on the whole split between sweaty pub back-rooms (Portland Arms, Man on the Moon) and huge venues where you'll have to pay over a tenner for a ticket (Junction, Corn Exchange). And College ents can be fine but there's always an air of the amateur about them (think rave in a school gym with light displays on strung-up bedsheets.) But there are exceptions to every rule if you look hard enough. There is ALWAYS an excuse to get out of the library.

1. **Café Afrika** In any other town this would be student heaven. In Cambridge mention a 15-minute walk for your pint and people will look at you like you've suggested a trip to the moon. All the better for those who make the effort. 3 courses of home-cooked African food for £3, Afrobeat, calypso, reggae, D'n'B, live music from all around the world, dance, storytelling, charity events, and a friendly atmosphere. Unfortunately the ex-community centre building can feel a bit big to be cosy, but if you need an escape from rugby teams, formal halls and 'pennyng' this is where to go.



Above, left to right: Clowns café; Emmanuel College; Queens' College; The Portland Arms

2. **APU bar** Another much un-mined resource for music lovers, tone down the public school accent and go down to the 'other side of the tracks'. It will be like that bit in Titanic when Jack shows Rose how much fun the poor people are having while the rich kids are singing hymns or drinking tea or whatever. A newly refurbished bar and 400 capacity venue, breaking bands and punk rock karaoke, what else do you want? Check www.apugigs.com for details and bring your student card for discounts.

3. **Songs in the Dark** Refreshingly, a night set up by Cambridge (philosophy, of course) students that doesn't revolve around college cliques and weirdly characterless college bars. An acoustic night of high quality music, poetry, stories and comedy, in an intimate café venue where you can get a bottle of red for a fiver while you soak up the emotional unfurling. Candlelit, incense scented and always packed full, get there early for a seat. Clowns Café, alternate Sundays.

4. **Bad Timing** 'Digital lo-fi and abstract beats.' If you don't know what that means I don't think you're cool enough to go. Responsible for gigs from the likes of Kid606, dj/rupture and Rephlex Records, they've been bringing cutting-edge international electronica to Cambridge for 3 years now. Thursdays at the Portland Arms. Don't miss the Planet Mu tour on Thursday 7th.

5. **Pop Art** Every last Friday of the month, throw on some glitter and your best cord flares, make like it's 1996 and shimmy to retro indie and punk pop. Sing along to Bon Jovi as well as new-fangled no wave guitar pop, can of Red Stripe in hand.

6. **Funk da Bar at Emma** Thank the Lord! A college ent with good music, a nice atmosphere and lots of really quite hot people. For Cambridge. Okay, it takes half an hour to get served, the bar shuts at 11 and the smallish

dance floor gets too packed out to move. But what do you want, Fabric?

7. **Queens Entz** So when I was talking about school gyms and bed sheets I was actually referring to Queens. BUT if you're in the mood for dancing like all of your limbs have minds of their own there's no better place to be on a Saturday night.

8. **Rawganics** Cambridge's biggest, best and most fun hip hop night was created in '01 to bring live hip hop back to its roots. Regular guests have included Roots Manuva, Kila Kela and Phi Life Cypher, but there's also a commitment to promoting local talent. The *NME* said of the night "these are the stately homeboys of England, and they're here to represent." Whatever. Pronounced by DJ Skully the best hip hop club in the world. Monthly at the Junction.

9. **Evensong** Properly old skool. There's no better place for chilling out and listening to some truly unearthly music than in the austere twilight of Trinity, John's or King's chapel. Get stuck in a time warp and lose an hour, it's one of the places you realise how beautiful Cambridge can be.

10. **Write for the Varsity music page.** Technically this *can* actually be done in the library, but propaganda aside I'm running out of options. Email music@varsity.co.uk or send us a retro-style paper 'letter' addressed to Varsity Towers telling us it how it is, what needs to be seen and what needs a kick in the teeth. Create your own damn music scene!

Bright Lights, Big City

Jon Swaine enjoys Interpol's latest *Antics*



Matador Records

Two years on, and the world around New York new-wavers Interpol, popular-musical and otherwise seems more bent on the elevation of the ridiculous than the one from which they left us. Entirely non-existent scenes are nurtured to maintain fearful sub-editors' Converse habits, while the election of a generation is entrenched in debates apropos of none of the numerous contemporary crises. And our possible conclusions? The systematic ransacking of the Clash back-catalogue is as vulnerable to diminishing returns as the politics of 'I was less awful than the other guy'.

Antics (out now) is no progression. Why should it be? How *could* it be? Their heads simply go back down as the gazes re-locate their favourite middle distance. Whether a determined reaction to, or unfazed statement of independence from their peers it remains unclear, yet this never matters. As 'Untitled' delivered the brutal broadside required of 2002, 'Next Exit' is the reassuring sound of

just-settled cogs whirring once again. 'Evil' sets a blurring pace, a bar set so terrifyingly high so early that the remainder seems sure to fall short. Yet 'Take You on a Cruise' and 'Not Even Jail' build upwards, bricking in this precious lull, this hour's respite from the manic outside.

But all along, vocalist Paul Banks' lyrics continue to be something of a liability, forcing an unnecessary tight-rope walk across a sea of absurdity. Coming from the man who two years ago gave us *Her stories are boring and stuff*, this is perhaps not unexpected, yet lines like *You make me want to pick up a guitar* really do reach new, cringing heights. Set against such subtlety of instrumentation and production, this is a sore thumb too difficult to hide. Fortunately for them and us, the surrounding brilliance prevails: Interpol reach the end of this second chapter as proud and resplendent as they left the first.

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Queer as Folk

Ned Beaman on strum'n'bass and harpcore

I have a lot of experimental electronic music, but no evidence that it wasn't all created by robots. At best, it's the work of geeky men with laptops. At worst, robot armies are planning to raze our cities and enslave humanity, but while they're biding their time they've decided to get a record deal and release hours of bleeps and clicks. So sometimes it's nice to listen to confirmed flesh-and-blood humans for a change, especially folksy ones with acoustic guitars.

