

VARSITY



D i z z e e N e w H e i g h t s

The Rascal returns: an interview with the man who fixed up, and looks sharp
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No. 616

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Friday February 25, 2005

Admissions report shows black student applications only 1/3 of national average

Sam Richardson

TWO YEARS after *Varsity* first highlighted the scarcity of black students in Cambridge, there are still fewer black undergraduates at the University than there are students or academics with the surname White.

Last year's admissions statistics, which were revealed this week, show that only 1.4% of students who applied to Cambridge were black. This is less than a third of the national average, and marginally lower than Oxford. Black students who were interviewed were less than half as likely to get in as white students.

The University does not in fact know the full number of black students who apply to Cambridge, because the right to anonymity under data protection legislation means some applicants do not disclose their ethnicity. The University's confidential figures suggest that there are at least 88 black undergraduates – two more than there were two years ago.

Dr Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions for the Cambridge Colleges, said "Given these figures, it's difficult to say that things are moving in the right direction. They make us realise that, even though we're putting in a lot of effort already, there is much more yet to do."

Parks also pointed to the broader national perspective. "It is becoming increasingly apparent that in addition to 'evangelising' – encouraging students from under-represented groups to consider Cambridge – there are many instances where we need to support their schools in helping them fulfil their potential. That's why

there is an increasing emphasis on the outreach work done by Colleges and Departments in educational enrichment, through the provision of masterclasses, study days and a myriad of excellent online resources."

Nikhil Gomes, co-ordinator of GEEMA (Group to Encourage Ethnic Minority Applications) said that the problem with attracting black students to Cambridge lies in the perceptions of the University both nationally and internationally: "If you come from a background where there is not a great deal of knowledge surrounding the Cambridge admissions system, then obviously Cambridge can be quite daunting. GEEMA continues to run outreach and access work, and over the last few years has concentrated on students as young as Year 9."

The new focus on younger pupils is likely to go some way towards pacifying figures like David Lammy, the black MP for Tottenham, who said "Your investigation confirms that both Oxbridge and other Russell Group universities have to continue to do more to ensure that they know the names of headteachers of inner city schools in areas like Tottenham, Lambeth, Peckham and Brixton. They must work together to ensure that their pupils are prepared to apply, and that on application they are well positioned to get in."

CUSU President Wes Streeter also emphasised the national nature of the problem. "The current situation facing black students in the UK marks a complete failure; not of theirs, but of the education system, which lets them down year on

year. Whilst this week's admissions figures have shown some improvement, it is clear that there is much more to be done to encourage black students to apply to Cambridge."

Pav Akhtar, the NUS's Black Students' Officer, said that "When I went to Cambridge from a working class background it was a complete culture shock. Black students can often feel isolated". The BBC documentary *Black Ambition*, which followed a number of black Cambridge students, attempted to show a different story. A university spokesperson said the program did "a great service for the university, by bringing to light the flourishing diversity of our undergraduate student body."

Opinions within Cambridge seem to be positive. A recent survey by this newspaper found that over 80% of students felt that there was no ethnic prejudice in Cambridge. A separate survey of interview candidates also revealed that students from ethnic minorities showed no discernible difference to white candidates in their assessment of the interview process.

New Statesman columnist Darcus Howe told *Varsity* yesterday that "In a recent experience in Trinidad, an extremely bright young woman, having been advised by me to apply to Oxbridge, reacted as though I was mad – that it was humanly impossible for a black person to get in unless they were from a certain social caste. Cambridge is out of our reach as black people, not academically but socially."

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Lucy Barwell

On the move: a view from inside Cambridge's black community - Interview with BAC, page 7. Comment, Chine Mbueagbu, page 7. How to fill a black hole, Editorial, page 11

Fresh attack on A-Level policy

Oliver Tilley

THE UNIVERSITY has issued a statement criticising the government's decision not to scrap the A-level and GCSE after it published a white paper on 14-19 year old education on Wednesday.

The critique comes after the publication on Monday of Cambridge's admissions statistics for 2004, which revealed that the University had to reject close to 5,300 straight-A applicants. Dr. Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions at Cambridge, said "The University was very much in favour of the Tomlinson proposals, so we are naturally disappointed that the government has chosen not to implement them in full." He added: "We do not

believe there is any need to retain the old terminology of A-levels and GCSEs in a new educational era and are still hopeful that the Government will reconsider the introduction of a single diploma when it revisits this issue in 2008."

The government's white paper outlined significant reform in secondary education, including plans to introduce an overarching 'diploma' for students at age 14 and building 200 vocationally led schools and 12 skills academies. But it did not advocate the abolition of A-Levels.

Cambridge continues to rise in popularity, with a 7.2% increase in applications in 2004 combined with a 4.1% decrease in acceptances. Many of the government's proposals will ease this obvious

admissions burden, with a greater provision for stretching the brightest students and the ability to view individual module scores of each candidate's A-levels.

But the government's senior education advisor, Sir Mike Tomlinson, disapproved of the government's plans. Tomlinson, whose proposed blueprint recommended an obligatory diploma for all 14-19 year olds, said "What is proposed yet again risks emphasising the distinction between the vocational and the academic."

Cambridge's admissions statistics also showed an increase in female intake, from 48% in 2003 to 52% in 2004, while the number of acceptances from the grant-maintained sector increased by 1%.

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News in Brief
Oxford Snobbery

Oxford University has found its admissions procedures under fire once again after the leak of internal guidelines suggesting that tutors give preference to postgraduate applicants from 'prestigious' universities rather than 'weak' or 'second-rate' ones. The head of an organisation representing universities established after 1992 stated that the document 'reeked of snobbery'.

Fatal Cure

A Swedish research assistant living in Cambridge died after swallowing a cocktail of prescribed drugs and paracetamol in an attempt to alleviate her hangover. The substances combined with the alcohol present in her bloodstream to fatal effect. The inquest recorded a verdict of misadventure.

Winehouse in Doghouse

The tsunami fundraiser concert which was to be held at the Junction on Wednesday night has been postponed after headlining singer Amy Winehouse dropped out due to illness. The organisers of Sama Sama have promised that all tickets will be valid for the rescheduled date or can be refunded.

Record-breaking Campaign

This week Cambridge SPEAK group helped launch the World's Biggest Dress, a creative petition forming part of the Make Poverty History campaign. 150 of the 7000 squares of fabric which make up the dress were made and sewn together in Cambridge. On each square campaigners have expressed their views on multinational trade exploitation.

Snowy the dog

It has been snowing sporadically for most of the past week, with nothing that actually settled on the ground. So no snowball fights unfortunately.

First We Take Manhattan

New night to be unveiled Thursday, March 3rd - 9.30 onwards at The Kambar. £3 before 11 and £4 thereafter. 'Fierce' apparently and should showcase lots of promising student DJ talent, with much of 'electro', 'rhythm 'n blues', 'new wave' and special guests White Magic (Drag City) - Time Out NY's 'Best New Band in New York'.

NUS anti visa hike campaign



Claire Mawer

CUSU President Wes Streeting leads a student protest in London against the government's recent decision to increase visa charges for overseas students.

Anna McIlreavy

CUSU PRESIDENT Wes Streeting led a demonstration in London on Wednesday against the government's recent decision to increase visa charges for overseas students.

Streeting led fellow students in a campaign organised by the NUS outside the Home Office in the morning, followed by a lobby in the House of Commons, where Anne Campbell, Labour MP for Cambridge, addressed students and members of parliament. The day of protesting highlighted student anger at

the government's recent decision to increase charges for visa extensions.

Students from Cambridge, Liverpool and Warwick attended the event, which has been heralded as a resounding success. Streeting called the lobby "hugely successful" and commented on Anne Campbell's support.

The student campaigners hit triumphant recognition when three of their questions were raised to the parliamentary table, and their petition, which is signed by more than 140 MPs, now presents strong opposition to the manifesto.

Streeting added that student

protests like this have a good chance of getting real results. Although the government have released the increase in visa extensions for overseas students *de facto*, it is subject to annual review. This system means that consistent pressure from students, and support from MPs such as Anne Campbell, could lead to changes within 12 months.

Campbell said, "International students studying in the UK make an enormous contribution to the wider economy in the UK through being students but also through their research. This increase is not justified and I

want the government to think hard about these charges for international students."

She told the Minister of State Des Browne that there were many students in her constituency who would find themselves badly out of pocket under the new arrangements. She also pointed out to the minister that the move does not do much to promote international relations. She called Mr Browne to exempt students from the new arrangements.

It is thought that further costs added onto the overseas fees may deter prospective applicants to British universi-

ties, which would not only create a large hole in the income of such institutions, but more importantly detract from the aim to attract the intellectual elite from all over the world, without financial bias.

Overseas students are becoming increasingly wary of being packaged as a financial commodity. Streeting cited the example of the fall in the number of applicants from China last year. He says that China is a key market in the global financial system, a "sleeping giant that is beginning to stir" due to its economic growth and population size.

Lost teens



Missing: Laura Callaghan (left) and Tammy Addison (right).

Police appeal for help in finding missing girls

TWO TEENAGERS who went missing from their homes in Bicester, Oxfordshire, last week are believed to be staying in the Cambridge area.

Thames Valley Police are appealing for help in finding the girls who were last seen in Bicester last Friday. Detective Constable Steve Willis, of Bicester CID, said: "I appeal to anyone who may have seen the girls or has information about their whereabouts to contact police immediately."

The two girls - Laura Callaghan (above left) and Tammy Addison (above right), are aged 15 and 16

respectively. Laura is described as 5ft 1in and of medium build with brown shoulder-length hair and blue-green eyes. Tammy is 5ft 4ins, of medium build with long mousey blonde hair and blue-green eyes.

Det Con Willis said: "I would like to stress to the girls their families are extremely worried about them. If they see this appeal then please call their families or the police to let us know they are safe."

Anyone with information should contact the police on 08458 505 505 or contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Still no Union building

Amy Goodwin

CUSU RELEASED a report this week urging the University to 'fulfil the obligations placed on it by the 2004 Disability Discrimination Act' by committing itself to the provision of a Union Building for all.

Past CUSU Presidents have pressed the case for new, accessible premises which can accommodate the services and facilities students require, as well as providing the central student venue currently missing from the University.

The report, entitled 'The Case for a Union Building', highlights the problems associ-

ated with CUSU's current Trumpington Street headquarters. "The building is inaccessible to wheelchair users. Small corridors and tight stairwells prevent CUSU from providing the best services it can to students with disabilities".

The report also noted that since CUSU relocated to the present premises in 1990 the range of services and provisions it offers "has increased dramatically, and consequently so have the staffing levels". The cramped and dilapidated building is "struggling to keep up with the pace" of CUSU's work. President Wes Streeting made the blunt admission "We know our build-

ing is crap. Students know our building is crap. The University knows our building is crap".

Although CUSU admits there is a shortage of space in the city centre, it emphasises the importance of the project for student welfare and cites Oxford's University Centre as an example of a 'modern, centrally located purpose-built facility'.

Streeting added, "Students will no doubt be as sick and tired of hearing about the lack of an accessible union building as we are of talking about it". The University's lack of commitment has meant that CUSU has been forced to raise the issue once again.

Student debt increase

Lucy Phillips

A NATION-WIDE study has estimated that today's toddlers will have notched up on average £43,825 of debt by the time they graduate from university.

The research, published last week, was carried out by the 'Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society' and also predicts that by 2023 nearly all young adults will have a degree. But they will be forced to live at home for longer due to the expected

rise in property prices.

If 70 per cent of all 18 to 21-year-olds were in higher education by this time - the figure being predicted - there would be a total graduate debt mountain in 2023 of nearly £90 billion.

The study has also revealed that when children born in 2002 attend university students they will pay £7.56 for a pint of beer (£2.65 today), £6.66 for a Big Mac meal (£3.29 currently) and £16.56 for an adult cinema ticket (£5.80 today).

Nigel Snell, the head of external affairs at the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society, said students and their families would have to save more in the future to fund children through university.

Mr. Snell said: "Although everyone knows life gets more expensive between birth and adulthood, the substantial increases in certain costs that we are predicting will have a dramatic effect on the future choices of today's babies."

College for sale on eBay

Alan Goodwin



View of Oxford: Brasenose College in the foreground and Lincoln College in the background

Lucy Phillips

A STUDENT from Lincoln College, Oxford, attempted to auction off its rival Brasenose College on eBay this week.

An unnamed student at Warwick University gave the highest bid – of £10 million – before the college was removed from the internet at the request of the college proctors. The bids commenced at £5.

EBay Customer Support

released a notice to the potential buyers saying: "Please be aware that item 6156205543 – Brasenose College, Oxford, in which you were a bidding participant, has been ended early by eBay as it appears to offer an item or contains material which is prohibited for sale on eBay. Because the item was ended early, you as a bidder are not required to complete the transaction."

Lincoln College imposed a £50 fine on the prankster "for

bringing the college into disrepute and for abusing computer facilities." The culprit was also made to apologise personally to the Principal of Brasenose.

Head Porter Kevin Keen from Lincoln College confirmed that a "student had been given disciplinary action" following the incident. He added that most people felt, "it was a very, very good prank, done in slightly bad taste."

Brasenose refused to comment.

Cambridge wins Varsity wine tasting contest



THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY Blind Wine Tasting team made history on Wednesday by retaining their title at the 52-year-old Varsity match.

The event took place at the Oxford and Cambridge Club at St James', London, where six students at each of the Universities had to distinguish the country and region of origin, grape variety and vintage of a selection of wines. It was a close contest with only 16 points out of 1440 deciding it in Cambridge's favour. The match was judged by wine experts Bill Baker and Jancis Robinson.

Benjamin Drew, a second year economist at Peterhouse and captain of the winning team, said "Given the hard work and determination that everyone put in, I am glad the result did us justice." The prize was a trip to one of the foremost Champagne houses in Epernay, France.

Prior to the event the team trained twice a day for two weeks, beginning at 10 o'clock every morning. Drew added "Right now I don't ever want to touch another glass of wine in my life!"

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Contaminated food King's online archive

Amelia Worsley

HUNDREDS OF products have been withdrawn from college butteries and supermarket shelves after being contaminated by Sudan I, an illegal carcinogen.

Sudan I is a red dye used for colouring solvents, oils and waxes. It has been banned for use in foodstuffs in the UK and across the EU since July 2003. However, it was present in chilli powder used by Premier Foods to make a Worcester sauce that was then used in hundreds of other products including soups, sauces and ready meals.

Mr Tony Smith, head chef at Gonville and Caius College, gave assurances that Cambridge college food is safe to eat. He said: "The retail market should be more worried about the situation... All the products we use

have been checked against the FSA's list of affected products".

Products containing Sudan I have in many cases been prevented from being delivered to colleges since many suppliers have "treated the problem at the source". Mr Reverchan, head of catering at Emmanuel College, said "the problem was dealt with by our nominated supplier before the delivery came".

The FSA predicted last week that all contaminated products would be removed from supermarket shelves by yesterday. It advised people who find contaminated products in their homes to either discard them or return the foods to the supermarket where they bought them, where they will be refunded.

Own-label lines from Asda, Waitrose, Morrisons, Sainsbury's,

Tesco, Sumerfield, Iceland, the Co-op and Marks and Spencer have been affected, as well as a McDonald's low-fat Caesar salad dressing.

Premier Foods stressed that the withdrawal was merely a "precautionary measure", since "the levels at which Sudan I occurs in the products concerned present no immediate risk to health."

Dr Julie Sharp, of Cancer Research UK, echoed these sentiments in a statement that said "people who had already eaten foods that had been contaminated had no reason to panic. The risk of cancer in humans from Sudan I has not been proven and any risk from these foods is likely to be very small indeed."

But Dr Bell, an FSA spokesman, stressed, "It is not sensible for people to be continuing to eat these products."

The Food Standards Agency said that people eating contaminated products over a long period of time were most at risk. The FSA has been criticised for waiting nearly two weeks to make a public announcement after being notified of a potential problem by supplier Premier Foods on 7 February.

A full list of the contaminated products is available on the FSA website, www.food.gov.uk.

Natasha Anders

KING'S COLLEGE has recently received £30,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, allowing improved access to College estate records in its archive centre.

The donation has allowed the Archive Centre to put the details of these records online so they can be easily accessed by anyone. At the moment the catalogue is held on a card index system which can only be accessed in the King's College Archive Centre. The new funding will cover the cost of a qualified archivist who will convert this to an online database.

The catalogue in question is a collection of records which document community life in England from the Middle Ages to the present day. Some of the charters are court records which date as far back as the 11th century. The collection

records important elements of the history of King's College itself as well as providing records for 164 manors, properties and land in 30 counties, with estates dispersed across the country from St Michael's Mount in Cornwall to Allerton Mauleverer in Yorkshire.

The collection of records includes 164 manors, properties and land in 30 counties and documents a vital part of the history of the college, including records of estates in England given to the college by Henry VI following its foundation in 1441. Many of these were the lands of the so-called alien priories, such as the Norman Abbey of Bec, confiscated by the Crown in 1414.

Items have also been documented such as Letters Patent of Henry VIII from 1536 featuring an example of the Great Seal. More recently, there are the original documents and

plans for the Cambridge Arts Theatre from the 1930's.

The new online service offers a chance for researchers to study many different elements of history related to Cambridge and estates owned, by the use of records such as court rolls, accounts and maps.

Project Archivist Jude Brimmer, said: "It really is a marvellous collection, with a great deal to offer local and family historians from all over the country - as well as to anyone with an interest in the development of the College itself."

The Archive Centre's catalogued collections are available to be seen, free of charge Monday to Thursday, 9.30 am - 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm - 5.15 pm. Visits are by appointment only, and those interested should phone 01223 331 444 or e-mail:

archivist@kings.cam.ac.uk



Many supermarkets have had to withdraw contaminated products



King's College, Cambridge. A recent donation has enabled documents to be put online

HIV awareness push

Joe Gosden

TO PROMOTE their campaign for equal access to anti-retroviral HIV treatment, the University's Stop Aids Society plans to open "Bush and Blair's Phoney Pharmacy" at 11am in Market Square on Friday 25 February.

Working with DHIVERSE, a local HIV and sexual health charity, and using an old ice cream van disguised as a drugs dispensary, they intend to hold "radical awareness-raising event" to act as a reminder that political leaders need to ensure access to aids medication in developing countries.

Through the use of campaigners dressed in Bush and Blair costumes and a soundtrack including songs such as

'The Drugs Don't Work' by The Verve, the society aim to provide information to the public and to lobby for action at a political level for what they say is a necessary step on the road to making poverty history in third world countries.

The arrival of the "Phoney Pharmacy" in Cambridge is part of the launch of a two year DHIVERSE campaign to raise awareness about the problems that HIV poses and to tackle what the society call the "inequalities, stigma and discrimination that surround HIV both in the UK and overseas".

Will Horowitz, of the Student Stop AIDS Society, said "The HIV/Aids pandemic across the world is one of the greatest crises of our generation, and our failure to act is

one of the greatest injustices."

He added: "The phoney pharmacy will hopefully bring this to the attention of people in Cambridge, and help us to raise awareness of this critical issue".

DHIVERSE is one of the oldest HIV and sexual health charities and is at the forefront of the campaign to raise awareness about Aids. General Manager Luke Mallet said "Access to treatment is critical to the survival of millions of people living with HIV and Aids across the world."

Shamefully, entitlement to HIV treatment is also becoming an issue within the UK, it no longer seems to be the case that everyone living in the UK with HIV will be entitled to ongoing treatment from the NHS if they need it."

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Michael McCrum 1924-2005



Chine Mbubaegbu

A FORMER Cambridge University Vice-Chancellor has died at the age of 80. Michael McCrum, former headmaster of Eton and Master of Corpus Christi, was described by the current Vice-Chancellor as someone who would be remembered for his "personal kindness and dry humour."

Professor Alison Richard said that she was saddened by the news of his death, saying: "He made many important contributions to the University... and, of course, his College and the schools of which he was headmaster."

Mr McCrum was born in Hampshire in 1924. After going to school at Sherborne in Dorset,

he served in the Royal Navy and then won a scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge where he gained a Double First in Classics on graduating in 1948.

After becoming a fellow the college a year later, he became a Director of Studies in Classics within two years, holding the post until 1962.

After leaving Cambridge, he became headmaster of Tonbridge School and then Eton College, where his reforming and modernising skills helped to maintain the excellent reputation of the school.

McCrum became Master of Corpus Christi in 1980, where his reforming technique included him overseeing the matriculation of the first female students into the college in 1982.

Professor Richard said: "In the University, he belonged to a group of young, reforming members of the Council of the Senate in the 1960s who can truly be said to have formed modern collegiate Cambridge through the establishment of, among other things, the new Colleges and the Colleges Fund, as well as the University Centre.

"He was a natural choice to be Vice-Chancellor and gave the two-year assignment his deep commitment, especially in advancing the University business fairly and efficiently through the Council of the Senate, the General Board and the Financial Board."

McCrum died on 16 February 2005. Details of a memorial service are to be announced.

Hunting ban

Henry Bowen

THE BAN on hunting in England and Wales came into force on Saturday amid widespread protests from both hunters and anti-hunt activists. The Hunting Act bans hunting with dogs of all animals except rabbits and rats. But hunts turned out in force on the first day of the ban hoping to "exploit loopholes" in what they claim is a badly drafted law.

Cambridgeshire Hunt and Trinity Foot Beagles were among the local groups demonstrating their opposition to the new legislation at the weekend. The Trinity Foot Beagles have an unofficial link with Cambridge University and were set up in 1862 for the benefit of its students. Although dwindling numbers have forced them to amalgamate with another local hunt, they still have strong student representation among their members.

Matthew Higgs, Master of Trinity Foot, said that "we don't intend to break the law, instead we are looking for possible ways around it". He suggested that they may try hunting rabbits rather than hares, as they are exempt from the ban, although he conceded that it will be difficult pre-

venting the hounds "chasing what they've been brought up to chase".

Other legal ways of hunting include using terriers to flush out prey to be shot, and drag hunting with an artificial scent. With only one month left of the season, Trinity Foot are planning on being "cautious" after the introduction of the new legislation.

Mr Higgs called the ban a "nonsense" as he explained that Trinity Foot had been actively involved in monitoring and conservation of hares. He derided the bill as "pernicious" because in the long term "animal welfare will be worse off" as hunts are often the best informed about the size and behaviour of local hare populations.

Yesterday the attorney general Lord Goldsmith asserted that the hunting ban would be enforced like any other law. There has been concern from anti-hunt protesters that hunting was being given a low priority as police were encouraged to concentrate on preserving public order during hunts. In a written letter to parliament, Goldsmith stated that "it is not for the attorney general to suspend an act of Parliament and introduce a blanket policy of non-enforcement."

CUSU encourage student voting

Mark Padley

CUSU IS set to launch a campaign to encourage students to engage with the political process in what is likely to be a general election year.

CUSU intend to help students make an informed choice and raise awareness about how to vote by delivering information to students on "how to reg-

ister to vote and how to vote", and by organising "hustings for political candidates".

Over the coming months they will be looking for student volunteers to run the campaign and to formulate further ideas on how CUSU can help students participate in national polls.

CUSU President, Wes Streeting, stressed that there

was no political motivation behind the plans and that "student interests will be best served" if they take a more active role in selecting Britain's government.

This 'get out the vote' campaign comes at a time when national voter turn out was just below 60%, with 60% of males and only 46% of females between 18 and 24 voting in

the 2001 general election. CUSU have noted that such low levels of electoral participation not only damage democracy but also weaken the student voice on all political issues. When Cambridge students launch campaigns on important issues, such as top-up fees, their credibility is damaged by their previous failure to engage with the political process.

Applications now welcomed for the position of Varsity Business Manager



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VARSlTY



Arts & Sports Review 2005

The annual TCS/Varsity Arts and Sports Review looks back on the main events of 2004/5. The combined effort of journalists and designers from both of the university's student papers, promises to be another unique publication read throughout the city.

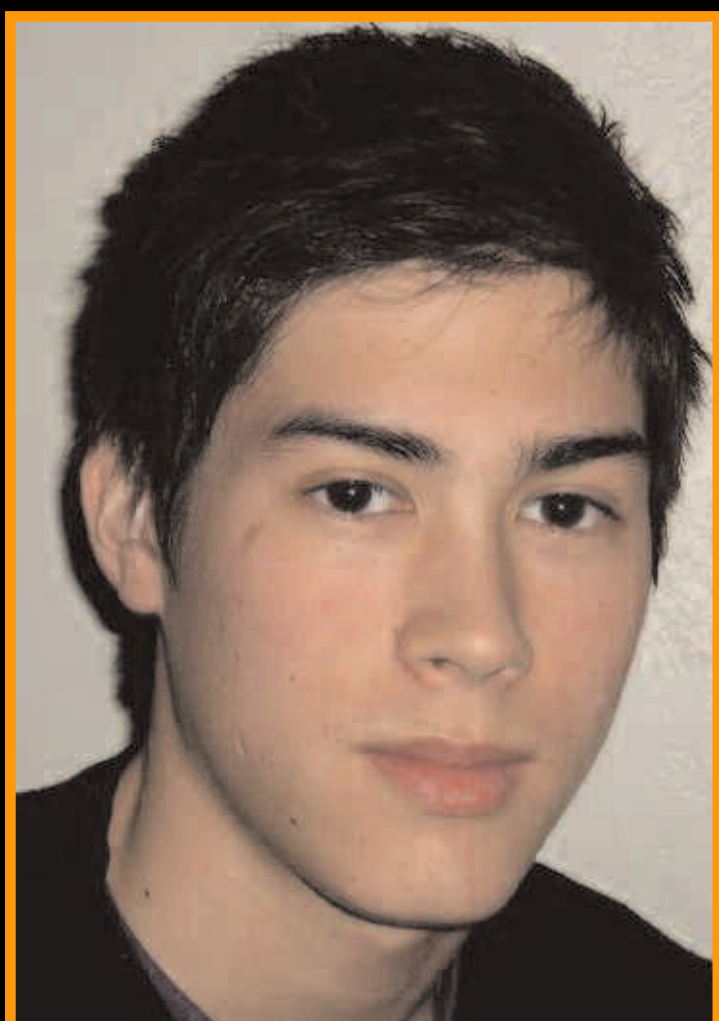
It is an opportunity to write about events in Cambridge over the last year, ranging from the best gigs to the the best games, theatrical highlights to musical moments.

You don't need extensive experience to join the team, just enthusiasm and a vision for the project.

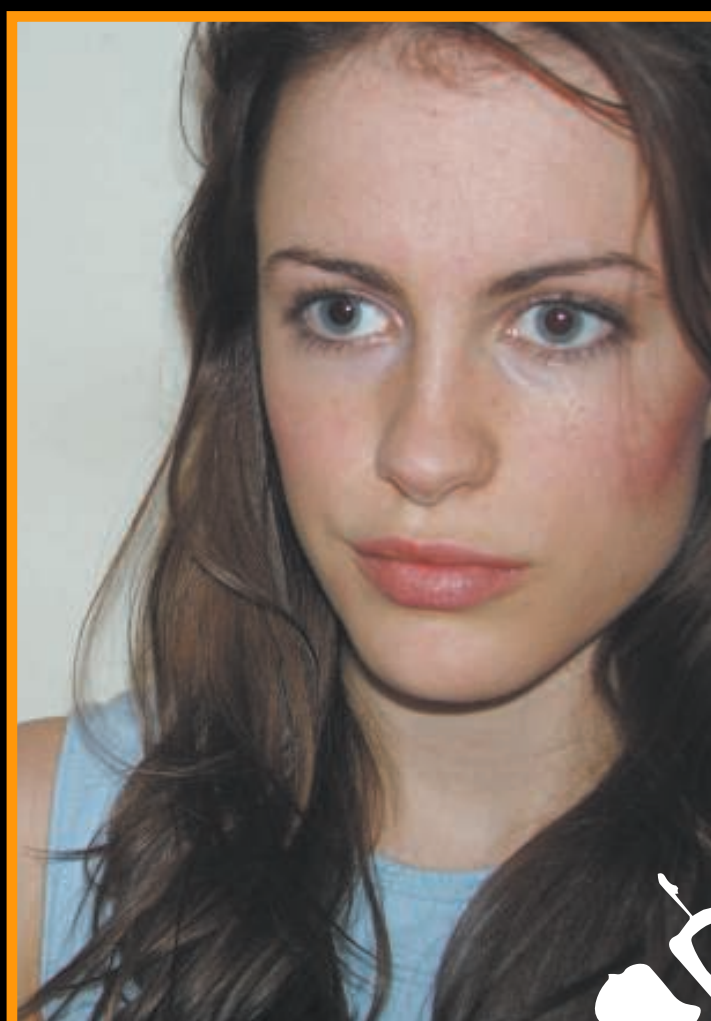
VARSLITY TCS

We are looking for an editorial and design team to produce the 2005 Review. Applications are open to all, including the TCS & Varsity teams. The Review will be published in mid-May. Email review@cusu.cam.ac.uk for further information and application forms.

Model Student 2005



James K. Emmanuel



Claudia, Trinity

See this year's Model Students, as voted by you, at The Cambridge Fashion Show 2005 on Sunday 6th March at The Guildhall. For more information or to find out details of your college ticket rep, check out: www.cambridgefashionshow.com

Cambridge Fashion Show

Not as simple as black and white

Kate Ward talks to Dave Ziyambi from the Black and Asian Caucus

THE STATISTICS unveiled as part of an investigation into the number of black students seem to reveal a worrying trend, with only 1.4 percent of applicants being black. The explanation of the low levels of black student application is commonly explained by a perception of Cambridge as a socially and ethnically restrictive environment.

As Dave Ziyambi, co-president of the Black and Asian Caucus, commented, many black students would be drawn to "LSE and UCL, which are just as good academically and won't be considered as pompous. People just don't consider what it's actually like". The reality of Cambridge is very different from the image which persists outside the university: "to say that there is very little prejudice here is just a gross generalisation... too often people make decisions without talking to the people that are involved".

The work of the access officers, both at university level and in projects run by the individual colleges, has been criticised. Ziyambi argues that access drives which try and encourage more black students to apply to Cambridge run the risk of achieving precisely the opposite effect to that intended, because

they are focussed on issues which it is considered refer specifically to black students. He went on: "I am not quite sure that tailoring a campaign to black people to get them to come to Cambridge is effective... rather we should focus on the pros and cons of coming to Cambridge. By doing so we make the reasons for coming the same for everyone".

Ziyambi feels that issues of race should be made secondary to the advantages Cambridge offers

He says that regardless of one's skin colour, one should still be focussing on the fact that "Cambridge is prestigious, and that appeals to everyone". It seems that by isolating black students in the policies of the access campaigns before they apply it only compounds the view held among many outside the university that they will exist in a minority and not as a part of the whole university community.

As Ziyambi says "you are coming to university to get an education, looking to get on with your life, you don't always want [race] issues thrust on you". He went on to say that the

reasons why black students don't apply are (in the main) the same reasons why students from other ethnic groups choose not to apply. "Being far away from home" and "the Oxbridge stigma" were mentioned most in school visits that have been organised by the BAC.

But the question remains as to why this negative stereotyping continues. Ziyambi does admit there is racism in Cambridge but he argues "racism is everywhere, not just in Cambridge; its going to be in every university you go to." Despite this, stories continue about racial stereotyping, leading some to argue that rather than being a product of the student community racism is institutionalised. Af Oliver, a third year student at Trinity Hall, and member of BAC argued that there is "tolerance of a kind of institutionalised racism". He used the example of the recent 'Colonials and Natives' night at Ballare, reasoning that "the fact that Sholto Mayne-Hanvey felt comfortable enough to put on a night like that shows that many of these [prejudiced] attitudes are ingrained." Oliver continues "I feel that I'm treated differently by members of the University staff, especially porters, because of my race and



Varsity Archive

Issue 575 of *Varsity* brought to wider attention the limited number of black students in Cambridge

the stereotypes I fit... the way I talk and the way I dress".

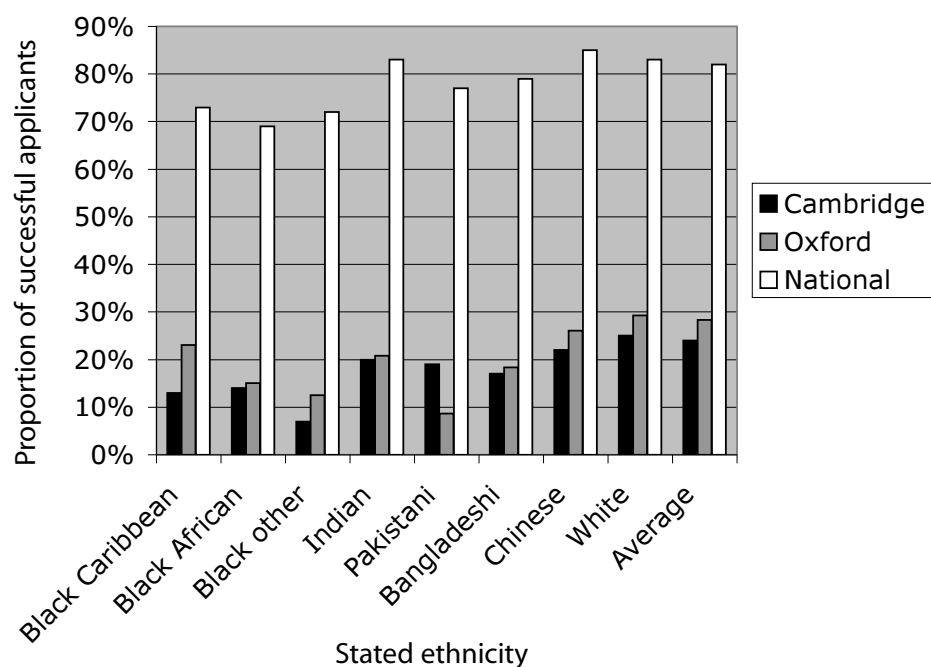
Ultimately however Ziyambi feels that issues of race should be made secondary to the positive advantages, both social and academic, that Cambridge offers.

He says "a lot of the black people here do not have that much of a problem with being black in Cambridge; the problems only arise when attitudes and stereotypes are unfairly applied".

BAC are optimistic that the

image of Cambridge is changing and that future numbers of black students will increase, it seems however that ironically those who campaign for them to apply reinforce the negative image which plagues this university.

Proportion of successful applicants to Cambridge in 2004, by ethnic origin



Explaining the admissions statistics

THIS WEEK'S REPORT into Admissions at Cambridge University has shown a familiar pattern: ethnic minorities continue to be less successful in passing their interviews than white students.

The statistics confirm that those who identified themselves as 'black other' (who may be British black, mixed race or not

comfortable with selecting Caribbean or African) have only a 7 percent chance of getting in to Cambridge, with white applicants have a 25 percent chance.

It appears that despite access drives to encourage applications, when it comes down to the interview being white gives you a better statistical chance of getting that place.

The statistics show that Cambridge is more difficult to get into than Oxford for all ethnic minorities aside from Pakistani students, who were shown to have a 19 percent chance of gaining a place at Cambridge but only a 9 percent chance of success at an Oxford interview.

Kate Ward



COMMENT

CHINE MBUBAEGBU
Chief News Editor

"Evidence suggests that we are not a group that see ourselves as isolated from University life simply because we are black"

Our investigation has highlighted once again the 'shocking' under-representation of black students at the University – an issue that becomes increasingly tiresome the more and more it is brought up.

It is true that the number of black people in Cambridge is a fraction of what it should be. But to dwell on the issue merely serves to cause tension both within the black community that already exists in Cambridge and externally. The issue at hand is not as clear-cut as people seem to believe. There are some black people who are militant about the under-representation of black students at Cambridge and there are some who choose to get on with their own student life rather than focussing on how hard done by we as a people are. Each to their own. Not all black people are the same, just as a great variety of personalities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes exist amongst white people.

The generalisations that exist when referring to black people at the University are dangerous and frightening. Being a black Cambridge student does not mean that you have benefited from an access scheme that enabled you to rise like a phoenix through the ashes of poverty and through the ivory towers. Black people can go to Eton too, you know, and many of the students that are here have come from privileged backgrounds. To assume otherwise

simply on the colour of someone's skin is to be guilty of the prejudice that so many are fighting against.

Despite its small number, the University's black community remains a thriving and successful one, with a large proportion of black students being amongst the movers and shakers at the University, whether that is in their capacity as head of access initiatives such as GEEMA, or cultural societies such as the Black and Asian Caucus or in things that are not directly linked to issues of ethnicity. Being black at Cambridge does not necessarily mean that your main focus is on getting more black people into the system or on an insistence on maintaining your cultural identity. Many black students hold positions of power throughout the University – including in areas of sport, media, theatre and music. Being black does not necessarily entail that you cannot live your university life to the full. Nor does it mean that you cannot feel at home in an environment that lacks black faces.