CocoRosie, two American girls who live in Paris, are as lo-fi as it gets. *La Maison de Mon Reve* sounds like it was recorded down a bad phone-line, the drum machine is broken, and they use one of those little boxes that has a picture of a cow on it and goes 'moo' when you turn it over. But there's such intense emotion in their idle, bluesy delivery, so much romance and sadness and nostalgia in these seemingly simple songs, that it doesn't matter. This album will give you all the pleasure of a consuming crush with none of the pain. They need to stop trying to play solos on children's toys, though.

Another voice that you might fall in love with is Mirah's. Her singing has a lot in common with the CocoRosie girls, cracking just when you don't expect it, going from sardonic to vulnerable in the space of a line, and always sultry. But she owes more to country than folk, and one weakness is that the production on *C'Mon Miracle*, her most recent album, is so much more elaborate than CocoRosie's. A song like 'We're Both So Sorry',

about a relationship that is drawing awkwardly to a halt, should feel as if she's murmuring to you across a pillow, but the horns, distorted drums, and tricks with reverb just distance the listener.

I played part of Joanna Newsom's wonderful album, *The Milk-Eyed Mender*, to my friend Raoul, and his reaction was, 'I think I hate this woman's voice more than any other voice, ever,' and, later, 'It shouldn't be allowed.' You may think the same of Newsom's erratic, child-like voice, or you may find it enchanting. She plays the harp (but not in a swirly new age way), over which she sings surreal, intimate poetry. Finally the angels will have some decent songs to cover on the open mic nights in heaven.

Newsom is part of the same San Francisco 'outsider folk' scene as Devendra Banhart. Banhart's voice is almost as unusual, the cheerful croak of an aging hippie (although he's actually only in his early twenties). He couldn't be more wrong in his claim that he's 'terrible' at the guitar. But, although Banhart has some pleasant, idiosyncratic songs on *Nino Rojo*, his most recent album, he just doesn't bring the same magic as Newsom. (He's put together a compilation of good new folk called *Golden Apples of the Sun*: only a thousand copies were pressed so you won't be able to buy one, but it's worth downloading because you're sure to find at least one other act you like.) Banhart is touring Europe with CocoRosie this autumn. Looks like the robots can't quite control everything.



'If every angel's terrible why do you welcome them?' ask CocoRosie



Double Dragon Records

Rising from the ashes

Ash's Charlotte Hatherley talks to **Jessica Holland** about Bowie, being cool and sounding like a girl.

Charlotte Hatherley is good at being cool. On a website devoted to her (audiojunkies.net) she gives lessons in how to be as cool as her, like "Black clothes are an essential item for coolness. I wear black clothes all the time. Even when it looks like I'm wearing red or blue or something, I've probably painted my body black underneath." She also starts a story with the words, "One time me and Britney were in a graveyard somewhere skinning up" so in addition to impeccable black-clad coolness she can also be credited with an admirably offbeat sense of humour. While on the road in America she and her bandmates filmed an epic slasher movie that turned out to be an perpetual work in progress, featuring Charlotte getting messily killed lots of times, sleeping with singer Tim Wheeler and roping in everyone in a band on the road at the time including Chris Martin (as a pipe smoking, womanising detective), Moby and Dave Grohl. "It's funny. It's really fucking funny," she confirms. "But it's *stupid*."

When I chat to Hatherley she's in the middle of promoting her first solo album *Grey will Fade*, still touring with Ash as well as seeking out musicians for a tour of her own, at the end of September. "I

want to play with a shit-hot girl guitarist, but I haven't really found any yet," she laments. She's constantly busy and healthily ambitious: her solo effort was recorded during gaps in Ash's schedule and when not recording she's been on tour almost constantly for the last seven years, since she was poached by Ash from London britpopers Night Nurse at the age of 18. "Since I was 14 my whole life has been being in bands and making music. I remember at school having guitar lessons and always wanting to be the best guitarist in the room. I discovered much more of an ambitious streak in myself again doing this thing on my own than when I was with Ash."

For a woman whose addition to the band coincided with their metamorphosis from lovestruck stargazing schoolboys to rawknolling punk dervishes her songs are surprisingly breezy, sugary affairs; all about guitar-stealing latin lovers called Antonio, 80's pop stars and female friendship. "People were surprised at how melodic and pop it is," she agrees. "They were expecting something a bit heavier, a bit darker. My voice is a bit 'girlier' than people expected and a lot of the songs are

about women, so I can kind of see how people would see how it is a chick's album." Choppy guitars roughening up the edges are reminiscent of early 90's Breeders or Throwing Muses, but she hasn't got Wheeler's instinct for spot-on simplicity or the wide-eyed energy of early Ash. "In terms of songwriting I don't think I've quite 'got there' just yet. I think this album was a great start, but I feel like I've got a lot more to prove, more for myself than for anyone else."

She cites amongst her influences XTC, the B52's, and says David Bowie is a constant inspiration. Her first musical love was the Beatles in her pre-teen years, "But then I discovered David Bowie when I was 14 and that was it for me." When I ask her about long-term plans she dismisses the idea of leaving Ash to go solo. "I think Ash will go on for a lot longer. But I'd love to do some more solo stuff. Make a bigger and better album. And... I'd love to get into photography, and I'd like to chase a tornado in America... but I think that music is something to get on with while you're young and passionate about it, and that's all I'm thinking about now."

Album Reviews



R.E.M.
Around the Sun
October 4th (WEA)

On first listen, R.E.M.'s latest record is reminiscent of *Out The Time*, their 1991 commercial breakthrough ('Shiny Happy People', 'Losing My Religion'). The same country, folk, hip-hop and 60s pop influences are all evident here. The difference is that they've now got a decade's worth of break-ups, comedowns and come-outs under their collective belt. The philosophical-political drive of the

lyrics, most explicit on the protest song 'Final Straw', successfully avoids being preachy (in fact, this is the most poetic thing this English student has heard coming out of his hifi in some time). Speaking of rhymes, MC Q-Tip even makes a surprise appearance, backed with rocky riddims from ex-Ministry drummer Bill Rieflin. And, dare I say it, it all works beautifully. R.E.M.'s success has afforded them many things: most importantly the ability to be mainstream representatives of the counterculture and still maintain their integrity. Out of time? Far from it.

Felix Hunt



Massive Attack
Danny the Dog
October 11th (Wild Bunch)

Massive Attack's *Mezzanine* is my favourite album. This, the soundtrack to Luc Besson's new film, was always going to suffer in comparison, because *Mezzanine* itself felt like a soundtrack to a film that's never been made - something about sinister drug-addled happenings in London. And with *Mezzanine* they didn't have to worry about drowning out the actors or following the rhythm

of the scenes, because the actors and scenes are all in the listener's head. So Danny the Dog is not much more than a shapeless, watered-down *Mezzanine* - and if you want that, just listen to *100th Window*. The Dust Brothers' classic soundtrack to *Fight Club* showed that film music, long after the golden age of Lalo Schiffrin and Henry Mancini, can still sometimes stand up on its own. But there's no need to buy this when you could just listen to *Mezzanine* again. (Same goes for any album, really.)

Ned Beaman

There's more to movies than just Hollywood

Agata Belcen interviews Shane Danielsen, Artistic Director of the Edinburgh Film Festival

This year the Edinburgh International Film Festival, the longest continually running film festival in the world, opened fittingly with *Motorcycle Diaries*. Why was this so fitting? Because it meant that what was originally a documentary festival all the way back in 1947, returned to its routes with a UK premiere from a documentary film maker: Walter Salles. Furthermore it lead the way to several wonderful South American Films that featured later in the two weeks of the festival, culminating in the very powerful and touching *La Machuca* from Chilean director Andres Wood.

We spoke to the artistic director of the Festival, Shane Danielsen:

You have been Artistic Director at the Festival for three years with two to go...

Yes, like Stalin I tend to work in 5 year plans!

What has and continues to be the philosophy behind the programme of films you choose?

There are 4 points really:

It has to be more than a sneak preview of something that is going to be released. I choose films that are often not going to go on general distribution and they might get a window of opportunity from this festival. I choose films from an under-represented area, however, if the films are bad I won't take them just to represent the country. For example you will not see any Dutch films because Dutch films are bad!

They have to be an excellent example of their type, whatever type that may be.

What do you think is the most important criteria for running a film festival?

Broad taste. I am not a rarefied aesthete. I love comics and I love Fitzgerald. 'The Bourne Supremacy', great film and 'Yi Yi', a seven hour Taiwanese film by Ed Yang is so cool.

How would you describe the spirit of the Edinburgh Festival?

I say it's like Dr. Who. It was always the same Dr. Who, even though there were different actors playing him. So at Edinburgh different artistic directors come and go but still the atmosphere transcends. It is more intimate, more friendly than other festivals. **Were there any defining films in your life when you realised that movies would become your life?**

I think a lot of people have those moments, when you watch a film and you think, "wow", "yes". *Masculin Feminin* [Goddard], I watched aged 16 and I just thought that it was so groundbreaking, like no film I'd ever seen before. It was a turn around. Before that it was *Excalibur* [Boorman], when I was 13. And *Decalogue* [Kieslowski], that is like a holy thing to me.

Who are your favourite directors?

Kieslowski and Ozu.

What should you expect from a great film?

To be entertained. The entertainment might take various forms but you should come away with the same level of satisfaction. I'm not anti-Hollywood, but most Hollywood movies fail to entertain. I'm also a believer in the story, the narrative. If you don't have a good story, however good a director, cinematographer etc you may have, they won't be able to improve the film. You need a good script. Unless

you're Goddard maybe.

Where to now?

Well when this festival is over, I am going to Venice to look for films for next year and then to Toronto. You see 6 films a day, most of them crap, then suddenly one film comes up and the thrill of seeing it overcomes everything. I know I sound quite evangelical. And I am; there is nothing to equal it.

Shane Danielsen's recommendations

Yi Yi by Edward Yan, Taiwan

Vivre Sa Vie by Goddard, France

Alice in the Cities by Wim Wenders,

W. Germany

Tokyo Story by Yasujiro Ozu, Japan

The Ice Storm by Ang Lee, USA

Sweet Smell of Success by Alexander

Mackendrick, USA

The Apartment by Billy Wilder, USA

In a Lonely Place by Nicholas Ray, USA

I Vitelloni by Federico Fellini, Italy

The Long Day Closes by Terence Davies, UK

Kes by Ken Loach, UK

Brazil by Terry Gilliam, UK

The Decalogue by Krzysztof Kieslowski, Poland

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Shane Danielsen (right) in conversation with Walter Salles

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Raindance Festival 2004

Ross McElwain

The brainstorming sessions to come up with the name of a Sundance-rivalling British film festival can't have been very protracted. 'So. It's going to take place in October, right? In London, right? I've got it...'

The Raindance Festival now enters its 12th year and takes place at the UGC Shaftesbury, UGC Haymarket and Ciné Lumière screens between 1st and 10th October. It is a Big Deal. In past years, such films as *Pulp Fiction*, *The Blair Witch Project*, *Memento* and *Capturing the Friedmans* have had their British premières there.

This year the festival is opened by Meadows' new film *Dead Man's Shoes* and closed by the Cannes Grand Jury Prize winner *Old Boy* by Korean director Park Chan-Wook. In between, highlights include Catherine Breillat's *Anatomy of Hell* a follow up to her acclaimed film *A Ma Soeur* and Jim Jarmusch's *Coffee and Cigarettes*: a film about a series of conversations between actors and celebrities, fuelled - as you may have guessed - by caffeine and nicotine. It is notable not only because it pairs, for example, Tom Waits with Iggy Pop, Jack White with Meg White and Steve Coogan with Alberto Molina, but also because it features a chat between

Bill Murray, the Rza and the Gza (of the Wu-Tang Clan). Something of a return to form after voicing Garfield, to be sure.

Members of the 2004 festival jury include Anna Friel, Jonny Lee Miller and John Simm, reflecting the organisers' dedication to promoting British actors and filmmakers following in the footsteps of such seasoned professionals as Ken Russell, Christopher Nolan, Mike Figgis and Shane Meadows.