Evidence suggests that we are not a group that see ourselves as isolated from University life simply because we are black. There is, however, the problem that although it may not be an issue for us, it remains a challenge for many Cambridge authorities. The way black students are treated by some of the 'old school' fellows serves to remind us that we are black and

different, no matter how much of an issue it is for us ourselves. I remember various incidents in which comments have been made by members of the University's staff, for instance, being told at a college dinner that I must not have been used to such 'bland' food or being told of the difficulty I must have faced finding other Nigerian students at my college to share a flat with. A friend also told me that, having turned up for a supervision, a supervisor said to him: "I'm sorry, I'm expecting a student," thinking that he, as a black person, couldn't possibly have been a Cambridge undergraduate. Black students have been stopped, sometimes pulled out of larger ethnically diverse groups when simply entering college gates and challenged as to their membership of the University. Such examples do nothing for improving the image of Cambridge as an 'ethnically restricting environment'.

There are certainly problems that need addressing, both in the admissions process and the way in which black students are treated once here. The former, is not just the fault of the University. Several factors need to be taken into consideration, including the aspirations and expectations of black communities around the country. And of course the latter is not just a problem for the University, but an issue that needs to be addressed by our society as a whole.



The pioneer of Grime stands up tall

Dizzee still just a rascal?

Dizzee Rascal, a dominant force in UK urban music, talks about youth, influences, ambition and Grime with **Amit Gudka** and **Nikhil Shah**

"I left school with nothing. My school life was very colourful," says Dizzee, "But one thing I always concentrated on was music- whether it was playing the drums, keyboard or guitar in school bands, DJing or MCing. And I was good at English- writing and shit. The other side of it was trouble". Dizzee was expelled from three different schools and was on the verge of another expulsion when

"I love it that students may be from different backgrounds and areas, but the music is still reaching them"

he was 16. It is only when he starts to speak fondly of the teacher, Tim Smith, who recognised his musical talent and enthusiasm, that we realise this really is a dreamy story of the troubled teenager from a high-rise estate in Bow, E3, who came good. "Lunchtime, break time, after school, any time I could he would let me into the music room to use the computer and make tunes. That's how he supported me- he pretty much kept me out of trouble and in school by helping me with music".

It wasn't at school where Dizzee's real interest in music started though. He never really intended to be an MC. In fact Dizzee started out as Jungle DJ Dizzy D. "When I was 13 I had these turntables, right. They were proper rubbish- belt drive, wooden with a round pitch control. If the belt broke we used elastic bands instead!" says Dizzee. "You know DJ Target yeah (Target is one of the original members of one of the leading grime crews, Roll Deep), he used to sell me jungle records for £2 a go. Then one day he just gave me everything. People would come round and we would make jungle tapes, and sometimes I'd grab the mic and MC a bit. It was just a joke ting then".

Dizzee goes on to describe his progression in a typically modest manner. "It just moved. I started performing at youth clubs, then house parties, then bigger raves and now it's concerts". When asked about his ambitions, and whether he ever dreamed of making it as a mainstream international artist, Dizzee replies "I was never that sure, but I always hoped to make it big. I kept on making beats though".

The big break for Dizzee was when 'I Luv You' came out on white label, and sold 8,000 copies, a phenomenal achievement at a time when a successful UK Garage release would only sell a couple of thousand units. The harsh claps, the grating basslines and the rawness of the lyrics not

only lit up the underground, but also captured the attention of the music industry and media. XL Records, the independent label behind acts such as the Prodigy, Basement Jaxx and The White Stripes, were the first to react to the potential of the sound that Dizzee was engineering. "Boy, after 'I Luv You' dropped I started seeing paper (money) and believed all this shit was actually going somewhere."

Many within the UK Garage/Grime scenes strongly believe that influences of the Roll Deep Entourage, and in particular that of their leader, Wiley, were particularly important in shaping Dizzee's career. However, Dizzee has gradually distanced himself from Wiley and Roll Deep over the past 2 years, giving them no credit on any of his recent releases, whilst Wiley dedicated a large part of the 'shouts' section on his album to Dizzee and mentioned their falling out. When asked about this, Dizzee responded, "We don't even talk any more. Target introduced me to Wiley, and one day when the crew were recording the track 'Bounce' in a studio in Greenwich, I came up with a chorus line that stuck. Since then I was part of the crew." Without a doubt being part of Roll Deep was a stepping-stone to underground success, but Dizzee maintains that he was always independently working on his own album. "I'd be an arsehole to forget Wiley completely, but I was always doing my own shit." Could this mean that Dizzee's old peers are simply trying to jump on his popularity bandwagon?

Dizzee goes on to talk about his musical influences. "Tupac and Bone Thugs n Harmony were artists that I was always feeling. First and foremost though, jungle has always driven me. Still, you'll find a mixture of everything in my music: the beat patterns in 'I Luv You' are similar to crunk (the style

Dizzee started out as Jungle DJ Dizzy D

of hip hop emanating from the Southern States of the USA). Also, my 3rd school was like 95% Asian, so I took on all these influences as well." Dizzee then sings a couple of bars from some famous bhangra tracks to us, whilst giving all the relevant hand movements, and then responds to our question of how he developed his own style, "By not giving a shit. I've always been open to different sorts of music and had fun with it. I'd try something new and muck around with it."

Dizzee's rise from East London pirate radio MC to international superstar has been meteoric. He has performed all over the world, and told us about his experiences of gigs in New York:

"They received me with open arms man, I was surprised. Even though some people said they didn't understand my accent, the crowds were singing my choruses back to me. I've made some mates out there like the Neptunes and Lil' Jon. I always come across as someone who only wants to work alone. That's not true- its just that the bigger artists are so far into what they do and so busy that its difficult for them to give you their all. I have to elevate myself to get on a level with these big boys. I'm branching out in the UK though- top underground producers like Youngstar and Wonder have produced on my album 'Showtime' (on the tracks 'Stand Up Tall' and 'Respect Me' respectively). I see myself as an artist, and I'm looking forward to when I start singing on my tracks!"

Is Dizzee still interested in the UK Grime scene in which he was so influential? "I feel that I am one of the main pioneers. Sometimes I find that hard to comprehend because I was just trying to bring my music across. Wherever Grime is going, it's going- I'm just proud to have done my bit. The thing is, it don't stop there for me. I want to go worldwide and affect the earth. Music by the Neptunes is just in the atmosphere at the

"Band Aid was jokes. They called me in just to spit 4 bars. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity"

moment, it's the sound. I need my music to be doing that." Would he produce for other artists? "Part of the reason I MC over my own tunes is that I know what could be done to them. The Neptunes have shown their beats to the world by using their own vocals, and now every artist wants to spit or sing over their productions." It begs the question; will Dizzee one day be bringing his unique production style further into the mainstream via artists like Britney Spears or Justin Timberlake?!

We quickly move on to Dizzee's views of performing at the New College, Oxford, May Ball, and in particular how he hit

it off with the ladies there. He smugly responds, "It was all right..." and then breaks into a cheeky grin. "I thought they would be a lot more stush, but in fact they were a lot more loose, even in their tuxedos and ball dresses, than I first expected. It

"I want to go worldwide and affect the earth"

was heavy! And I don't even want to talk about the rest! I want to come and do the rivals though (Cambridge University). I love it that students may be from different social backgrounds and areas, but the music is still reaching them."

Finally we talk about Dizzee's role in the Christmas Band Aid single. "It was jokes man - they called me in just to spit 4 bars. Boy, I flew in from Italy the night before and was going to go straight out to LA afterwards so I was exhausted. But it was a once in a lifetime musical opportunity. To be honest I had no idea about Band Aid before they got in touch with me, but I began to understand its importance after I found out more about it."

Dizzee deservedly won the Mercury music prize in 2003 for his debut album 'Boy in the Corner'. Contrary to most expectations, he came back with an even stronger and more refined second album, 'Showtime'. Nonetheless, he still is eager for more, mixing new sounds everyday, whilst gaining recognition for his unique style from further flung parts of the world.

Raw, energetic flow. Frank, gritty lyrics. Genre-defying beats. He's already filling the airwaves, it can't be too long now before this boy in da corner's filling up the atmosphere.

Tune into The Get Down Show on CUR1350 on Thursday 3rd March at 7.30pm for an XL Recordings special. See www.cur1350.co.uk for more details.

Sign up to the Hip-Hop List at www.thehiphoplist.co.uk to win other Dizzee and XL Recordings goodies.

The Rascal responds

We say

He say

School.....	"Turn up"
Music.....	"Makes the world go round"
Cambridge University.....	"Wish I went"
Britney Spears.....	"Give her one"
UK Hip-hop.....	"Me"
Valentine's Day.....	"You can't see me"
Mathematics.....	"Everything"
George Bush.....	"Funny as fuck"
Pussy.....	"Yes please"

America-bashing is for the lazy



Ifti
Qurashi

It's always fun to watch *Fox News* or to read Ann Coulter's column. Almost as much fun as mocking our colonial cousins across the Atlantic, in fact. America-bashing is all the vogue nowadays. From idle conversations in the pub to the more sophisticated circles of the City and even in the higher echelons of the EU, one can observe this sport. The best part about America-bashing is that, unlike most other sports, it requires little exertion and even less thought. It's really easy: Americans are constantly providing us with limitless amounts of material. Everything from Janet Jackson's exposed breast (and the ensuing media frenzy) to President Bush's exuberant youth provides yet another opportunity for a punch-line; a little reminder that while they may be the richest, most powerful, most culturally pervasive nation on the planet, at least we're Europeans and civilised human beings.

Americans also do their part contributing to the trans-Atlantic banter. The *New York Times* ran banner headlines saying things like 'They died for France, but France has forgotten'. A pair of enterprising Congressmen had French fries changed to Freedom fries in the Congressional mess. It makes Americans feel good about themselves too. They think: 'Well we might not have Europe's culture, history or social institutions, but damnit, we've got the almighty Dollar, loads of tanks, rockets and guns (and the right to carry them around willy-nilly).'

Is this brand of hostility nothing more than the latest manifes-

tation of the Second World War's 'overpaid, oversexed and over here' rivalry? Probably not. While Jacques Chirac was spouting off sentiments like "We are all Americans today" an American I knew in London was told that America deserved what it got on September 11th, by her British neighbour. An isolated incident? An American friend who came to visit me in Cambridge was told the same thing in the pub one night. A recent edition of the *International Herald Tribune* ran a story on the general discomfort felt by Europeans, living and working in Europe, with American accents.

These sorts of sentiments undoubtedly reflect changing ideologies and changing circumstances. In the post-Cold War world, America and Europe no longer find themselves united by the fear of a common foe. America finds itself obsessed with the proper role for America on the world stage. American politics are increasingly driven by the fear of rising economic powers in China and India and the growing challenges to American military might. Europe, in turn, in contrast is trying to define itself. Europeans are struggling with the integration of growing immigrant populations (read: Muslims) and reforming our institutions to meet the spread of American culture and Asian economic capacity.

The European world-view is one of a fundamentally closer world where the kind of ties forged across our own continent can be successfully applied to other continents, but only with time and through measured reform. Americans see a closer world as well; so much so as to verge on claustrophobia. A world where terrorists can cross borders with ease and the solution is radical change based on an ideology of liberal democracy rather than



A target of scorn. But a significant proportion of anti-Americanism adds nothing to public debate

the slower-tempered actions of Europeans. Lest we mock too harshly or judge too rashly we should understand these changes and, more importantly, look to our own house first.

The truth is that America and Europe draw on the same pool of cultural and ideological heritage

It is easy to see American soldiers torturing prisoners, American voters denying homosexual couples the right to marry, American liberties being overturned and think, 'That bloody cowboy, how stupid do people have to be to elect him twice?' But the truth is we have our own versions of the Patriot Act and Camp X-Ray, the Anti-Terror Act and Belmarsh Prison being the most obvious cases. Measures such as the proposed EU-wide anti-Swastika legislation and the

headscarf ban are simply European responses to the peculiar troubles we face today. Europeans think of the Patriot Act as a heinous breach of personal liberty. To many Americans, though, it is a rational response to a foe that is perceived as implacable and as dangerous as Hitler. Americans can easily view the headscarf ban as a violation of religious freedom. But it is the French response to the perceived dilution of secular identity. Not to suggest that any of these measures are warranted, only that they must be viewed through the lens of history and current circumstance before they can be properly criticised.

The truth is that Europe and America draw on the same pool of cultural and ideological heritage. There is no foreseeable or even conceivable event that could substantially change this. Acrimony, on either side of the Atlantic, may be understandable but its translation into the petty

hostilities and snubs so evident today is by no means justified. Worst of all it serves only to strain a relationship that already has much to bear. Obviously, there is still room for the sly note or witty observation.

It is not a question of guarding our comments. Rather we must be careful that our comments do not come to define our perceptions. Otherwise we run the risk of repeating the darker mistakes of our forefathers, when the caricature grew to overshadow the subject. Political correctness (whether you think it has run amok or not) exists for a reason: it is too easy for our language to start shaping our perceptions. Americans aren't going to be actively discriminated against, nor are their rights going to be somehow circumscribed. Although the scope of our caricature is much smaller than that of say 'negroid' or 'coolie', it is still dangerous—particularly because it is so easy to miss.

Broadside

Arthur Cary

Why is it that so many of us are made to feel intellectually inferior in Cambridge? I once told a friend that there were no select amongst the elect, but it seems to me there is a gulf between those of us clever enough to get in here, as opposed to anywhere else, to piss away three years and avoid responsibility, and those of us who are using Cambridge as a stepping stone to becoming neurosurgeons or some such.

I take my hat off to those of you in the latter bracket with genuine brains, and ask you to remember me when I am spread across your operating table.

But in response to my initial question, it is not the 'intellectual' who does the real damage, oh no. It's the 'pseudo'. Take pseudo to mean that girl in the pub shouting for 'Rooney' (because she can't name anyone else in the team) and generally taking the whole 'I'm into football thing' one step too far and rubbing - nay, slapping - it in your face.

Then apply it to that dickhead who seems to know everything about music, politics, literature, (forestry?) and religion without ever actually saying much. For those of us too polite, too meek, or perhaps (admittedly) too ignorant to scratch half an itch below the surface and expose the miscreant's outrageous prevaricating, we may walk away feeling a little disheartened and, well, stupid.

I implore you to take heart from this lustrous pearl of wisdom: they're blagging, and who wants to know about forestry anyway. Go home, learn everything in the Encyclopaedia under the letter 'w' and let battle commence. It is the 'pseudo' as opposed to the 'intellectual' who does real damage, because he/she walks around looking and smelling like a real person. Beware the 'pseudo', coming to a conversation near you.

Proverbial wisdom is rubbish, but it cheers us up



Jon
Beckman

I have sometimes wondered, when helping to whip up a wholesome potage or tasty consommé, when the multiple hands making the task enjoyable, easy and quick start to spoil the broth. Empirical evidence suggests that four people, when trying to fill a large tureen with peeled and pulped vegetables, definitely makes for easy work. I would have thought that ten people to make a single pot of soup would be excessive, though it is difficult to see how they could ruin it unless deliberate subterfuge was involved.

Proverbs such as 'Many hands make light work' and 'Too many cooks spoil the broth' can coexist because they have a kind of epis-

temological authority that can simultaneously be deferred to and ignored. Occasionally a grandmotherly type will toss one into a discussion, usually in want of a real argument. Proverbs are profoundly truistic but it is a truth which is generally insufficient in the context that they are

Only quantum seamstresses are interested in stitches in time

used. They induce an exasperation when invoked, normally followed by a cry of "Give us a real reason". The fact that I should never put all my eggs in one basket will neither convince me to get two bags when shopping at Sainsbury's nor dissuade me from dedicating every waking minute towards achieving my passionate desire to photosynthesise. Classic proverbs are no longer part of our cultural psyche. Most people I

know use vitamin supplements, rather than apples, to stave off the doctor and only quantum seamstresses are interested in stitches in time. Proverbs belong in that medieval cartoon of England where John Major rides his bicycle across cricket pitches, bending Edwina Currie in a nun's habit across the handlebars whilst drafting resignation letters.

Metrosexuallectuals, like you and me, may convince ourselves that we have no need for such homely, matriarchal gobbets of wisdom as we teeter ironically on the brink of late-capitalist nihilism. We're too cool to actually believe anything - we prefer our mochas to be interesting rather than true. Our raised eyebrows are so overgrown that they tend to obscure our vision.

And yet, there are times when the banter dies, when you are unable to disown what you've just said in a flutter of laughter, and you are forced to fall back on some universally applicable

maxim in order to provide consolation or advice. My favourite one, which I overhear again and again slipping through my lips, is "These things always turn out alright in the end." This statement is clearly disprovable. Napoleon's invasion of Russia did not turn out alright in the end. It

Classic proverbs are no longer part of our cultural psyche

reduced the most powerful man in Europe to an armchair tactician on a rock in the South Atlantic. The lives of homeless people haven't turned out alright in the end.

Sometimes so much shit happens that it is impossible to move for all the manure. Yet in the midst of events we fashion narratives for ourselves which involve us scoring a century and riding off into the sunset with the girl draped across our handlebars. Most people want

to be happy. Once, and for many still, God guaranteed that. Whatever crap happened in this world was a small price to pay for eternal frolicking in Elysium. For some of us this world is the only chance and we want some guarantee that it is worth it. All we can rely on are these fragile maxims percolated through mass consciousness that allow us to keep envisaging our future as we would like it to happen.

The brittle nature of such self-affirmations was brought home to me when I went into school the day my grandmother died. For obvious reasons my countenance was morose and I was unwilling to indulge in the customary chat. A good friend of mine, perpetually jovial and oblivious of my circumstances, sensed my somewhat downbeat mood and said 'Cheer up mate, it might never happen.' That it had happened, only that morning, reinforcing the fact that it happens to all of us sooner or

later, made me laugh at the arrogance, not of my friend, but of the statement itself. The certainty, rooted in the all-encompassing banality of that 'it', of accounting for the full particularity of human experience. Yet time and time again, faced with the uncertainty of the future and the inscrutability of fellow humans, I tell myself it may or may not happen. Maxims hibernate from disappointment.

So does our celebration of failure: is the life of a pallid, gaunt floribundant poet, shivering and vomiting up his lungs in a Parisian garret in anyway desirable? We need our mantras, that the sky's the limit (which would make for a number of unsuccessful astronauts) and making the best of things, in order to keep the mirage of a brilliant, happy future ahead of us. When one dissipates into the air we just paint another one. It may just as insubstantial but at least it gives us something at which to aim.

Lucy Barwell



"The first step in learning to treat people equally is to recognise the prevalence of current inequalities"

So you want to be 'post-ironic'? Who are you trying to impress?