For more info check out www.raindance.co.uk



Cate Blanchett in *Coffee and Cigarettes*

Cinecam - the lowdown on filmmaking opportunities in Cambridge

Have you written a script that's waiting to be brought to life? Or if you have an idea for a short and just need a little motivation, this is the perfect opportunity. You have 8 days left to write something if you haven't already and you could win the chance to have the whole project funded by Cinecam this term. Just email Nick the complete script by October 8th on nrch2@cam.ac.uk (Script must be less than 15 pages)

The Week Begins Thursday -

An Experimental documentary/fiction piece about Cambridge involving many renowned campus figures..... This is a great opportunity to

be involved in a student feature film with a comfortable budget. Anyone acquainted with 16mm cameras and interested in being the Assistant Camera operator should contact Anthea at ak416@cam.ac.uk. You must be able to commit weekends in October and November.

Animal farm and 1984 - a HATS week 6 production needs film director/ Audio Visual editor. Contact Saraïd on semd2@cam.ac.uk.

Watch this space to find out about upcoming workshops this term: scriptwriting courses, cinematography, operating the camera, editing and directing....

www.image.net

Tavener comes to King's

Nicola Simpson meets a modern master at work

September 19th saw the European premiere of Sir John Tavener's *Lament for Jerusalem* in King's chapel, performed by the Rodolfus choir and the Orchestra of the City. *Varsity* managed to get in on the action and speak to the composer himself.

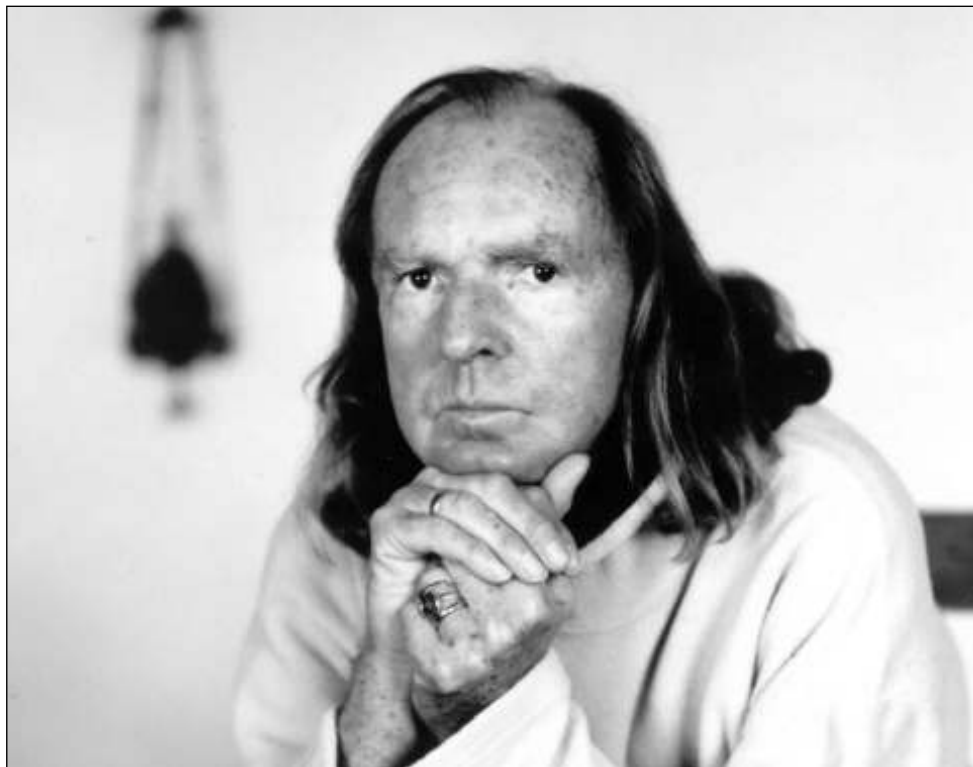
Sir John Tavener is one of today's most influential and inspiring composers. His deeply spiritual choral work *Song for Athene*, played at the close of the funeral of Princess Diana, catapulted his music into the public eye and confirmed his status as one of the world's unique composers. Driven by an intense spiritual passion to find the 'essence' of life and portray that in his music, he has challenged the established foundations of Western music and taken composition to new and exciting levels; *Lament for Jerusalem* is no exception.

The piece is, in Tavener's own words, 'a mystical love-song' - not, as the title may suggest, some sort of political statement regarding the 'war-torn place that contemporary Jerusalem has become'. He is keen to state in his preface to the work that to regard it as such would be to 'limit and misunderstand it.' Its structure is comprised of seven stanzas, and by using three religious texts (Christian, Judaic and Islamic), the composer has 'attempted to form a unity'; that is, he wishes to express his Universalist approach that all religions strive towards the same goal.

The performance of the piece was almost, if

not entirely, flawless, not least on the part of the soloists, Patricia Rozario (soprano) and Andrew Watts (countertenor) and the Rodolfus choir, which, under the direction of Ralph Allwood, gave a stunning performance. This was in part due to Tavener's skillful choral writing - Rozario described it as 'just full of love and yearning for eternity, and the Jerusalem that we've lost and that we should seek to find.' This sense of 'yearning' is very much captured by Tavener's music, and pervades throughout, evoked by the harmonies and long, fluid phrases. Allwood highlighted the use of the very close harmony in such phrases as 'blessed shall he be who shall seize and clash thine infants against the rock' as particularly effective - and equally poignant bearing in mind the recent crisis in Beslan. He also drew attention to the composer's unique talent with sound; trombones and basses are perfectly combined with the choral writing to produce a deep and powerful resonance.

Rozario has a long-standing relationship with Tavener - indeed, ever since casting her as the principal in his opera 'Mary of Egypt', he has composed many of his pieces for soprano voice with her in mind. Born and brought up in India, Rozario is a Roman Catholic, and there is clearly a connection between singer and composer on a spiritual level. Rozario told *Varsity* that 'in some ways you begin to understand that all our



(c) Richard Haughton

Tavener's music is very much an expression of his own spiritual reflection

beliefs are based on God, and we may not understand or want to accept another point of view, but deep down, I think there is a unity and I think that's what John, through his music, is trying to express'.

Does he enjoy hearing his music performed? 'Yes...(pause)...I prefer writing it. That's when I'm happiest; when I'm writing it.' I asked him how significant the piece was for him in terms of the expression of his own sentiments. 'I like it because it manifests beauty, and it's very difficult to find beauty in this world...it's a very ugly place...you look at art, modern art today, if you

look at a painting, it manifests Hell, you look at a newspaper, it manifests hell, you look on the television, it manifests Hell.' It is clear that what sets this man apart from his contemporaries is his musical conviction. Each piece of music he writes acts as a vessel, a channel through which he can communicate his thoughts and beliefs to his listeners. Towards the end of our conversation, he commented on his role as a composer: 'If I have anything to do in music, it's to bring about some kind of feeling.' In *Lament for Jerusalem*, he has certainly achieved his goal.

ANDREW McCULLOCH

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WE ARE HERE

Get your classical kicks

Varsity's whistlestop tour of what you can hear

Nicola Simpson

More music goes on in Cambridge than sex in a brothel, but what's on offer here is usually slightly more refined. As well as an astonishing amount of musical talent, the university also has an infinite number of societies in which to house this talent. An attempt to list them all would be a bit like a Homeric pageant of heroes; long, monotonous and pointless in many ways. So I'll give it a go.

The daddy of them all is Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS), having four separate divisions: two orchestras (CUMS I and CUMS II), the wind-only Zephyr ensemble and the CUMS chorus. CUSO, the University Symphony Orchestra, is another big player, putting on a hugely popular concert each term, and CUCO, the Chamber Orchestra, make musical offerings of a consistently high standard. This term, CUMS will be performing music ranging from Janacek to Saint-Saëns to Holst - their typically extensive programme for Michaelmas features a guest appearance by the eminent Sir David Willcocks on 1st December, who'll be conducting CUMS I and the chorus when they perform Holst's Hymn of Jesus and Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony. At their termly concert on 25th November, CUSO will perform Schubert's Symphony no. 8, Ravel's Piano concerto no. 1 in G major, and Prokofiev's Symphony no. 5, and CUCO will be entertaining us with, amongst other gems, Martin's Sinfonietta 'La Jolla' on 30th October, followed by Mozart's Magic Flute Overture on 20th November. Catch all these performances at West Road Concert Hall or King's College chapel.

But don't let the big kids steal all the sunshine - college music societies often showcase some spectacular concerts. The Orchestra on the Hill is run by Fitz along with New Hall, Churchill and Magdalene, and the brilliant Fitzwilliam String Quartet actually have a residency at the college. If you're prepared to trek up the Hill, Fitz have a swanky new auditorium, this term hosting concerts by international musicians - don't miss the Leipzig

Gewandhaus Choir doing their stuff on 16th October. Trinity College Music Society (TCMS) will be performing the time-honoured Handel's Messiah on 20th November, and both Clare and King's College Music Society (KCMS) regularly put on lunchtime recitals - not only are these often of a very high standard, they're also free. So, if you've spent your last few quid on entrance to Coco's, you still have no excuse not to broaden your cultural horizons.

If you like your freebies, Kettle's Yard have free lunchtime concerts every Friday by Cambridge students, in addition to their five concerts each term by prolific members of the chamber music scene, which kick off on 21st October with the internationally renowned Janacek Quartet. The Britten Sinfonia, about to embark on their twelfth season in Cambridge, like to think of themselves as a bit radical, performing music by Miles Davis and Nitin Sawhney - catch them performing the European premiere of MacMillan's Piano Concerto No.2 at West Road on 3rd November. The prestigious Ancient Academy of Music returns to Cambridge this term for another season; expect to see acclaimed Japanese Bach interpreter Masaaki Suzuki (not of the automobile fame) directing 'Bach Cantatas' and the Italian violinist Giuliano Carmignola show off his supreme sawing skills in 'The Virtuoso Violin'.

Exciting stuff. Don't miss a note of it.

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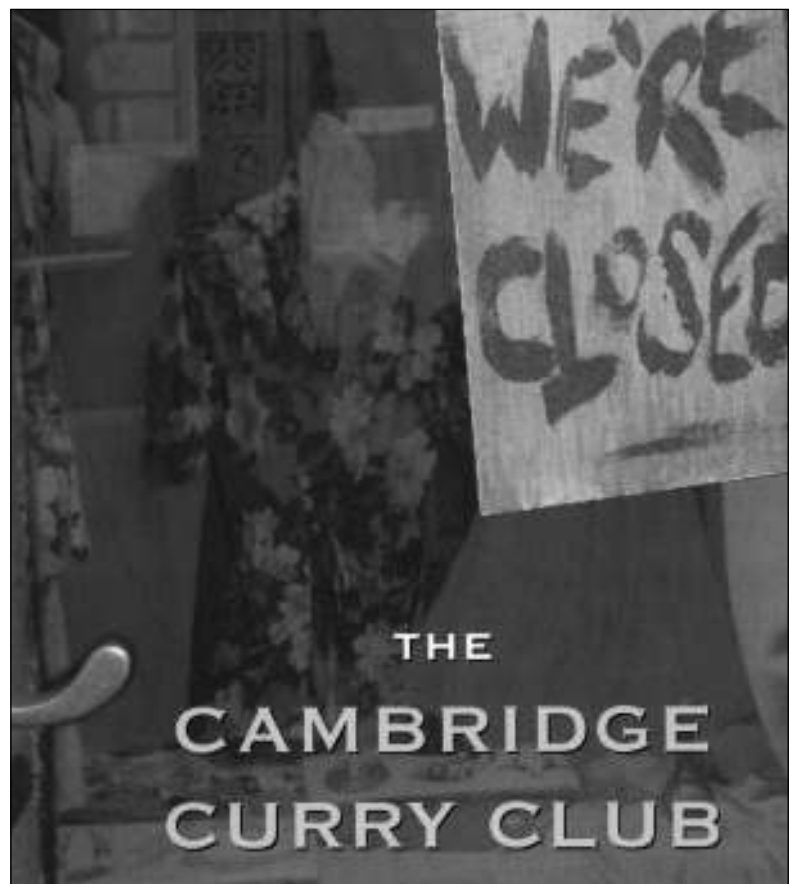
Political Correctness gone ironic - seriously

Tiani Ghosh finds different shades of Multiculturalism in *The Cambridge Curry Club*.