No amount of nonsense-talk will excuse your bad behaviour

This article isn't about the Colonials and Natives night at Ballare. Yes, I know you're all bored of that ruckus by now. But I am going to have to mention it. So please don't put down the paper and go back to whatever it is you people do with your hollow lives. (Actually, given the implausible results of the recent sex survey in Varsity - are we really a university of rampant satyrs? - I should probably assume you've just had sex, you're just about to have sex, or you're actually having sex while reading this. No, I won't talk dirty to you. Please stop dripping on my prose.)

Anyway, Sholto Mayne-Hanvey, the Hawks Club member who chose and publicised the Colonials and Natives theme, defended it in TCS as 'ironic'. Then, when he was given a few hundred words in this very section to explain himself further the following day, he said it was 'post-ironic'. Something is wrong. Now follow me from last week's Varsity to the rather glossier pages of PREP, the Cambridge fashion magazine that was launched a fortnight ago. (You might have stop rutting like a stoat for a moment to go and get it.) Inside you'll find two pages of photos cheerful girls doing housework in their underwear. Mopping, dusting, and so on. I've had this justified to me as 'ironic' or 'post-feminist'. Again, something is wrong, and not just because everyone knows students don't do housework.

Now come with me to the nearest Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. (My apologies if your paramour is getting a bit confused and irritable about all this flitting around.) We're not actually going to look up 'ironic' or 'feminist',

An exception cannot prove a rule, as any moron could tell you after a moment's thought



Ned Beauman

we're going to look up "the exception that proves the rule." You hear this being used in the following sort of context: "Everyone in Cambridge spends most of their day squirming naked in bed with someone." "Really? But for me, the last time I had sex is such a distant memory as to be almost mythical." "Ah, well, you're the exception that proves the rule."

How could this possibly make sense? When Newton discovered the Law of Gravity, he did not have the following conversation: "This is very interesting, Isaac, but how do you propose to prove it? With sums, I imagine?" "No, maths is boring. I'll wander around until I find something that's just sort of hanging in the air, and that will be the exception that proves the rule." An exception cannot prove a rule, as any moron could tell you after a moment's thought. It can only break one; and not every rule must have an exception. The phrase should be used in the following sort of context: "Frogs must usually be more expensive than this." "How do you know?" "It says 'special offer on frogs today only'. The exception proves the rule." In other words, the exception proves the rule, in the sense that, when you learn that some state of affairs is an exception, then you

know there must exist some rule to which it is an exception.

But, because people are lazy with their thinking, they have overheard this phrase, attributed to it a nonsensical meaning, and now use it as if it had some kind of awesome metaphysical power. And people do just

I don't want to delude you into thinking that you're qualified to use these words

the same thing with words and phrases like 'ironic', 'post-ironic', and 'post-feminist' (and 'post-modern' and 'anti-globalist' and a lot of others). This would normally be the point in the article at which I explain the proper use of those words. I'm not going to, partly because I don't have enough space, but more importantly because I don't want to delude you all into thinking that, after reading my article, you will be qualified to use these words. I know you receive my wit and wisdom as if God himself had shouted it all down from the clouds, so I have certain responsibilities. And most of what I said would have to be stolen from stuff I found on Google.

The problem is, words like that

give people a licence to say and do whatever they like. They are intellectual Get Out Of Jail Free cards. In future, this is how you should use those words. Use them whenever you like. Call anything you do 'post-ironic' and 'post-feminist'. But take care. Think to yourself: would what I'm doing still be acceptable if those words didn't apply? As Rilke said, "search into the depths of things: there, irony never descends."

Say you wear what they call 'fuck-me boots', and you justify it as 'post-feminist'. Would it still be all right if it wasn't 'post-feminist'? Yes, of course. Say you take pictures of girls doing housework in lingerie. Is that all right without the jargon? No, obviously not - stop pandering to oppressive male fantasies and demeaning your gender.

Say you wear an S Club Juniors T-shirt and you justify it as 'ironic'. (I'm not saying this would be using the word correctly, but this is what people say.) Would it still be all right if it wasn't 'ironic'? Yes, of course. Say you throw a Colonials and Natives party, and you justify it as 'ironic' (or 'post-ironic', or 'meta-ironic', or whatever). Would it still be all right without that threadbare cloak? No, obviously not - stop pandering to oppressive upper-class fantasies and demeaning everyone who will ever have to admit that they went to the same university as you.

Use these words with caution, if you must use them at all, and remember that they never, ever excuse doing something stupid. And that includes if you're embarrassed when your mates find out who you've just had sex with. No, you can't say you were "shagging them ironically."

VARSITY

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VARSITY

How to fill a black hole

The trouble with multiculturalism as it is currently practised is that it makes a virtue of the differences between British people of distinct ethnic heritages, and in so doing makes it difficult to treat these people equally. There is an obvious danger, of course, that in flagging up the limited number of black students in Cambridge this newspaper is feeding precisely that habit. In fact, we are quite explicitly treating black students unequally. But this is being done with good reason: the first step in learning to treat people equally is to recognise the prevalence of current inequalities, and the fact that only 1.4% of applicants to Cambridge are black – 1/3 of the national average – suggests inequality indeed.

What, then, is the solution? As Dave Ziyambi, the impressive co-president of the Black and Asian Caucus, argues elsewhere in this newspaper (Analysis, page 7), it is wholly necessary to make a distinction between 'Access' and Admissions policy *per se*. It is an observable feature of applications to Cambridge that members of Britain's black community are still dissuaded from applying to study here because of their perception of the University. This is an Access issue, and the University is therefore right to continue allocating resources to Access programs. But, as Ziyambi points out, these Access programs should target students of all ethnicities in areas that have few links with Cambridge; to isolate students of one particular ethnicity is to treat those students unequally. That is patronising, and it should not be permitted.

What is probably the most disturbing fact revealed this week is related more directly to Admissions policy: black students who reach the interview stage are, on the whole, only half as likely to pass their interview as their white counterparts. There are two possible reasons for this: firstly, that the black students who apply to Cambridge are less academically competent than their fellow applicants; or, secondly, that Cambridge is institutionally racist. There is little material evidence for the second of these explanations, though plenty of lingering suspicion (some justified, but most not). The first explanation is more plausible and empirically verifiable: black students who apply to Cambridge tend to come from schools in the state sector, most of which tend to achieve lower results across the whole spectrum of their students.

Such tendencies ought to be given the weight they deserve. To recognise them is to admit that the figures revealed this week, and the issues promoted on the front page of this newspaper, cannot be extricated from a wider pattern prevalent in British society: black students tend not to apply to Cambridge because they think it is a white place. If Britain is to initiate the process by which black students achieve more academically, and therefore apply more successfully to Cambridge, it must understand the requirements of a multicultural Britain, in which the proportion of students in this University who are black reflects the proportion of students in this country who are black.

Multiculturalism must be understood as a starting point, not a final destination. Recognition of the fact of differences between people is the first step in trying to overcome those differences. From there, a system of common values, agreed upon through engagement, interaction, and rigorous public debate can be reached. But to celebrate these differences, and to see them as entrenched in the society that we, commonly, strive to achieve, is to promote inequality, albeit inadvertently. Diversity ought not to be made a dirty word, but current practices risk doing precisely that.

The solution for Cambridge is as follows: firstly, to recognise the fact of black under-representation here; secondly, to increase black access through Access programs that do not over-state racial differences; and, thirdly, to discover the precise reason why black students who do apply to the University have less chance of getting in. Once this final hurdle is crossed, appropriate weight can be given to these applicants' background when assessing their merits. Such are the means by which Cambridge may fill its black hole.

Hack attackers strike back

A free and independent press is more than simply the hallmark of a healthy democracy; it is also the badge of a progressive intellectual climate, in which philosophical scepticism and artistic creativity will tend to be married in happy communion. Such is the case in Cambridge, and the University is much the stronger for it. As Jessica Holland writes today (Features, page 12), there is a current trend in this town for students who are dissatisfied with what they see and read in the student press to respond by producing their own publication. This may seem unremarkable to some; but academics and University veterans alike have found it to be quite the opposite. In fact, many reckon some of Cambridge's smaller productions are amongst the best they've seen, and are surprised by the number that have been born recently.

Sceptical readers of the student press have at their disposal both talented writers and the support networks to make such projects viable. It is, nevertheless, to the very great credit of students such as James Pallister and Nick Hayes – co-founders of *Meat* magazine, whose third issue is out soon – that they display the initiative, motivation, and skill necessary to make such projects successful. But what is, by some margin, the most impressive feature of these energetic new publications is their preparedness to say the unsaid. There is a refreshing ruthlessness about an attitude that gives to unorthodox (even bizarre) ideas and opinions the oxygen of publicity. These young publications certainly do that. That they also provide a healthy forum in which students can first see their names in print is to be applauded; but it is the accompanying mentality – one of intellectual dynamism and courage – that most blatantly suggests that the off-spring of Cambridge's more traditional student press will flourish.

Letters

CUSU kidding?

Dear Sir,

Last week, against my better judgement, I attended CUSU Council where our illustrious leaders were discussing whether or not to scrap the termly CUSU Open Meeting as part of a larger debate about constitutional change. The most outstanding moment of the night was when an argument was made that Open Meetings ran the risk of being hijacked by 'nutters'. As I was contemplating whether I myself would be classified as a 'nutter' I happened to glance at the final motion of the evening re. Ghostbusters

CUSU notes Ghostbusters was a song written by Ray Parker Jnr for the film of the same name and released in 1984.

CUSU believes that the song Ghostbusters, like many other classics such as Chesney Hawkes' The One and Only or the theme music from Fraggles, can provide listeners with a sense of euphoria not usually experienced in Cambridge nightclubs.

CUSU resolves that DJs playing in CUSU run clubnights should play this song at least once an evening, preferably more to mandate the Services Officer and Entertainments Officer to listen to Ghostbusters in its entirety once a week to ensure that they can recognise the song and properly enforce this motion.

Some might say that the 'nutters' have already infiltrated the building.

Yours,

Stuart Jordan
(Anarchist)

CUA1 misfires

Dear Sir,

I am not impressed by CUA1's latest campaign, aimed at stopping the arms trade. While I know their intentions are noble, I fear that it will take the focus away from what is really important. By putting the emphasis on the weapons, rather than the butchers, it distracts the world from the real way to reduce violence. Whether they are armed with AK103s, AK47s or hatchets and spears, dangerous lunatics will find ways to kill people unless we actively try to stop them.

Remember the tragic story of Rwanda, a genocide carried out with iron age technology and stone age barbarity. Most of the million dead were killed with ten cent machetes – ordinary farming tools that no ban would touch. One of the worst incidents was at Kivumu, where 3,000 tried to hide in a church. Interahamwe militia commandeered bulldozers, knocked down the building and hacked down those who fled. However successful Amnesty's campaign may be, it would not have stopped this.

Humanity's twisted ingenuity will find the tools to slaughter among whatever is legal and available. If Amnesty wants to prevent death and devastation, it should talk about defusing conflicts, not disarming combatants.

Yours Sincerely

Michael Dnes
(Trinity College)

Freedom to choose

Dear Sir,

I'm writing in response to Susan Allister's letter last week. It's important that religion is not above criticism and satire, particularly in a country (and a city) such as ours where there are so many different ideas of 'the ultimate truth'.

To many of us the Bible is an interesting semi-historical document full of inspiration for dramatic works; Jesus was a man who had ideas that were unpopular with the ruling élite, and died nearly 2000 years ago; and the Apocalypse may be inevitable, but only in 5 billion years when the sun 'dies' and destroys our planet.

To censor from our drama any material inspired by religious texts would be silly and irresponsible, and a threat to our freedom of speech.

Yours

Richard Smith

Apocalypse Now: Redux

Dear Sir,

Firstly, the assertion that "the existence of Apocalypse: The Musical is offensive to anyone who believes that Jesus Christ is Lord" is entirely incorrect. We have a number of practicing Christians involved in the production, none of whom find the show offensive. Are you the only Christian, such that your view becomes representative of the whole?

If this is a rant, it is certainly not against Christianity or Christians in general, but rather against individuals who elevate themselves to spokesmen, putting forward ridiculous assertions claiming that this is what 'Christians' think or are offended by.

Secondly, the idea of an Apocalypse has its origins not in Christianity, but the Hebrew Bible. Had you come to see the play, you would have noticed an almost entire absence of Christian ideas. To not offend, it avoids any notions of Dualism, God is always in control and there is but one reference to Jesus, (as it handily rhymes with 'Please Us'. I suppose you think God doesn't like rhymes.) The theological premise is set on the book of Job, which, incidentally, wasn't written by Christians.

To claim that it is offensive to Christians to stage a play based on a concept which Christianity developed at best, subverted at worst, seems rather short-sighted. Finally, I find it interesting that you found offence not in the content of the musical, but merely in the "existence" of it. Far more "dangerous" than a comedy musical is your desire to sanctify certain concepts so that they are excluded from potential exploration or comment.

Yours Sincerely,

Heather Newton
(Co-writer of Apocalypse)

Dear Sir,

In response to a letter published 18/02, I felt compelled to point out that, for hedonistic atheists, the pleasures of drug-taking, self-indulgence, promiscuous fornication

letters@varsity.co.uk

Letters may be edited for space or style

and/or sodomy according to individual preference are not to be lightly forsaken.

If CICCUC is wrong and our end is to come, not at the Apocalypse, but under a bus or similar, surely it will be they who have so spectacularly missed out on life's opportunities for the sake of a being who probably doesn't exist, and sure as hell wouldn't give a monkey's about our lifestyle choices if He did.

Yours,

John Furneaux
(Selwyn College)

Dear Sir,

I would like to respond to Susan Allister's letter (curiously entitled "Freedom to Choose") in which she informed me that I "genuinely deserve unending punishment" for ignoring my "creator". I take issue with this as I phone my parents quite regularly.

As for that other (let's face it more elusive) 'creator'; how could I possibly ignore the bombardment of glossy "Look upon my works, ye mighty, and despair" notices and flyers which plague my day-to-day life? My point is that I do indeed acknowledge your warning, and sensibly choose to ignore it.

You begin by saying: "I know we are allowed (sort of) freedom of expression". I read on in anticipation of a "but". You continue, conceding: "...and that this letter is laughable". I must contradict you again: I am not amused by any threats, unfounded though they may be. Furthermore, I refuse to meekly laugh away patronising assumptions that my lifestyle has evolved without direction and deep personal consideration.

You conclude: "if there's anything in what I'm saying it would be a huge mistake" not to take your warning seriously. I put it to you: if there's nothing in what you're saying (and Christianity denotes itself as a faith, thus resting on doubt, not certainty), would it not be a huge mistake to do so?

Charlotte Holden
(Fitzwilliam)

Love. Angel. Music. Empty

Dear Sir/Madam,

Though usually an ardent fan of your music section, I must take issue with its absurd declaration that Gwen Stefani's music is "original, unique and utterly unlike anything anyone else is doing". I find it hard to accept an irritating, high-pitched, platform clad parody of Madonna shoving over-produced, synthesised, self-referential bullshit into our ears as "inimitable".

A kitsch and kinetic 'supersonic female' she may claim to be, but the tedious self-aggrandizement of such lyrics does not merit the validation of an intelligent newspaper. I think, perhaps, in this case, her definitive line 'don't speak' would be more applicable.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Paterson
(Fitzwilliam)

Get stuck in to Pritt Stick Lit

Subverting cliché and challenging convention - Jessica Holland talks to the creators of Cambridge's growing fanzine culture

The time's never been so good for DIY publishing in Cambridge. New magazines are being started weekly, awards are being collected and small battles are being won against boredom and complacency. I talked to the people making it happen.

Richard Rosey is Cambridge's king of fanzines. His sprawling, passionate cut'n'paste 'zine R*E*P*E*A*T, beloved by the late John Peel,

If you're funding yourself you can be more 'yourself'. All you need is a glue-stick and a photocopier.

has been going strong for over a decade. Encyclopaedic in its scope and diverse in tone, you can spend years reading each issue. It was born, Rosey tells me, out of some drawings by his primary school music class and a love of the Manics. "They were the band that changed my life. They inspired me to read and to write and to be creative." Rosey's commitment to inspiring young people has resulted in a R*E*P*E*A*T record label and weekly new band nights at the Portland Arms. He is also responsible for a group of punk-rock ten-year-olds from his music class playing a gig on *Blue Peter*.

When asked why fanzines are so important, his answer is straightforward: "It comes down to advertising. Even though R*E*P*E*A*T loses money I've never taken a paid advert. As soon as you take an advert you're beholden not to upset that person. If you're funding yourself you can be more yourself. All you need is a glue-stick and a photocopier."

What makes a good fanzine, according to Rosey, is "opinions, mess, prittstick, cut'n'paste, people not giving a fuck about who they offend, being honest, and using full stops." R*E*P*E*A*T ticks all the boxes.

R*E*P*E*A*T slips into a long tradition of independent fanzine literature. The history of fanzines started out in the 1930's as self-made sci-fi publications spawned by fan-clubs. They have since been adopted as a mouthpiece for every anti-establishment form of music, most

notably 70's punk (*Sniffin' Glue*) and 90's riot grrrl ('zine-turned-band *Bikini Kill*). In the 1980's fanzines had money thrown at them and became hype-meisters like *THE FACE* and *Dazed and Confused*, demonstrating just how wrong the 80's got everything apart from teen movies starring Molly Ringwald.

This type of glossy fanzine-hybrid is still going strong, with the love-it-or-hate-it *Vice* leading the way. It offends just about everyone, treading all over the line between too-cool-for-skool and too-cool-for-cool in a way that makes you feel either uneasy for reading it or for not getting the joke.

Less offensive, though no less cool, is Cambridge's *Meat* magazine. *Meat* is a beautifully produced publication with an emphasis on "comics, artwork and literary innovation." "We wanted to do something that's highbrow meets lowbrow," James Pallister, who started up the magazine last year with student-turned-artist Nick Hayes, tells me. "Something that looks good - the design's really important - but with some stupid humour, so it's not just po-faced and pompous."

"*Meat* was born out of frustration at the fact that there are so many people in Cambridge that just don't seem that excited about the world around them. Who've just got too much work to do. There didn't seem to be a real forum for ideas other than TCS and *Varsity*." The magazine may be pushing against the mainstream tide but James says

***Meat* is a beautifully produced publication with an emphasis on comics, artwork and literary innovation**

"I don't have any problem about selling more copies. It's not going to steal my soul or anything. But I'm proud that it's independent. You can actually do this by yourself."

DIY publishing is growing up, and perhaps you no longer have to choose between integrity and success. Everett True, who brought Grunge to Britain, and whose independent magazines *Careless Talk Costs Lives* and *Plan B* have set a new standard for cutting-edge music journalism, bears testament to this. True's magazines have all the breathless enthusiasm and obsessive knowledge of a fanzine with the kind of scale and production values of a mainstream music magazine.

"The only concern I ever have in my own writing is to try to communicate the love for the music I feel. I don't know where that fits in with any kind of scene. We wanted to put



Jess Holland

together an intelligent, passionate, soulful magazine about music. When I was reviewing music for other magazines (Everett used to run *Melody Maker*), we would always get the same 5 or 6 CDs every week. I was really annoyed that there was all this great music coming out that I wasn't allowed to review anywhere."

The web has had a transformative effect on all these publications. The move towards the web has put a dent in R*E*P*E*A*T's circulation and precipitated the closure of many established music titles. Yet many fanzines and magazines have embraced this change. The web has caused an explosion in the availability of independent, fanzine material.

Printing and desktop publishing too is getting cheaper and easier. The magazine section of Borders gets more cluttered each day, with magazines catering to ever more specialist tastes. Fanzine makers are making the most of the physical, sensual aspect of holding something beautifully made, with cut-out stencil layers (Amelia), white ink on white paper (Perfect) or hand-stitched covers.

People remain excited about the old-fashioned combination of paper and words. With ever more student-run arts publications like *Prep*, *Contraband*, *Filament*, *Inprint* and upcoming music magazine *The Laundry Room*, it's an exciting time for DIY literature in our little cobbled town. So put down your textbooks, they're getting in the way of your education.



Anna Af-Hallstrom

Links

- www.repeatfanzine.co.uk
- www.emapfanzineawards.co.uk
- www.meat-mag.com
- come.to/robots
- planbmag.com



NEWS King

Queen snubs wedding: "I'm washing my heir."

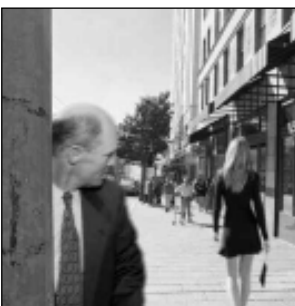
Photo King



Ruthless Labour campaign tells it like it is.



British soldiers sent down for harmless surfing prank.



Man waits for woman to pass before finishing urination.



Delegates wonder why Bush keeps swivelling around when they're talking.



Haemophilic "sick" of brother's thoughtless pin jokes.



Alfred Hands

The old-fashioned Queen proved herself even more fuddy-duddy this week, by snubbing her eldest Prince, Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales. "I don't give a royal fuck," crooned the wrinkled hag. "If he wants to marry Camilla, that's his prerogative, but don't expect me to be at the wedding... I won't be at the wedding."

Royal analytical expert, Albert Bevan: "She won't be at the wedding."

And she won't. When probed further to reveal why she was doing this, the wily Queen teased, "What? I'm not doing anything. I'm liter-



Their playful staring match lasted twenty-eight minutes.

ally not doing anything. What? What? When asked who she would like to be King, she demanded, "Dead or alive? 'Cos if dead, probably Jesus. Alive... so difficult... I just don't... Jimmy Nails! Definitely Jimmy Nails! Is it Nails or Nail?

Either way," she sniggered on her way out, "I wouldn't mind hammering him in."

The issue sparks passions on either side of the issue:

"This is huge. HUGE. It's never happened before: wake up! IT'S HUGE; ABSOLUTELY HUGE. Can't you hear me? Are you BLIND!" Mike from Reading.

"She's bang out of line. Completely off the radar. I'm really upset about this. Who the bastard is she? Jesus. She looks like a jacket potato wrapped in satin." Chelsea, London.

"Look, the Prince may or may not be Prince now, but one day he'll be King. Most people have no idea what that means. Most people have no idea what anything means. When you're King, all you



Camilla counts how many times she's gonna "kick Queen's ass".

survey is yours. That would be amazing..." Frank, France.

And what does News King decree? Well, when passion takes hold in the breast of a noble king, when a fair damsel wears his favour, there is but one for them to go: the Guildhall, for a legitimate marriage ceremony.

Globe King

- Bush trips on Europe.

Religion King

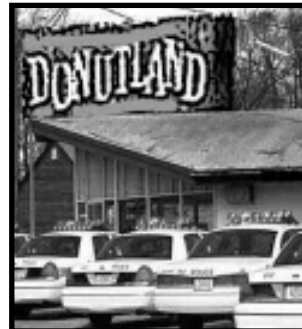
- Senile Pope condemns gay abortion.

Parish King

- Electricians get their wives crossed.

Met. King

- "There's snow in Cambridge". Big fucking deal.



Lowest crime in Donutland since '2 for 1' gorge-fest.

G8 declares war on "every-f**kin-body"



Jeremy Herd

In an alarming statement, Tony Blair, President of the G8 summit, declared, "the mother of all wars" against "any country dumb enough to screw us around".

The G8 summit, instituted in 1975 to discuss world trade, has no mandate to declare war. "Yeah, this is a first.



Tarrantino advises G8.

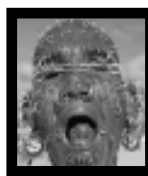
What's your point? Nobody invaded Britain before the Nazis. I'm shooting from the hip, I'm blue-skying it, and there are bombs in that sky and they're falling, they're

falling on YOU!" he pointed emphatically to the horizon. "If Iran wants the nuke, she'll get it - all over her face."

The UK Prime Minister is confident that the G8's economic supremacy will prove insurmountable. "What are they gonna do? Pelt us with pennies? Launch missiles of camel shit? Penetrate our armoured tanks with rebellious passion? We can buy things. We will buy things. We must buy things, and we have. Eat my silver bullets - you'll die of famine anyway..."



King Comment



Melanie Forbes

Where is Britain?

Please government, action. Honest, appreciative family men and women - that's what we want. That's what Britain wants. Instead, this week for the ninth time the government rolls out another worn-out old muslim cleric. Who are these no-brainers in Number 10? We didn't ask for this. If it was an attempt to impress us, which I suspect it wasn't, then it failed dismally. If it wasn't, then it's highly likely to backfire. One thing's for sure: It's

all deeply embarrassing. And look what happens when we remember. We travel back in time to a shining day. When Labour were elected in 1997 it all looked so good. Promises were high, and Tony assured us of a kooky 'Donald' bib for baby Jake. Now look at the broken mess. He's lost the wonderful country, where is it, where are the trees? Rags grow on Camelot, and the youth-Rage is a distinct and increasingly ill-defined problem.

Here's a question for the apologists: T. S. Eliot once wrote off 'The Waste Land'. If we're not careful, that's just where we seem to be arriving. And? Well, if you must know, as a woman myself, I would welcome a better world. So gently I go in hope.

King Current



Jimmy Lips

REVEALED: Those celebrity details the celebs don't want you to know, in full...

Celebrities - for years they have been the force to be reckoned with on the high street scene, so it seems. Not any more, according to a new report from the Animal charity 'FrogWatch', which reports on animal paraphernalia from upwards of 20 times.

"The celebs would frequently do nothing at all" they said. On other occasions, celebrities

were reported to have used normal stuff just like the rest, one even using a fork at a restaurant where he had stopped in for a food meal.

The biggest charmer was American, Tiger Woods, who clocked up a gargantuan 50 hits on the U.S. based website, StarMichael.Com. Fans on the site said they had seen films of celebrities, many using television sets to tune in from their own homes.

So, will the findings continue? "There's a good chance that nothing will be done," says Jake. "But who knows? There's a lot of watching to be done in the next 20 or 30 semesters. Come back in a year's time and ask me then." One thing's for sure - I'm involved.

Letter King

Dear Varsity,

I am writing to respond to quips about Cruz Beckham's feminine name. Being a boy called Hermione was difficult at first too, especially as I enjoyed wearing my hair long. But soon enough, the bullies just backed off - I guess there's only so much phlegm kids can hack up!

After a few years, I got over it and now I run a hair salon and dance in the evenings.

Best,

Hermione Edward Raingold

VARSITY

CAMBRIDGE
by **EYE.COM**

/ g u i d e	// s t a g e			/ m u s i c			/ t h e r e s t		
FRIDAY 25	19:00	Corpus Christi Playroom	Killing Alex Titus Andronicus The Countess The Glass Menagerie and Two Short Plays Progress Risk Everything Wasteland	CLARE	Dynamo d'n'b Toni Haddle Vs Martin Fry & ADC Boat race Bop Boogienight Full Moon Party Funk Star	With Doc Scott & Mc Flux Pop 70s and 80s music Dance and Chart Quality funk & break beat	EVENT	17.00	Unlocking the Uighers, talk by Christian Tyler, author of The Taming of Xinjiang @Lecture Theatre, Trinity College Cambridge University Jewish Society @ The Student Centre, Thompsons Lane The Rules of Attraction @ Caius
	19:30	School of Pythagoras		CORN EX					
	19:30	St Chads Octagon		UNION					
	19:30	Fitz Auditorium		LIFE					
	19:45	ADC Footlights		QUEENS					
	21:30	Corpus Christi Playroom		FEZ					
	21:30	ADC					FILM		
SATURDAY 26	19:00	Corpus Christi Playroom	Killing Alex Killing Alex Titus Andronicus The Countess The Glass Menagerie and Two Short Plays Progress Risk Everything Wasteland	LIFE	The Big Party Dot Cotton Eternal	Dance, 60's and club classics Pop Soulful American House	EVENT	17.00	Talk by Brian Griffin @ Caius Bateman Auditorium Mozart's Requiem Mass by candlelight @ The Great Hall, Homerton College Battle of the Algiers @ McCrum Theatre, Corpus Christi College
	19:30	Corpus Christi Playroom		JUNCTION					
	19:30	School of Pythagoras		FEZ					
	19:30	St Chads Octagon							
	19:30	Fitz Auditorium							
	19:45	ADC Footlights							
	21:30	Corpus Christi Playroom					FILM	20:00	
	21:30	ADC							
SUNDAY 27				LIFE	The Sunday Roast Room for XPosure Goldie Lookin Chain	Suporting CU Hockey Club Open mic for local talent Hip hop, Urban and Rap	CLASSICAL	00.00	The Triumphs Of Oriana @ Fitz's College ET @ Ummey Theatre, Robinson College The Cabinet of Dr.Caligari @ Trinity Wimbeldon @ St.John's College
				FEZ					
				CORN EX					
MONDAY28				JUNCTION	Flamenco Classes Live is Life Fat Poppadaddys	Takes you to the heart of Seville International student night Funky and soulful sounds	CLASSICAL	19.30	David Crighton Concert 2005 @ West Road Concert Hall Clare Chapel. Phil Nash The Cabinet of Dr.Caligari @ Trinity
				LIFE					
				FEZ					
TUESDAY 1	19:00	Corpus Christi Playrom	Oh, What a Lovely War! Orpheus In The Underworld Hamlet Royal Hunt of the Sun The Street of Crocodiles Peace When Decan Died Smoker	LIFE	Unique Top Banana Ebonics Dynamo d'n'b	CUSU's lesbigay night CUSU ents flagship night Mix of hip hop, dancehall, reggae With Hospital's Logistics and Commix playing	AEROBICS	18:00	Kick Bo @ Christ's College
	19:30	Arts Theatre		BALLARE					
	19:30	Fitz Hall, Queen's		FEZ					
	19:45	ADC		PONANA					
	20:00	Christ's New Court							
	21:00	School of Pythagoras							
	21:30								
	22:00	ADC							
WEDNESDAY 2	19:00	Corpus Christi Playrom	Oh, What a Lovely War! Orpheus In The Underworld Hamlet Royal Hunt of the Sun A Thousand Words Kafka's Dick The Street of Crocodiles Peace When Decan Died The Morning after Optimism Lunch	BALLARE	Rumboogie Mi Casa Tu Casa	Godfather of Cambridge nights International student night	EVENT	20.00	Rev, Stephen Sizer: Christian Zionists @ Culanu Jenny Clark, Lucy Goddard and ensemble: Pergolesi Stabat Mater @ Jesus College
	19:30	Arts Theatre		FEZ					
	19:30	Fitz Hall, Queen's							
	19:45	ADC							
	19:45	Robinson College							
	20:00	Bateman Auditorium							
	20:00	Christ's New Court							
	21:00	School of Pythagoras							
	21:30								
	22:45	Fitz Hall, Queens'							
	23:00	ADC							
THURSDAY 3	19:00	Corpus Christi Playrom	Oh, What a Lovely War! Orpheus In The Underworld Hamlet Royal Hunt of the Sun A Thousand Words Kafka's Dick The Street of Crocodiles Peace When Decan Died The Morning after Optimism Lunch	COCO	Urbanite Wild Style Lady Penelopes	CUSU's night of hip hop & rnb Award winning night of hip hop RnB and hip hop			
	19:30	Arts Theatre		FEZ					
	19:30	Fitz Hall, Queen's		LIFE					
	19:45	ADC							
	19:45	Robinson College							
	20:00	Bateman Auditorium							
	20:00	Christ's New Court							
	21:00	School of Pythagoras							
	21:30								
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	23:00	ADC							

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What's eating the Developed World?

Is your jeans size all in the genes ...

Jamil Bacha

Few people are not aware of the medical and political anxiety about the obesity epidemic sweeping the developed world. One in four adults in the UK is now obese, quadruple the figure of 25 years ago. Our easy access to, and low prices of, sugar- and fat-rich food, combined with increasingly sedentary lifestyles has created an "obesogenic" environment, which has raised both our average waistlines and our GPs' blood pressures.

The increase in the number of people classed as "morbidly obese" (with a body-mass index, or BMI, of more than 40 kg m⁻²) has been particularly startling. This suggests that the obesity epidemic is not simply larger dinners and less exercise. Something else is at work that makes people overreact to our fast fed, car happy world. Over the last decade, scientists have been closely examining our genes, trying to identify which ones affect weight, and how they work. This has led to some promising, and sometimes surprising, findings.

One of the most dramatic stories is that of the gene for a protein called leptin, an appetite suppressant which is part of the normal appetite control system in humans. The leptin gene was first located in obese mice, and this led

scientists to examine the human version more closely. They found rare mutations in people that affected appetite control and left them prone to severe obesity. When some of these patients were injected with leptin to replace that which their bodies couldn't make, they lost staggering amounts of weight and reported lower appetites.

Another gene that can cause extreme obesity if mutated is called MCR4. This gene produces a signalling molecule involved in processing messages from the appetite and metabolism-regulating parts of the brain. Defects in this gene, though more common, still only account for 1-6% of morbidly obese cases.

In addition to mutations in specific genes, at least 20 syndromes caused by other genetic changes include obesity as a major component. The most common of these is Prader-Willi syndrome, which occurs in 1 in 25,000 births. It is caused by a deletion of a chunk of chromosome 15 that undergoes a process called imprinting.

Only one chromosome in this chromosome pair is switched 'on' leaving either the maternal or paternal copy functional in our cells. In the case of Prader-Willi syndrome, it is the paternal form that is switched on, and if it happens to contain the distinctive deletion, the disease is triggered.

Prader-Willi patients can never stop eating. They cannot feel the normal brain signals that tell them they are full, and left unsupervised would literally eat themselves to death. Which gene in the deleted block of DNA is responsible for this phenomenon is still not clear, but once discovered may lend vital clues as to the cause of overeating in obese individuals.

But what of the rest of us? Despite the sometimes dramatic effects of mutations in genes responsible for severe "disease" obesity, these are too rare to account for most cases, and it is clear that many more genetic factors remain to be discovered. Large scale genetic studies are now attempting to "scan" our genomes for new 'obesity' genes.

So far at least 13 have been identified. Understanding the genes involved and how they work will enable us to design more effective therapies. Scientists have already engineered an experimental mouse virus containing the leptin gene, which, when injected into obese mice caused weight loss with no apparent side effects.

It is also important to remember that even though genes are important to weight control, environment plays a crucial role in how they manifest themselves in our jeans sizes. One recent study showed that people who don't get enough sleep are more



Zoe Smeaton

Enough to put you off? Not for some.

likely to be obese. Those who sleep for only 5 hours per night had 15% lower leptin levels than those who get more sleep. Not only did they have larger appetites, but they tended to eat more sweet and starchy food, a possible cause of exam term cravings and weight gain.

Diet is also important regardless of the genes we carry, even in

many cases of "single-gene" obesity described here.

Experiments with MCR4-deficient rats have shown, for example, that despite their mutation they do not overeat when fed a normal diet, but start to overeat drastically when fed a diet rich in fat! This may well apply in humans as well, because relatives of MCR4-deficient obese

patients were very likely to be obese themselves, suggesting that the mutation is more likely to exert its effects when combined with poor diets.

So despite the promise of genetics in developing new treatments for this condition, the solution for most people is still the same as it has always been: calories in must equal calories out.

... Or could it be psychological?

Dhara Thakerer

We all know that eating disorders exist and we probably even know a bit about them; but most of us think we won't really be affected by them. However with the EDA (Eating Disorders Association) currently estimating that there are around 90,000 people in the UK receiving treatment for eating disorders (with many more remaining undiagnosed) the problem seems worse than we might expect.

There does appear to be a biological root to many eating disorder cases: evidence for a genetic factor came from an international study led by Dr Andrew Bergan, and published in Nature's Molecular Psychiatry two years ago. The researchers compared chromosomes of sufferers in families with a history of eating disorders, with those of non-suffering individuals.

They discovered that small variations on two genes of chromosome 1 had significant statistical associations with the likelihood of developing anorexia. Like many other diseases then, eating disorders appear to be linked to genetics.

Whilst some people may be predisposed to suffering from eating disorders, scientists also recognise social factors as playing a role for many patients, and it seems that ultimately a complex interaction between psychological

and biological factors is to blame.

Different eating disorders seem to be associated with slightly varied psychological profiles. Anorexics compulsively restrict the amounts they eat and drink, and often exercise excessively to burn off calories.

Physically, the apparent weakness of the body's 'drive to eat' in overriding the emotional desire to remain thin, is explained by the observation that the endorphins released in response to the stress of inadequate food intake and loss of body weight become addictive, outweighing the demand for food.

Despite the watchful eye of tutors, DoS's and friends, we can be adept at hiding our problems

Bulimics' behaviour is characterised by episodes of binge-eating during which they experience a loss of control, followed by a period of calmness. This calmness is often followed by self-loathing though, leading to extreme methods of weight control such as vomiting, fasting, and excessive use of laxatives and diuretics.

Despite these differences though, many eating disorder sufferers say their behaviour is triggered by similar factors. Food

is often intertwined with emotion – young women often confess to eating excessive amounts of chocolate as 'comfort food' – but to sufferers food often becomes the only way to cope with painful feelings or situations. Some say their behaviour towards food gives them a feeling of control in their chaotic, and often stressful, lives.