The plot in a nutshell: Three Indian women, at work in a Cambridge charity shop. Cue issues. Cultural issues. Social issues. Spiritual issues. Cut to hilarious misunderstanding

involving a shop-window mannequin and a cadaver.

As the publishers put it, 'disaster, death, and romance appear on the menu'. Presumably in that order.



Advertised as being an 'ironic post-colonial romp', this is an example of a genre that represents a significant contingent in contemporary British literature.

Unfortunately for us all, this movement has simultaneously spawned a sort of multicultural over-zealousness in the media which, taking on a suspect political agenda, seems crass at best.

Viewers of BBC One's altogether sinister 'comedy' *All About Me* will know that when the laughs are centred around the internal monologue of an Asian, wheelchair-bound, adolescent mute with cerebral palsy, either we're in the territory of black comedy or, god help us, a frighteningly *unironic* landscape of political correctness.

At one stage in the novel, one of the Asian women is asked if they are named Wellington-Smythe. The response: 'such a deliberate transposing of the postcolonial subject would not only be aesthetically unappealing but necessitate an inapposite dismantling of notions of self, ethnicity, race and class, thus bringing it into hybrid discontinuity'. Ironic? Yes. Funny? I'll let you decide.

Nevertheless, *The Cambridge Curry Club* is laden with cutting jibes, which, invariably directed at some unwitting Caucasian foil, run alongside a steady stream of quips that have been designed to 'keep you laughing until it hurts'. It may be of

interest to note that the limited, and some might say two-dimensional selection of white characters includes an elitist raj-throwback, her half-witted criminal son, and the estranged husband of one of the Asian 'heroines', who, on embarking upon being gay of an afternoon, severs the marriage, and in a cartoonish twist, shacks up with an anally retentive parrot-fanatic. And all this on their wedding anniversary.

Cutting jibes are invariably directed at some unwitting Caucasian foil

Fair dos, ironic 'post-colonial' observation is perhaps a far cry from Jasper 'the ink is black the page is white together we learn to read and write' Carrot, and his motley crew in *All About Me*, but equally, if the alternative to politically correct over-enthusiasm is an irony that verges on resentment, is it really preferable?

At its strongest the novel is a romantic page-turner, offering numerous, worthwhile social insights from an unusual perspective. However, the way in which this book is advertised as a madcap farce is somewhat misleading. The eccentric customers much hyped in the blurb fail to materialise - that's unless, by

'eccentric', we are meant to understand, 'dead'.

The 'bungling heroines' spend more time musing than bungling. The women are meant to be at once slapstick bodgers and self-conscious markers of cultural incongruity.

It is presumably the idea of being out of place and out of context that gives license to the charity shop becoming a cultural metaphor; whoever wrote the synopsis clearly found nothing more definitively strange or amusing than 'an adult video of Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs being sold with the Lego'. However, using such a ridiculously manipulated antithesis seems to miss the point altogether; surely an arbitrary collection of objects is only quirky if it is exactly that; arbitrary - not theatrically juxtaposed.

Overly determined to take 'pot-shots at everything', and equally determined to be unremittably wry, this book certainly doesn't treat either the town or the charity shop as worthy subjects in their own right, and ultimately loses any sense of eccentricity by taking its sporadic dips in seriousness, *too* seriously.

Saumya Balsari is appearing at Heffers at 6.30 on the 5th of October to talk about *The Cambridge Curry Club*. For tickets see the Literature department at Heffers or call 01223 568 521

The Darling Buds

Rachel Willcock finds creativity and character in *Mays 12*

A warning to all Freshers: Cambridge is a place that makes you feel inadequate. Ok, you were the cleverest in your school but that doesn't count for much here. Just look at your next door neighbour Miss X: on top of getting a first she is president of the Union, captain of the netball team and the most popular person in college. If you want to diminish your self-confidence even further just take a look at 'Mays 12'.

Before reading this book I reassured myself that despite the hype, this would be a collection of pretentious student writing, no better in fact than my own paltry attempts at creative writing. Disappointingly, I was wrong - it's actually rather good. The anthology is divided into two sections, poetry and prose divided inexplicably by some out-of-focus photographs. I don't really understand what these added to the book at all. The print copy was too poor to do the images any justice and, well, they just seemed rather out of place in a collection dubbed 'The Best of New Writing from Oxford and Cambridge'.

There are some genuinely moving moments in the poetry section. One highlight to pick out is 'Memorial Service (for Ben Vincent)' by Tom Marks. The couplet:

'Miles Davis, Pembroke Chapel (early Wren).
I almost weep for a trumpet, not knowing Ben.'

Is a clear demonstration of how effective simplicity can be in conveying emotion. In contrast I felt that the one problem with the anthology and particularly the poetry section, was a tendency to be too clever: There were some lines that just seemed laboured or too self-conscious and read awkwardly as a consequence. These writers are good enough to not try so hard sometimes.

The prose section contained brilliant writing by some very talented young writers. I

agree with Philip Pullman, who was guest editor, that 'the thing I liked most is the storytelling'. Indeed, I was impressed by almost everything I read.

Frances Leviston (*A Hole in the Ice*) can boast a narrative not dissimilar to Ian McEwan. Its cold tone has a subtle creepiness and grips you from the first sentence: 'At what point the children's cries became screams, Thomas Simpson could not have said.' She also achieves the almost impossible feat by making a child molestor a sympathetic character.