For students, perhaps more worryingly than statistics, is this association of eating disorders with stress. A landmark study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry, involving more than 1,000 female twins, used standardized tests and interviews to evaluate links between perfectionist traits and psychological problems. Researchers found that a perfectionist streak seems to be a key risk factor in a person's likelihood of developing an eating disorder.

Being in Cambridge, it is easy to understand how people can become stressed and sometimes feel a lack of control over their lives. Despite the watchful eye of tutors, DoS's and friends, we can be adept at hiding our problems here if we so choose, and many students may be suffering unbeknown even to their friends.

If you think either you or someone else has an issue with food, please contact the Eating Disorders Association helpline: 0845 634 1414 or look at <http://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/eating.html>.

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Clockwise from top right: Cast-Off fliers, Cast-Off hit the streets, Cambridge knitter Amy Fox

pick of the week



Music: The Chalets
The Portland Arms, Fri 25, 20.00
 Named after the place they met at All Tomorrow's Parties, The Chalets have been described as an infectiously enthusiastic mix of Le Tigre and the B52's. They promise to 'coat the speakers with glittery brain fuzz.'



Theatre: Progress
ADC Theatre, Fri 25, Sat 26 19.45
 Last chance to see the surreal Footlights Spring Revue, written by widely acclaimed Cambridge comedy regulars Joe Thomas and Raph Shirley



Talk: Simon Kelner
St. Catharine's College, Mon 28, 8pm
 The current editor of newspaper of the year, the *Independent*, will be delivering a talk to the Shirley Society about the changing face of print journalism.



Talk: Quentin Blake
Cambridge Union, Tue March 1, 20.00
 The celebrated illustrator, and Honorary Fellow of Downing College will be talking about his life and work, and his new children's book, about the tragic death of his son.

Girl's stuff just isn't cool. Swaggering testosterone-rock still dominates the 'credible' corner of the airwaves, 'chick-flicks' are universally sniggered at while a cartoon pastiche like *Kill Bill* or a pseudo-deep-but-actually-meaningless boy-film like *Donnie Darko* is hailed as a modern masterpiece despite the fact that its message seems to be that if you're moody and weird chicks will dig you. Don't get me started on *Lord of the Rings*. It's an old lament, but still a true one, even setting aside issues that are actually important, like women's jobs being worse paid and less respected than men's.

The parts of women's culture promoted in the media are the parts that most reinforce the idea that a women should aspire to be a beautiful object: make up, shopping, sex. It seems that the choice we're faced with is this: be shallow, *Bridget Jones*-watching, nail-painting shopaholics, or be more like men. Don't get me wrong: I like Led Zeppelin and violence as much as the next person, and there's nothing about any kind of activity that makes it necessarily more suitable for either gender. The point is that any sports, arts and pastimes associated in the past with women (either marketed to them as a demographic, or created predominantly by them) have always been sniggered at, while knowledge of the offside rule or the name of Tortoise's drummer carries some kind of weird kudos.

Which is why this knitting revival, spearheaded by London 'guerrilla knitting group' Cast-Off is so welcome. It sidesteps table-banging feminism with a witty celebration of a long-sidelined art-form, and manages to incorporate anti-consumerism, gender politics, and a challenge to accepted behaviour in public spaces into the making of stripy mittens

Knit Happens

'Guerrilla' knitting has arrived in Cambridge. **Jessica Holland's** hooked

or...um, a cable-knit penis (find the pattern at www.castoff.info). Cast-Off's activities have been well-publicised: they have flash-mob-style knitting sessions on a Circle Line tube carriage; at ice rinks, folk festivals, Parisian street corners and political protests, where they made banners that say things like 'Drop Stitches not Bombs'. They were thrown out of the Hilton well before The Others started their malarkeying about.

Sometimes knitters need to be tough

But it can be hard not to get lost in the layers of irony involved. Are Cast-Off mocking the arbitrariness of cool, or making a genuine protest that female-led art forms deserve more recognition (with an implied dissatisfaction of 'post-feminist' complacency) or none of the above? The group's website says it simply 'aims to promote the art of knitting as a healthy, contemporary and creative pastime', so perhaps all the 'revolutionary' tags are just media spin. But if you get into the craft, there's more than just fashion or feminist subversion to its appeal.

There's something meditative about slowing your thoughts down to the rate of one stitch at a time that's an antidote to years of guilt-inducing immediacy and convenience, drinking takeaway coffee from Styrofoam cups and swearing at traffic lights. In addition to this, the 'Stitch'n'Bitch' sessions that have sprung up around America and now England bring a community element to the craft: with disparate

groups of people exchanging tips and gossip. Behind this phenomenon is Debbie Stoller, editor of feminist magazine *Bust* and author of *Stitch'n'Bitch* which includes patterns for Wonderwoman bikinis, skull-and-crossbones wristbands and Joey Ramone dolls.

And, relatively recently, the phenomenon has arrived in Cambridge. I tracked down Rosie Sykes, a PhD student who, inspired by Stoller, set up a local knitting group that meets in places like the Eagle, the Grad Café, and the Botanical Gardens. The group has been steadily increasing in size, and people have started travelling from neighbouring cities to be a part of it.

She told me how she started knitting at school in secret because she didn't want to look like a 'boring goody-goody', but since coming out of the closet she's won awards for designing original patterns."Sometimes knitters need to be tough," she says. 'It's the only hobby that's got me hate mail ('F***ing bunch of pussy knitters') when Slipknot's website crashed and their angry fans ended up at *SlipKnot*, a knitting journal, which I'd just taken over editing."

And this is the recurring jibe that filters down to women's culture on so many different levels: 'goody goody', 'pussy', or just plain boring; and this is why knitters have got militant. To find out more, come down to the next knit-together on Saturday 26th Feb in the Grad Café on Mill Lane. Beginners welcome, revolutionary ideology optional.



Amelia: Wrapped scarf from Oxfam, tights worn as top from Marks and Spencer; Amanda: Futuristic underwear designed by Emily Norris and Meg Charnley (Fashion Show 2005 preview); Mia: Leotard from Dancia (London), gold jacket from Annie's (Islington)

When words don't come easily

Writing hasn't always been second nature for Whitbread Prize winner Nicholas Mosley, as he explains to **Simon Calder**

Last year, Robert Macfarlane wrote a review for the Times Literary Supplement in which he hailed Nicholas Mosley "one of the most important British novelists of the past half-century". Mosley and Macfarlane are both prestigious literary figures: the former was invited to judge the Booker Prize in 1990 "on the coat-tails" of the novel *Hopeful Monsters* and Macfarlane actually did judge the Prize last year. When Rob travelled up to London to visit Nicholas earlier this month, a third – albeit slightly less prestigious – figure was present to witness and record their meeting: arriving on Rob's coat-tails as it were (or he on mine, since another commitment was holding him up on the other side of London), I found myself approaching the front door of one of Britain's most important contemporary novelists, temporarily missing my own literary trump card. A mere undergraduate – writing my Part II dissertation on Mosley under

"If life is like farce or tragedy, we should make it so that it is not"

Rob's watchful eye – I timidly rang on Lord Ravensdale's (Sir Nicholas Mosley's) doorbell, and was ushered into his house by a woman named Verity.

I had come across Verity beforehand, through the medium of the twentieth chapter of a story called *Efforts at Truth*. This is an autobiographical story – written by and about Mosley – within which Verity simply "turns up" at the right time to rescue the protagonist from a period of stasis in his life. "Verity and I" – Mosley narrates in the final chapter of the story – "live in a big new house" (so this is her, and this is it, I thought as Verity took my jacket): but "there is no end to a story until the protagonists are dead." Being led by Verity and her two Pyrenees puppies through the endless labyrinth of rooms that this "big new house" comprised of, I had the sense of becoming implicated in a story that had clearly not ended at the point at which *Efforts at Truth* was suspended. Following Verity into Mosley's study, I found an eighty-two year-old Nicholas, reclined on a bed so as to give a recently broken leg a rest, yet still very much alive and committed to developing his stories: this was his afternoon off from writing a work of literature about his experiences in – and the concept of – war; he was in the process, it turned out, of overseeing the publication of what he thinks will be his final novel. By now Verity had shown me to a chair and was disappearing to get some of her – one of the most important novelists of the last fifty years was telling me – marvellous fruit-cake.

Mosley provides an ideal intro-

duction to his life and works in his own 'Foreword' to *Efforts at Truth*: "My novels have sometimes seemed unfashionable in that they have suggested patterns, however ungraspable, beyond helplessness and despair". In the Whitbread Prize-winning novel *Hopeful Monsters*, Franz's despair – on the eve of World War II – that Europe cannot help but absurdly play out that great hundred-act play which Nietzsche predicted for it is assuaged by Eleanor's ability to convert the material he effectively feeds her into a message that is hopeful. "We are actors anyway" she says, and when Franz remarks "We may just die of the absurdity", again she responds – "Oh we die anyway. What use might we make of the absurdity." Franz is slowly, throughout the course of the novel, converted: putting his hands on Eleanor's shoulders, he says "You make me believe this!"

Just as Nicholas was effectively rescued by Verity, so his fictional characters continually rescue each other. His fictional works of the past few decades convey a hopeful vision of a world in which presentations of an older generation's continual 'battling and jockeying for position' are tempered by the sense that an increasingly self-conscious younger generation may be working symbiotically (a favourite word of Mosley's) to allow new and ever more positive narrative developments. Mosley told Rob and I that there had once been a time when the only stories he knew or cared about were tragedies and farces; "but I don't think life is..." – he stopped, before correcting himself – "I don't want life to be like this. If life is like farce or tragedy, we should make it so that it is not." Mosley is suggesting that we should actively work with and "make" something of – rather than passively suffering from – our absurdities.

Nicholas Mosley has not always been so hopeful however: his first two novels, *Spaces of the Dark* and *A Garden of Trees* – written on returning from the Second World War – were precisely about the hopelessness of life, war and love: everything seemed "impossible" he reflected on this period, smiling nostalgically: "I kept on using that word – impossible." When Rob asked him why it was he had abandoned writing novels for a significant portion of his life, Mosley went on to explain how it indeed then seemed "impossible" to reconcile a life that might be said to be "good" with a life that might be considered inclusive and immersed enough in particularities to yield the sorts of experience that a novelist inevitably needs to draw on: "to be a novelist" reasoned Mosley in *Efforts at Truth*, "one had to observe the multifariousness of experience rather than to be committed to one view of it." Moreover, it seemed to Mosley that the traditional form of the novel itself was

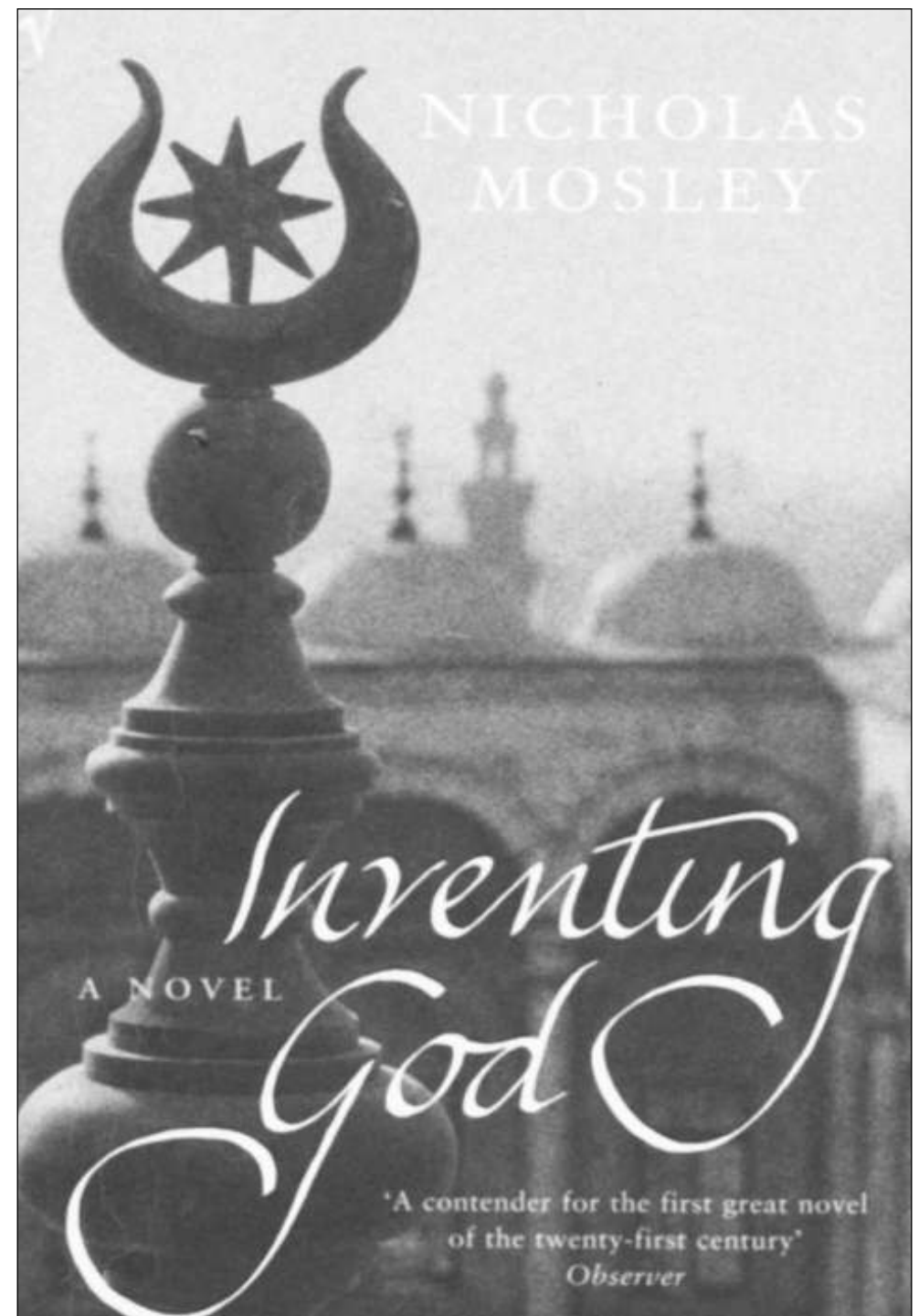
irreconcilably constrained by the nature of language: "language seemed structured to describe bombardments, attacks, sacrifices, self-immolations" – life, that is, as seen by somebody like Franz. Language had little to do, thought Mosley, "with calmness, stillness, comprehension, with awareness of the whole" – all of the things that someone more hopeful – like Eleanor – might want to convey. In relation to such theorising about the connection between language's conventional uses and humanity's violent jockeying for power, it is interesting to reflect on the presentation in *Efforts at Truth* of Mosley's relationship with his father, Oswald Mosley, who was the leader – in the 1930s – of the British Union of Fascists.

Critiquing a series of "increasingly bombastic" letters written between himself and his father in the fifties, Mosley exclaims "What a style!": "I suppose" – he admits – "we were

"My novels have seemed unfashionable in that they have suggested patterns beyond helplessness and despair"

both showing off". This presenting of oneself to be all-of-a-piece being, from Oswald's perspective, language's primary function, it is easy to understand how Nicholas once lost his faith in the positive power of the written word. Oswald's styles of life and writing accentuate how such contorted conceptions of the ends of language inevitably end up contorting one's conceptions of the nature and the ends of life: 'with regard to how human life worked or could work his policies seemed to have less and less to do with reality' analyses Mosley; indeed, Oswald was working with the supposition "that humans could be arranged and re-arranged like words." Perhaps it takes being in close proximity to such extreme cases to fully appreciate the strength of this propensity to use language to manipulate rather than to try to get at the truth of things. Perhaps also, it was partly his father's aversion to his profession as a novelist – ("novels were a waste of what might be a talent for polemic and rhetoric") – that intimated to Nicholas that any hope of discovering some positive pattern behind humanity's bombardments and abuses of power might have to do with returning to writing them: "it suddenly seemed not just possible but imperative" he described, "that I should write another novel."

"I had stopped writing novels" wrote Mosley, "because of the sound of my voice declaring, expostulating." In the course of *Efforts at Truth*, he had also



Inventing God, the most recently published of Mosley's novels; the next will be his last, he says

learned – however – "that, if you watch, listen, you do not stay the same: you can challenge, question the sound of your own voice." That it was on these grounds that Mosley returned to novel-writing is crucial and accentuates what is – in his later novels – so important about his project. Entirely opposed to the use of language as a merely manipulative tool, Mosley returned with a new-found hope that the form of the novel might be able to express something important about the human propensity or indeed even allow for ethical reorientation. Mosley no longer sees a conflict between the form of the novel and that of the well-lived life, an attention to particularity and acute responsiveness to present happenings being crucial in both. *Efforts at Truth* accentuates this: it is the story of one man's efforts to convert his experiences as a person and a novelist into forms that might uncover some truths about his or the general human predicament that could generally be learnt from. If he appears to be

more redeemed at the end of his own stories, this is precisely because his respect for particularity – nourished by the novel's form – and his commitment to authentically writing about what has already happened have encouraged the growth of such faculties as might allow the present to be written quite differently.

The most inspiring thing

"I stopped writing novels because of the sound of my voice declaring, expostulating"

about Nicholas Mosley's story is this sense that one is never quite certain in which direction its protagonist might be about to turn: I personally emerged from six hours worth of immersion in this story, only to end up – twenty minutes later – shaking hands with Phill Jupitus whilst we watched Gang of Four's reunion gig. I'd missed most of the concert because – just as might

indeed have happened in one of Mosley's novels – Verity had interrupted and radically altered the course of our meeting as I was about to set off. The issue of emotional intelligence had come up, the very temporal and emotional detachment that Rob and I had critiqued in Mosley's works had become the topic of conversation and – before I could stop myself – I had recommended a book by Martha Nussbaum, whose writings on ethics and aesthetics had informed our criticisms of his fiction. Compared with the dynamic reorientations that were going on in Nicholas Mosley's 'big new house' I decided that even the Gang of Four would be comparatively plain. Nicholas Mosley's final novel *Look at the Dark*, released on April 9th, is bound to be, like everything else that Mosley has written before, different from anything else that Mosley has written before. Who knows – by the time his work on war and peace is released, he might have converted to Nussbaum.

NEW IN 2005

#6 Mystery Jets

Think colanders, biscuit tins, hubcaps and hairstyles sticking up in more directions than Bowie's barnet in *Labyrinth*, and what comes to mind? No, not your student kitchen after a night out, but London-based four-piece Mystery Jets. Consider that they live and record on Eel Pie Island, in the middle of the Thames (and home to one of the most bizarre gigs it has been my bemused privilege to squeeze into), respect that the band's guitarist is the singer's dad. Talking Heads and Dexy's might have sounded like this if they'd read more children's fiction. Previous offerings 'You Can't Fool Me Dennis' and 'Lizzie's Lion' (about a friend with motor neurone disease and a girl who had a lion that came alive, respectively) are enhanced in puzzlement-value by new single 'Zoo Time'. It's about...goodness knows what. Give it a listen, spot the kitchen utensils, and answers on a postcard.

Mary Bowers
www.mysteryjets.com

Scaling the Alpine heights

Nine Black Alps
APU Bar – 17 Feb
Review by Mike Savage

As soon as this four-piece rock band from Manchester formed, they attracted huge interest. Soon after playing a few gigs around the city, the band was recording an album in L.A. with Rob Schnapf, the man who produced the work of their idol Elliott Smith; having it mixed by the man behind Mars Volta in New York; and playing to thrilled crowds in Japan. NME have already described them as, "nothing short of incredible." This rapid ascent surprised the band members, as drummer James Galley told me: "We never had any idea it was going to happen. None of us had any grand schemes to get a record deal." I had heard of the band through people who were not necessarily rock fans, but rather hardened independent music fans.

This hinted that NBA had more to them than just bar chords, distortion and volume. Indeed, lead singer and guitarist, Sam Forrest described how the band had enjoyed an impressive musical education: Cat Power, Lou Barlow and Elliott Smith were the real inspirations for them, rather than seemingly more obvious ones, such as the

Pixies and Nirvana. Such connections had left an impression on the band's song-writing. "I spent a lot of time learning how to finger pick," Sam explained, "so you end up using weird chords a lot."

The more we talked about their independent music connections, the more Sam wanted to indicate that, ultimately, they were a rock band. "Tonight you'll see that a lot of the chords are bar chords, just because they are just funny and loud," he told me. I asked where the rock direction came from. "It's just

enjoyable and less pressurised. It's like going back to a school band, when the best thing about it was the volume," Sam explained. Indeed, as if to underline the point, the band opened with two proper rock tracks, including the angular, 'Not Everyone', with its infectious sliding guitar riff.

Yet it was their third track, 'Cosmopolitan' which truly demonstrated the band's potential. Starting with a quirky, off-beat guitar riff reminiscent of Smith's 'Needle in the Hay', the track seemed like the true voice

of NBA. Every part of the track is a carefully crafted unit, full of interesting progressions. Lyrics like, "we'll kill our time, I'll be dead by sunrise," are most similar to those found on Elliott Smith's self titled album, or Will Oldham's, "I see a darkness." The rock guitar is more akin to Modest Mouse than the Libertines.

The new single *Shot Down* again displayed a real ability to mould rock with pensive guitar work. The pace of that track was perfect, as shown by the enthusiastic crowd response. A new

track, 'I'm Satisfied' even showed a post-rock influence, with its reverb drenched bass, instinctively reminiscent of Sigur Ros.

This plethora of interesting influences gives their musician-ship a real edge which is clearly lacking from the genre today. Yet, where some tracks demonstrated this, there were also too many in which the band's desire to recapture that enthusiasm of the loud, school rock outfit, led to a bias towards noise and a sacrifice of the more musically absorbing aspects. It is precisely their thoughtfulness in song-writing in combination with their unapologetic desire to rock that explains why the band have been seized upon in such a way.

When I asked NBA how far they thought they would go, they were understandably reticent. Guitarist, David, did not see the band progressing to the heights predicted by NME. But if they manage to retain their obvious enthusiasm, whilst bringing their thoughtful and novel guitar writing to the fore, NBA could indeed be the tonic that the rock world is crying out for. Watch this space. If you want to decide for yourself, there is another chance to see Nine Black Alps when they support the Kaiser Chiefs at the Junction, on 19th of April.

www.nineblackalps.com



Nine Black Alps: Would someone please tell them Trucker caps are like, so last year.

Bands go to war

Battle of the Bands
Clare Cellars - 19 Feb
Review by Mary Bowers

Take a little home-grown punk, add some pop and math-rock, throw in a bit of Jewish/World underlain with hip-hop, squeeze them into an underground venue under the banner of altruistic intent and what do you get? Not a fusion of MOBO and NME compered by Bob Geldof, but the 2005 SCA Battle of the Bands.

Clare Cellars was heaving with throngs of devoted college groupies, g'n't-swilling cool kids and Ball scouts, but this was more than a mere trial of rock'n'roll might. Though originality was not always the watchword, there was the odd smattering of innovation.

Among oddly monikered acts such as Jon Picked Our Name appeared some impressively polished acts: Crackademic, a Pembroke six-piece originally formed for a college production of 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' pleased the crowd with an impressive cover from the show, sung by a frontman in a trench-coat looking not unlike that of Jake 'Scissor Sisters' Shears.

Rock'n'roll warfare it may not have been (the closest anyone came to militancy seemed to be Selwyn's bandana-clad JPON crooning a cover of Muse's 'Newborn' enthusiastically, but there was enough anticipation to

make the night enjoyable.

The crowd witnessed some impressive shows of musician-ship, including the virtuoso blues guitar of inter-college five-piece Dave's Cousin's Band. Appearing onstage to a rapturous 'DCB! DCB!' they outstripped emo three-piece Little Alien, whose Cambridge via California vocals were accompanied by adolescent bedroom lyrics: 'Last night I had a dream, 10,000 aliens came/and took society away'

Emo and mathmo alike were blown away by Emunah, whose blend of 'world and Jewish music', fused with hip-hop and

dirty bass, won over the crowd and judges. Though it may have been unfair competition in retrospect, the Cellars were only too pleased to continue grinding the night away to the kicking violin and djembe-infused beats of Emunah's encore.

www.emunahmusic.com

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www.cambridgesca.org.uk



Emunah's Daniel Silverstein gets eclectic at Clare Cellars



The Arcade Fire
Funeral

After 2004 saw them barely able to move for Stateside critical frothage, Montreal's The Arcade Fire have finally deemed us Limeys ready to receive their debut masterpiece. Online sycophancy and a band name better-suited to emo-creeps crying about girls in horn-rimmed specs aside, *Funeral* is one of the outstanding releases of the decade so far. Much is made of the three band relations' deaths during the writing and recording of the album; their influence on the ever-present themes of mourning, family and reflection – exemplified on 'In The Backseat' and 'Neighborhood #1' – is indisputably powerful. Yet the crux of *Funeral*'s force lies in the momentous passion seeping from its every bar, whose mesmerising universality renders any recommendation more developed than 'just incredible' seem like unnecessary over-analysis.

Jon Swaine

Funeral is released on February 28th through Rough Trade



The Mars Volta
Frances the Mute

On their second album these former members of At The Drive In achieve what they never quite managed in their previous incarnation, that being to commit their live intensity and vibrance to record. This is mainmen Cedric Bixler and Omar Rodriguez's self-avowed 'prog' album and with final song 'Cassandra Gemini' clocking in at over twenty minutes in length that label certainly has a basis in reality. Yet this is an album that avoids the pitfalls of customary progressive indulgence through sheer inventiveness, Rodriguez building up complex arrangements then breaking them down as on 'L'Via L'Viaquez' to the bare latin groove that propels *Frances The Mute* into transcendent arse-shaking territory. This is an inspired and inspiring achievement.

Krzysztof Honowski

Frances the Mute is released on February 28th through Island



The Kills
No Wow

I'm not entirely sure where the Kills fit in the big portrait of rock. They make dancey-rocky music which is neither danceable nor something to headbang to. It's like a minimalist post-rock record – surely a contradiction in terms? I could see some of the songs being mixed over something as the vocals are pretty strong even though the lyrics are nothing particularly special. They pull off all the right moves with seemingly no substance, and despite my view that the vocals seem strong, they don't seem especially suited to the music. The growling guitars really make me want someone gravelly like Mark Lanegan on vocals. If you like the singles it's more of the same and you'll probably like it, but this is basically Yeah Yeah Yeahs album filler and not worth the time.

Sam Blatherwick

No Wow is released on February 28th through Domino

Busting out of the coop

Rooster

Junction – 20 Feb
Review by Andy Hodges

The music industry and its participants have a - perhaps slightly obsessive - fascination with categorisation. Sub-genre after sub-genre is constructed (or discovered), often solely in the name of fashion or simple novelty value. However, the separation between certain musical boundaries has traditionally seemed quite firmly marked out.

That is until recently, when the distinction between teen-pop and credible rock has been seriously called into question by a wave of new bands, namely the Busted-McFly generation, of which Rooster are most definitely a part.

Arriving at the venue, the shrill screams of excited teenyboppers preparing to hold up their felt-tipped poster declarations of love certainly prevailed. However, the crowd was actually comprised of a more heterogeneous mix of fans than one might expect at a standard pop gig, comprising both young and old.

Musically, Rooster's influences seem more in the vein of Cream-era Eric Clapton and the Rolling Stones than Boyzone or Take That. On categorising the bands sound, drummer David Neale remarked "I wouldn't like to pigeonhole us," although he

admits the band have been compared to "quite a lot of bands we wouldn't have thought of, from Westlife to Velvet Revolver."

Admittedly, their sound is far more polished than that of the aforementioned influences, and the image they portray does suggest a degree of squeaky-clean, boy band charm. The crunch with these so-called 'nu-pop'

bands surely lies in their live - as opposed to possibly studio-enhanced - performance. Thanks to each of the band members' several years of experience on the live circuit, Rooster manage to impress in this respect; indeed David goes as far as to suggest that playing live "is what we're all about."

Highlights of the gig included

a cover of the Cream classic 'Sunshine Of Your Love', upbeat pop-rock tune 'Joyride' and debut single 'Come Get Some'. Recent top-10 single 'Staring At The Sun' also pleased the young and lively crowd.

The group were undoubtedly at their best while unleashing their faster, high-energy tunes rather than the frequently bland, more down-tempo songs that threatened to steal the night's momentum. Vocalist Nick Atkinson exerts a fiery stage presence, though admittedly much of his style - and to an extent appearance - is borrowed from Mick Jagger, obviously quite a band idol. Impressively, whilst maintaining a lively set throughout, the whole group seemed relaxed as they delivered their hits to an expectant audience.

How one takes bands such as Rooster clearly depends on the preconceptions you choose to bring to your adopted critical stance. Musically, they are derivative, and inevitably fail to reach the more original heights scaled by many of their cited influences in throughout the 1960s and 70s.

However, if your benchmark of comparison is more one-dimensional, late-nineties pop, plummeting to the depths of myriad *Pop Idol* rejects reciting hollow ballads and overproduced covers, Rooster are actually relatively sophisticated, tal-

ented and down-to-earth in the style of their delivery.

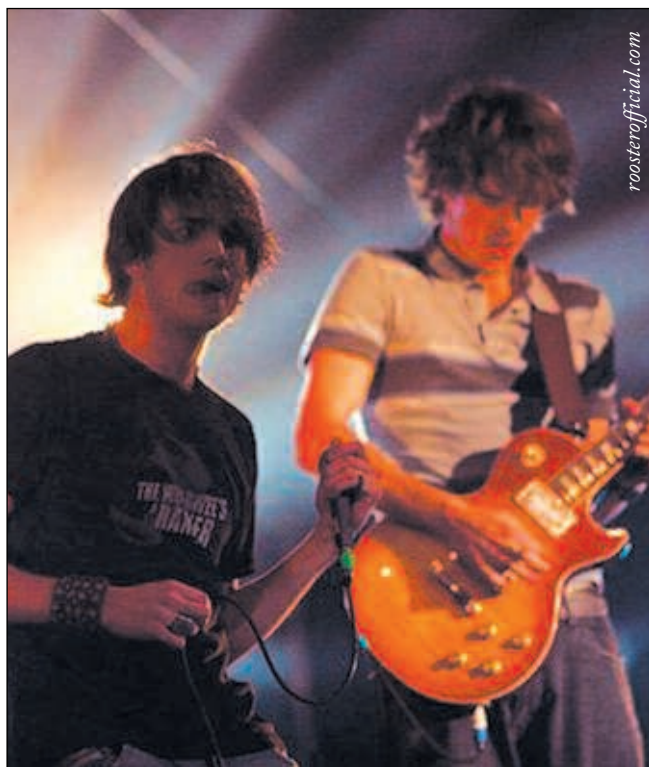
Clearly, in their interest for bands like this, fans are buying into an image as much as a sound. The hordes of - largely female - teenage fans make this statement most clearly, screaming whenever any band member (or technician, for that matter) wanders onstage unsuspectingly.

However, essentially what really matters the most at a gig like this is that the crowd leave happy, and although Rooster's set was relatively short, at a little over three-quarters of an hour in length, the punters gleefully participated with the band's vivacious onstage antics.

Dave summed up the Rooster mentality in the following remarks: "I think people should just take us how they see us." Rather than sitting around, idly arguing about what categories such as pop and rock do or do not mean anymore, it is surely more worthwhile to cast aside the preconceptions such labels carry, and enjoy bands for what they are.

Rooster may lack musical depth, but their inoffensive, sharp-rock mentality and reasonably tight live performance makes for a harmless, genuinely fun show that will unleash the secret teeny-bopper in even the most cynical of you, if you are prepared to let it.

www.roosterofficial.com



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APU Academy
£8 door + NUS / £7 adv
www.wegottickets.com

Lemon Jelly
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Cambridge Corn Exchange
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ONLINE

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What to Watch



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Orpheus in the Underworld
 Arts, 1-5 March, 7:30pm

With the biggest cast Cambridge will see this year, it promises to be a glitzy extravaganza.

Progress

ADC, 22 - 26 Feb

Sarah Conneally

The Footlights spring revue is "not to be missed". *Progress*, written by the duo of Cambridge comic geni that is Raph Shirley and Joe Thomas, evoked high hopes for the evening's entertainment. Matt Harvey is strong as the drifting tailor/author, still looking for his niche in the world. The generalisations of the job interview, and beautifully disorientating relationship between the interviewer (Nick Mohammed) and the tea boy (Simon Bird), set the standard for the sublime parodies of human relations. Threesomes appear as

something of a motif in the first half of *Progress*. Shirley and Thomas investigate the boundaries of human relationships, with a bit of gayness and penis action thrown in for good luck.

Tiani Ghosh's performance as the potential sculptor demonstrates that women can 'do' comedy and do it well. Its lighthearted poke at the pretentious patter that can evolve in the course of what we call progress is helped along by the exuberance of her friends.

The main problem of *Progress* is that it is too long; funny, witty, surreal, sublime and naturalistic it may be, but the truth is that the parts of the sketches that are very funny are often lost in the tedium of the intermittent dialogue. The sketches tended to focus on one

character, and subsequently the lines of the supporting characters often suffered. Where Shirley and Thomas do excel is in short, sublime dialogues or monologues as the case may be, based on a ploy of clever writing, good jokes, but ultimately cheap laughs.

Attempting to write two hours of comedy is a brave thing to do. Shirley and Thomas are certainly brave, which is admirable, but sadly brave people don't always make good progress. *Progress* has an exceptionally strong cast, and is at points very well written, but the sketches should have been shorter and the jokes more concise. A friend of mine is fond of saying, 'I'm a big fan of cutting'; in the case of *Progress*, I would have to agree.



Team Footlights: it's a funny old game

Improvisation!

ADC, 22 Feb

Lottie Oram

"Isn't the word 'nut' an abstract noun?" Not a heckle the average comedian is often faced with, but then this is the crazy cut-throat world of improvised comedy. This is a world where hair-brained situations and schemes are thrown together at the whim of the audience and often strung out with nothing more than a few well-placed jokes and a silly hat. Thankfully, the

Iceberg improv team had plenty of both, and some sparkly capes too.

The premise was that, with a little help from our nut/noun obsessed audience, the comedians would improvise four original TV shows with titles provided by the audience, complete with commercial breaks and weather forecasts. Titles were predictably 'zany' and included such smashers as "the Wellingtons of doom" and "the rise of the flying crumble birds". But the comedians did well to make this enforced wackiness work.

Some of the best moments included a man walking into a dating agency looking for a randomly aggressive, incoher-

**selling items
 such as a vibrat-
 ing elephant
 and Bolivia**

ent girlfriend, shopping channel hosts trying to sell such tricky items as a vibrating elephant, Thursday and Bolivia; and, of course, a man who confuses mutagen for bread-crumbs resulting in the forma-

tion of a race of murderous crows. The madness culminates in a fierce battle of words and leeks between an evil wizard and the self proclaimed king of Wales followed by a rousing song summing up the moral message of evening, "eeevil crows, eeevil crows, we don't want none of those".

All in all this was a very witty, silly and fast-paced show. Not every situation worked and the performers' various attempt at portraying foreign accents were quite amusingly dire. But the comedians were a quick-witted and

self-deprecating enough bunch to make the assorted cock-ups all seem rather endearing. For many comedians one of the most terrifying things would be standing up on stage with absolutely no material prepared. You have to be impressed with the people who can make it up on the spot and make it work. The Iceberg team will be performing an Amnesty gig, in their own words "soon", and it's well worth catching up with them, even just to throw in your own nut-based heckle. God bless the Cambridge audience.

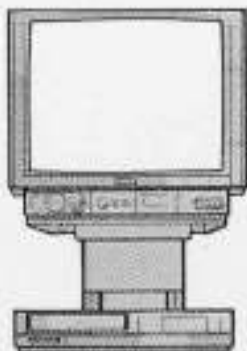
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Titus' Revenge

Sophie Middlemiss enjoys a blood-bath

Titus might be called a "most lamentable Roman tragedy," but this production feels more like the "fearful slumber" of a nightmare (to quote the eponymous hero). Fixated by flesh, the play climaxes with the infamous cannibalistic "pie scene." One gratuitous murder occurs mid-way through the first scene, and the death-count from then on spirals, leaving the stage frequently difficult to navigate with bagged or bare bodies underfoot.

A well-chosen supporting cast are led by some notable performances. Jonathan Beckman as Titus is powerful, rooted and most in command when gleefully machinating revenge. His manifest enjoyment of the comic set-pieces reflects the tendency of the overall direction (at one point, two sons' severed heads are placed before their loving father

in Sainsbury's bags). This directorial decision is expressive less of discomfort with the extremity of the material, though, than of the very proximity of laughter and tears which the play so disarmingly demonstrates. When the devastated Titus contemplates the wreck of his life he can only say: "Ha, ha, ha." Shakespeare insinuates the limitations of language to encompass the extremities of possible human experience.

The point is pressed home by the plight of the maimed Lavinia, whose physical inability to speak the unspeakable - her rape - makes literal her muteness in the first scene where she is bartered by prospective husbands. Alexandra Butt's performance as the abused girl is transfixing; one shoe off, she reels, stumbling and shying away from physical contact.