Lloyd Thomas showed extraordinary imagination, creating a fascinating tale about a man who is sent children's teeth mysteriously in the post. At the start it seemed that this story was

The one problem with the anthology, and particularly the poetry section, was a tendency to be too clever

going to be one of the gems of the collection, where the reader would be taken by surprise at the effortless originality of the writer. However, by the third part, his idea had lost its appeal and the ending was anti-climactic and smug. This kind of development is perhaps what is missing in these new writers.

Nevertheless, I am sure that even the most sceptical reader will be impressed by 'Mays 12': obviously that is a hackneyed comment, but this really is a showcase for new writing talent. The fact that these writers are very young and often previously unpublished is almost irrelevant: it is enjoyable as a collection of already accomplished work. Doesn't it make you sick?

Mays 12 is available for £6.99 from business@varsity.co.uk, or in the English Faculty Library

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Positive Darby ready for bigger challenges ahead

In an exclusive interview, Blues football captain Jon Darby tells **Adam Edelshain** about the coming season, and why the next Varsity match is his most important as leader.

How did the Blues do last year?

It's a funny old thing really because a successful season seems to stand on whether you win or lose the Varsity match. To be honest with you, up until then I don't think our season could have gone any better. We were promoted, so now we're in one of the top national leagues. We scored a lot of goals and kept lots of clean sheets and together as a team we were flying, going into the Varsity match. We played an Oxford side that was relegated from the division that we have been promoted into - so on the day we really fancied our chances. We also murdered them for 65 minutes and they didn't look like they had a chance of scoring. Then they scored a bit of a dodgy goal and as we pushed forward, they notched a second as we got caught short at the back. It's strange because up until that point, no one could have criticised where our season was going and it's a bit of a shame that losing the Varsity match took a little bit of a shine away from a very good season.

Which of your star players are still around and who will you be missing this year?

There's a few left around, although we have lost a lot of players this year. Players like Mike Adams will still be here and he always looked dangerous. There's a few players who never really kicked on as well as they should have done last year. I think it might almost be a good thing that we've lost so many players though, because it will give the players in the wings a chance to shine - players like Jonny Hughes, who should be looking to command a regular first team place.

How's the forward line shaping up?

Last year's strike force will change as Chris Fairbairn has gone, and Danny Waistell was out all of last season with a lot of injuries. He broke his leg and then first game back he broke it again. I don't know whether he'll be playing much in the future but it looks a bit bleak. On the other hand Mike Adams scored a lot of goals last season and there's a few of the falcons that did well last year - Danny Griffiths and John Russell especially - who now have their chance to show that they can perform at the next level. There is a big gap in the standard between the Falcons and the Blues so it's quite a step up, but we are hoping for good things this year.

And at the back?

The defence is still fairly strong and should retain some fluency as many of last year's players are returning. Chris Turnbull and Ben Allen were excellent last year and should be role models for the younger players coming through.

Have you seen any freshers yet who might star for you this year?

There's a few that have been training this week and there's a few college players who didn't really think about playing last year and now look pretty good and may well be able to do a job for one of the sides - if not the Blues, then the Falcons and Hawks. You never really know what the freshers are going to be like but the training has given me some idea and there will be University trials starting next Friday, October 8th, and running into the weekend. We'll be running a stall at the freshers fair and are contactable at c.u.football@sport.cam.ac.uk. We're hoping that talented freshers will come

along and boost the squads for the coming year.

Any predictions and targets for this coming year?

Going into the new league it's hard to set targets as we don't really know what the squads will look like. It's difficult to judge if we will be going for promotion or consolidating our position and to be honest it could end up being a scrap just to stay in the league. It very much depends on where we stand in a couple of weeks time and I'm not being negative just being realistic about the fact that it's very difficult to know what kind of team we're going to have. We've also got two new coaches so there's a lot to suggest good season ahead. And we're also going on tour this Christmas, so hopefully if we gain a few players and things take shape then we should have a very good team and we should definitely stay in the league, if not push on for first or second place. Of course we also want to win the Varsity match very much this year. We haven't done very well in the last ten years, winning 3-1 four years ago, but not doing particularly well otherwise.

Do you find it difficult to combine academic work with your sporting commitments?

To be honest, last year I was a bit of a lazy sod. A lot of people do shy away from doing extra curricular activities because of the pressures of work but in many ways it makes you work more efficiently as you've just got to get things done. I think the football last year helped me work better and I did all right last year too so hopefully I'll keep my head above water this year.



Adam Edelshain

Darby, who plays centre-half, scored five goals last season

Cambridge expose flaws in Leeky defence

University Hockey

CAMBRIDGE 3
LEEK 1

Mark Rushton
Sam Grimshaw

Last Sunday saw the Men's Blues playing the first National League hockey match in their history. Promotion last season from the East Premier league now makes the Blues the best all University player team in the Country.

With pre-season starting 2 weeks before the opening fixture, the Blues had plenty of time to train together and work on playing as an effective unit. Three freshers were incorporated into the team, with Andy Middleton in goal, Dave Hemsley at centre defence and James Waters at centre midfield to compliment the old stalwarts of Parker, Williamson, Fulford and Wilson.

The first match against Leek was always going to be tough, with the

team needing assurance that they could play at this very high level. The first half was an even contest with the light blues seeing the better opportunities but not being able to convert. Half time saw the match at 0-0, with Cambridge full of confidence from their early opportunities.

The second half started perfectly with Captain Fulford intercepting a defence pass and setting Patchett free on goal. Patchett then slipped it to Parker on the left who finished neatly to make it 1-0. Dream play continued as Fulford picked up the ball on the edge of the Dee and the Leek defence scattered, providing him with a shot on goal. The keeper saved the first but quick reactions from Rob secured the goal.

2-0 up and Cambridge hit a relapse, letting the opposition back into the game. Cambridge conceded short corner after short corner. However the defence held reasonably strongly, only allowing one goal to slip past. The last 10 minutes proved to be tight but Cambridge remained on top and with 5 seconds remaining, Mikey Williamson ensured the win by clinically passing the ball into an open goal.

Meanwhile, the newly promoted Wanderers played Long Sutton in Prem B of the East League. The game started at a ferocious pace with the Wanderers having the best of the opening exchanges. Sam Grimshaw put the finishing touch to a well-worked move to give Cambridge a deserved lead. Further pressure created

several short corners, one of which was emphatically put away by James Sym. At the other end new boys Guy Foxell and goalie Charlie Romito dominated the Long Sutton defence and the score at half time was 2-0.

As both teams tired the game became stretched in the second half. Cambridge however, were first to capitalise, winning

a Short Corner which Gareth Collins calmly finished with a drag flick.

The last twenty minutes saw Long Sutton hit back with two goals but the Wanderers held on to win 3-2. Token Fresher and Man of the Match Reese Alan was delighted with the win and said he was "looking forward to the rest of the season".



Cambridge blues hockey team in a friendly game against Loughborough

Sporting future dependent on funding

Mark Adair

Anyone in Cambridge hoping to emulate Olympic Badminton Silver Medallists Nathan Robertson and Gail Emms, will find they have to pay £7.60 for a court at peak times as well as the 80p admission fee at Kelsey Kerridge Sports Centre. Britain cannot hope to produce the champions of tomorrow if local sports facilities are so expensive. The Williams sisters succeeded at tennis because they were able to use their local Tennis courts for free as is the case in much of the US. We are told ad nauseam that to combat the rise in obesity we must take exercise, but the cost of sport at leisure centres around the country is prohibitive. The government must step in to subsidise the cost of sport for everyone. The nation's health is at stake.

"Tens of millions of pounds are still needed before the new Central University Sports Complex becomes a reality"

Closer to home, many Universities, such as Oxford and Nottingham, have their own indoor swimming pools, but here at Cambridge, swimmers have few options other than to pay to use the Leys School or council owned Parkside Pools. And it is not just swimmers who have to hand over cash to participate in their sport. Many col-

leges don't have facilities for all sports and must beg other colleges for the use of their courts and pitches. Colleges that don't have squash courts struggle enormously to find courts and are often forced to use Kelsey Kerridge to play "home" matches, which costs £7 for 40 minutes play during peak times.

Step onto any college squash court and one cannot fail to notice the numerous signs declaring "Courts Are For The Use Of 'X' College Students Only". Surely aware of the stress Cambridge students are under and with the rise of heart disease and other health related issues, the colleges should be encouraging sport, not banning members of the Cambridge University from playing there. To be treated like a trespasser and evicted from the Squash courts when no one else is playing there is embarrassing as well as frustrating. We are all members of Cambridge University and should share college facilities in order to further sporting enjoyment and achievement in this University.

Herein lies one of the major downfalls of the collegiate system. The fact that there are 30 colleges who have a variety of Boat Houses, Squash Courts and Gyms to build and maintain means there is very little money or incentive to spend on central University facilities. The colleges would rather spend money on their own facilities and therefore there is no pooling of resources for University-wide projects.

Tens of millions of pounds are still



Varsity archive

Visions of tomorrow: A computer graphic of the proposed Central Cambridge Sports Complex

needed before the new Central University Sports Complex in the West of Cambridge becomes a reality. Only when this is built will Cambridge's top athletes be able to train in some of the finest facilities in Britain. It will mean a new generation of athletes from Cambridge can compete for the first time on an equal footing with Loughborough, Bath and most importantly Oxford.

However, the new £1.2 million Indoor Cricket School at Fenner's does raise hopes of future investment in University sport. Its success in helping not only the University's Cricket teams but local schools and the community at large may well have positive implications and lead to similar projects.

Yet no matter how good the facilities in the University become, it seems

unlikely that Cambridge sportsmen and women will stop working entirely. However, with improved facilities it may increase the number of students that play too much sport on the weekend and must join the mad rush on a Sunday evening to finish their work.

For more information about the new University Sports Centre go to <http://www.sport.cam.ac.uk/fundraising/universitysportscentre.html>

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Cambridge destroyed again by Oxford prowess

Luke Daniel

As Cambridge's opening batsmen strode to the crease on an overcast morning at Lord's, it was visible that all was not well in the Light Blue camp.

After an excellent season, the team should have been brimming with confidence, but as the captain gave his pre-match interviews in the Media Centre, the edgy tone in Adrian Shankar's voice was noticeable. Shankar himself was playing under the strain of torn cartilage in his left knee, but his more pressing concerns involved masking a toothless bowling attack with the talented batsman at his disposal. Oxford on the other hand, had an impressive array of bowlers to choose from, led by Amit Suman, their overseas Indian star.

Shankar looked like a troubled man at the crease, and he was beaten by Suman in an uncharacteristic fashion for a batsman of his calibre. His opening partner, Richard Mann, threatened to reproduce his early season form, but it was left to the impressive Simon Marshall to construct an innings of substance, which he did in elegant fashion with 94. Unfortunately a flimsy effort from Cambridge's lower order resulted in Cambridge being fifty runs light of a proper score.

However, the way the Light Blue attack bowled made Cambridge's total of 224 irrelevant. Oxford's batting

line up is not one to strike fear into opponents, as their results had shown, but Joe Sayers fed on some shoddy deliveries to notch an excellent century. Shankar desperately tried to conjure wickets with inventive field placings, but even that was to no avail. As the final blow was struck, both Shankar and Marshall sunk to their knees on the turf with hands over faces, in disbelief at how such a promising season had evaporated in an afternoon.

The edgy tone in Adrian Shankar's voice was noticeable

One moment encapsulated Varsity cricket in 2004, and it came in the four day fixture at The Parks. With Cambridge desperately fighting to save the match on a wearing pitch, after haemorrhaging runs again, Shankar and Marshall came together to battle it out. With Cambridge's two champion players at the crease, there was at least a glimmer of avoiding defeat. However as Marshall called for a tight second run, the hitherto anonymous Alex Wyatt scored a direct hit from the boundary to dismiss him. As all Oxford efforts focused exclusively on the Light Blue captain, it was inevitable that he would wilt at some point, and when he was dismissed, he took Cambridge's hopes with him.



Lynden Spencer-Allen

Another Cambridge batsman falls victim to Oxford's superior bowling attack

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