Kirstin Smith's rendering of the villainous female lead, Tamora, is as memorable, her carnal appetites filtered through an exquisitely manipulative veneer which makes this murderess, complicit in Lavinia's rape, disturbingly likeable. Sam Goodyear as Aaron meanwhile is a revelation; this very 'devil' who dies regretting that he did not commit more sin is unsettlingly sympathetic, particularly during a startling evocation of the largely unexplored bond between father and newborn child.

The engineering of this blood-bath by director Daisy Black is as careful as Shakespeare's controlling and feeding of his audience's progressively growing appetite for horror, building to the unparalleled pie scene. This triumphantly-executed climax fittingly finishes off *Titus*, a production as delectable as a crusty head pasty.



Claude Schneider

The Countess

Octagon, St. Chads,
22 - 26 Feb, 7.30pm
Review by Miranda Stearn

James Topham's *The Countess* (following swiftly on the heels of his *Rostov's House*, which played at the ADC last term) is a blend of wit, magical realism and tragedy all played out in the round in the delightful surroundings of the Octagon. It is also the first production from Close Knit Productions, a new company founded by Topham and Ben Deery. It is, in the greatest part, an interrupted monologue by the eponymous Countess (Cordelia Jenkins), who - having been told precisely when and where she is to die - has escaped from her hospital bed into a nearby forest and narrates the story of her life to a man she happens to meet there (played by Asti Parnell).

The roles played by Jenkins and Parnell are the adhesive that binds the whole play together and fortunately both actors are extremely good. Parnell, as the

mysterious stranger who becomes the audience to the Countess's story, is cajoling, ironic and pity-evoking in turn, all with an understated charm that is the mark of a stage actor brimming with confidence. Playing across from him, Jenkins is magisterial. She strides across the stage with purpose and vigour, weaving the Countess's tales in the air as if she could bring them to life in front of our very eyes merely through the power of voice and gesture. It is a performance that personifies the notion of stage presence - she is on stage from beginning to end and the audience is constantly aware of her control over everything that passes before our eyes.

They are admirably supported by a secondary cast of four that play out numerous characters between them - not because of the usual problem of a play produced in Cambridge, a lack of actors to cast, but to point out parallels and repetitions. Amongst them special note should go to Frank Paul (as Charles/Angelo) who plays bumbling, loving, but utterly hopeless

to great comic effect and Adam Terry (Count/Sergeant/Majezik) who, as the Count, showed flair and self-control during the wedding night sequence!

Topham's writing excels in the weaving of the Countess's story. The dialogue is witty and the action well-paced; the actors dwell on the touching humanity of the characters, the humour in tune with more substantial textual characterisation than was evident in *Rostov's House*.

The first night - especially due to a sudden change in casting - had its jitters, and the staging wasn't as slick as it might have been. Due to cast illness, Julia Clark had stepped into the part of Marianne at four hours' notice and gave a performance that needed no excuses. On the contrary her charm and whimsical self-assurance make it hard to imagine the part played any other way. An exceptional piece of new writing coupled with strong performances which could, once the technical difficulties are overcome, prove something quite special.

Killing Alex

Corpus Playroom, 22nd - 26th Feb, 7.30pm
Review by Anna Marx

Every morning Alex wakes up, has a slice of toast and takes the tube to work. He is never late. In fact, he has become so neatly attuned to the minutiae of daily life that the only thing keeping him from mediocrity is his restless death-wish.

Tom Powell's new writing brings the London Underground to the intimate studio of the playroom, a setting well suited to this experimental drama. Powell takes a common theme, that of suicide and the alienation of the self, and turns it on its head; self-annihilation becomes self-affirmation when Alex realises someone other than himself wishes him dead - will he get there first? The writer deals sensitively with an issue he considers particularly relevant to today's exclusionary and indulgent world and suc-

ceeds in bringing out the comic irony in sparking up one's life by stamping it out.

The play opens with a crowd of workers waiting for the tube to take them to their 9 to 5's; Alex stands closest to the white line, willing himself to jump. Cleverly, the same crowd who are so indifferent to his situation become the obsessive chorus inside his head and the only kindness Alex receives comes from the quiet girl of the office, tenderly played by Rea White. Running beneath all this is a truth Powell forces us to acknowledge: whether we choose our moment of death, burn off a few years by smoking, or just let it slide, we're all heading for a common terminus.

Although the script can be truisitic at times and the characterisation trite, such limitations

are overcome by inventive direction. Scattered throughout the performance are operatic renditions, strobe lighting effects and even a human photocopier: scenes which urge you to smile, despite the subject.

The one directorial catastrophe comes in the form of masking tape. On the one hand it is used creatively to map out Alex's dull flat as if it were a blueprint, rather than a home - reminiscent of the set in Lars von Trier's film *Dogville*. On the other, the constant ripping-off and sticking-on with every scene change means that what is at first inventive becomes cloying and cumbersome, aggravated by the even-more-irritating chanting that accompanies it.

This aside, *Killing Alex* is an ambitious and lively production and well worth an entrance fee. Whether you're looking for soundly-acted drama or inspiration for a novel murder-method, go along and indulge Powell's backlash against the mundane.



Charlotte Bevan

Wasteland

ADC, 23-26 Feb, 11pm
Review by Roz Gater

Much of *Wasteland* is based on T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which is an impossible poem. This is an impossible play, and this is thus an impossible review to write. Unable to obtain the rights to the original poem, the play is only loosely based on the poem itself, and more upon the montage of allusions referenced by Eliot, or cut by Ezra Pound in the poem's radical revision stages prior to publication. *Wasteland* didn't move or excite or amuse me; but the sincerity of the actors, and the detached direction that refused to interpret and instead skilfully created a rhythmical and incredibly synchronized dialogue of highly ambiguous

content, was a refreshing and innovative surprise.

As the house lights dim, two images confront the audience - A laden with books and a pile of stones. The barren sterility of cultural society as Eliot saw it was effectively, if rather unimaginatively, conveyed by the stones, and the table and books indicated the extremely introspective, and psychological, nature of this piece. Everything we witnessed was the product of Eliot's research, mind and imagination. This fostered in its dramatic form a sequence of randomly nightmarish phases, as well as a single male figure playing, presumably, Eliot himself. The play thus seems to aim at re-constructing the process of creation experienced by Eliot, with the chorus of black spirits representative of

all that plagued and inspired him. This play feels alive in a constant state of revision, struggling with a set of languages, the actors skilfully springing from Spanish to Latin; each phase is presented only to fade behind a new one, in a frustrated state of evolutionary stagnation.

Wasteland is a narrative of sounds. There are momentary flashes of stylised discordance, of fragmented imagery and figures physicalised as shapes, outlines, who are rarely real; but these flashes are experienced as merely a background set against a soundtrack of words devoid of meaning, rendered, simply, noise. Random birdcalls and stunning melodious song pierce the air, returning like the bunch of lilacs, as a constant reminder of the intertextuality of the piece. *Wasteland* was conse-

quently thought-provoking, the audience reacting with murmurs of recognition and satisfied self-congratulatory nods as it soon became evident that seemingly random upheavals of place, situation and character, were in fact connected in an impenetrable web of interdependence. However, simultaneously, the combination of noise and image was fatally transitory; *Wasteland* is infinitely forgettable, as the words of this play drift into black nothingness as soon as they are expressed by a chorus of interchangeable, faceless representations of Eliot's unreality.

Impossible to describe, fostering moments of beauty, every Cambridge student should see this play and be challenged to articulate its meaning and its relative success, hopefully with more eloquence than I have.

Laing brings war politics to Pop-Art

Claire Hart reviews the Gerald Laing exhibition at King's

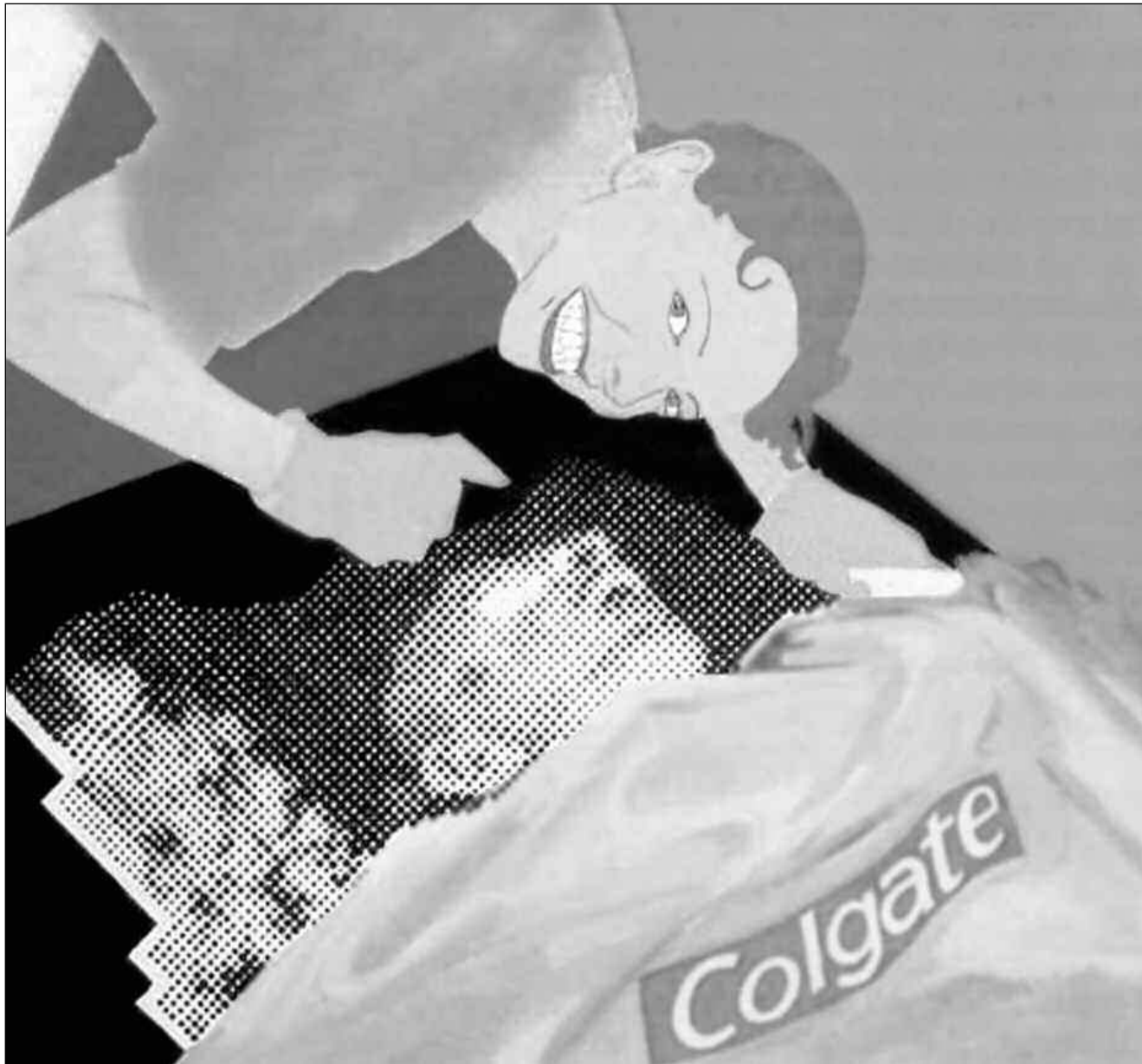
“Merciless” was the highly appropriate choice of words made by a friend of Gerald Laing in response to this collection of ‘War Paintings’. They are the work of a British artist fêted by the in-crowd of the 1960s New York art scene, who retreated to the tranquillity of rural Scotland to dedicate himself to the ‘moral’ creation of public sculpture, before being drawn back to Pop Art in response to outrage he could no longer contain. This outrage is, fairly obviously, directed against the action taken by the U.S. in Iraq; but also, more subtly, against what he described as “the rehearsed banalities” of Pop Art, the genre in which he first made his name, and its practitioners – above all Andy Warhol.

Juxtaposition is the key to the explosive nature of these works. A desperately stark contrast is drawn between an image of a desperately stark contrast is drawn between an image of omnipotence and post-industrial prosperity which America would have us buy into, and the not so pretty, frankly disturbing, reality it has unleashed. Far

from carefully alluding to such a contrast as an artist keen to avoid controversy and revulsion would, Laing has made this contrast fiercely clear and completely tangible. Brightly-coloured, stylised images transplanted straight from 60s Pop Art are overlaid with meticulously drawn reliefs derived from photographs of the suffering caused by the bombing of Baghdad in March 2003 and the torture seen in Abu Ghraib. The effect is a dark satire of American exploitation and arrogance and the posing of questions which have possibly not been raised as frequently as they should have been.

Surely a sophisticated nation which gave birth to rock ‘n’ roll and mass-production, and which believes itself to be following a divinely ordained path would not dehumanise their fellow men simply because they could; they would not take pleasure in devising novel ways to inflict pain; their pilots would not listen to pop music as they made their round-trip to Baghdad for the purposes of “Shock and Awe”, or in other words the indiscriminate destruction of a city where the lights were still on. “Shock and Awe” is the subject of one of the larger canvasses, aptly entitled “Awe Shucks”, in which Laing portrays Baghdad ablaze whilst George Bush, regal, removed, protected, is exalted as some kind of saviour under the gaze of an eye taken from the US dollar bill whose significance doesn’t require a great deal of extrapolation.

It is hard to avoid the artistic comparison with Michael Moore; one which Laing would welcome. When I asked him about the way in which his paintings were a response to American foreign policy, he immediately replied with the question, “Have you seen Fahrenheit 9/11?”, as if the latter had provided a direct source of impetus for them. Laing is expressing on canvass that which Moore seeks to convey through



It is hard not to avoid the artistic comparison with Michael Moore; one which Laing would welcome

the medium of film. Both men share a respect for America itself as a nation, but have experienced bewilderment at how a country

with so much potential to make a positive contribution to the world could get it so wrong. Both are acutely politically attuned and well informed.

Such is the political edge to these ‘War Paintings’ that when Cambridge Labour MP Anne Campbell, who resigned her government position in protest at the decision to go to war, visited the exhibition she left the following message in

the visitor’s book: “V. powerful and impressive work. Made me realise how right I was to oppose it [war in Iraq]”

Laing’s works are also impressive pieces of art in their own right, however inextricably linked they may be to a particular political agenda. One can easily be overwhelmed by their sheer vibrancy and feel the need to drink in as much of it as possible. They

are cleverly composed and skilfully crafted. Possibly their principal virtue, lies in the fact that they were produced not as a result of a large commission, simply for the sake of it or to keep up with the Joneses of the art world, but because a particularly gifted artist felt moved to enter into and put forward his opinion within a debate which has massive implications for the world we live in.

From carcass to canvas: art grows up

Can a painting ever be as sexy as a pickled shark? asks **Johanna Z-Sharp**

Having just heard that Damien Hirst’s 14 foot pickled Tiger Shark was beginning to disintegrate, I felt perversely amused. Sold for £7 million to the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2004, the apparent landmark of ‘Brit Art’ had begun to rot in its formaldehyde-filled container and reportedly required extensive and expensive restoration to piece together its rapidly decomposing flesh.

Was this a final and desperately ironic attempt to inspire shock and awe from its new American audience, or had the animal simply given up on eternal life which, according to

Hirst, is “what art is all about”? It would appear so.

Saatchi’s new and controversial penchant for painting as “the most relevant and vital way

Apparently the British public is no longer impressed with the insipidly scandalising images of drug use, sex and violence

that artists choose to communicate” was confirmed in January with the launch of his new exhibition entitled ‘The Triumph of Painting’.

Apparently the British public is no longer impressed with the insipidly scandalising images of drug use, sex and violence, nor can the ‘shock factor’ of an animal carcass be convincing evidence for artistic talent.

Harking back to the neo-expressionism of the 1950’s, Saatchi’s newest collection is a profoundly impressive display of slightly conventional, yet provokingly vivid pieces. ‘Found objects’, cigarette sculptures and other endearing displays of youth culture have all been replaced by rough pigments and a confident parade of brush manipulation suggesting an altogether more mature approach to art.

The trend appears to not only embrace paint as a primary medium, but it also explores a range of different figurative colour combinations and brush strokes – these tend to be bold and self-assured, although Peter Doig takes a far gentler approach.

In its blatant desertion of past conceptual paradigms, ‘The Triumph of Painting’ ironically serves as an ode to the early 20th century German expressionist movements. I was surprised to see such a Kirchneresque devotion to skilled paint manipulation – particularly in the works by Peter Kippenberger and Jörg Immendorff.

The question we have to ask ourselves is, however: does this new-found love of the ‘art of painting’ inspire the same kind of hype as Tracy Emin’s condom-strewn and heavily

the art gallery served not as a way of displaying art, but making it

stained bed, or David Falcon’s enormous mound of dead rats? I would suggest it does. The imminent media attention which Saatchi’s new exhibition provoked bore such resemblance to that surrounding the YBA movements that

one would almost expect the pieces to be painted in bodily fluids, not the more conformist medium of oil paint. Suddenly we were faced with the notion that we could no longer get excited by blatant scandal, nor could explicit pornography incite us to pose the unanimous question of ‘but is it art?’.

The boundaries of art had been pushed so far that an art gallery served not as a way of displaying art, but making it. Ironically it appears that the very idea of producing art for the sake of art, and not as a route to breeding artistic debate, is controversial enough for our shock-numbered mentality.

Filthy/Gratuitous

Emma Paterson gets intimate with Michael Winterbottom's explicit *9 Songs*, and emerges rather flushed

Celluloid sex has always sold. In 1973, Bertolucci took us into the bedroom with *Last Tango in Paris*. In 1999, in her film *Romance*, Catherine Breillat put the first erect penis on the highbrow screen. And next month, Michael Winterbottom throws together sixty-five minutes of interacting genitalia in the highly anticipated *9 Songs*. But in the thirty years between the former and the latter, a hell of a lot has changed. What was once a sneaky glimpse between the sheets, is now an ardent demand that you slide into them, unzip, and emerge a little flustered. What was once a token nipple flash, is now a protracted (do excuse me) cum shot, and the curious instinct to raise your hand to your face,

and wipe it. What once raised a little colour to the cheeks, now raises a rainbow, and you're not quite sure whether the middle-aged man sitting next to you has come for stimulation of the mind, or something further

Real, graphic, anatomical sex has become the cinematic zeitgeist

south of the border. Real, graphic, anatomical sex has become the cinematic zeitgeist, and to be perfectly honest with you, I can't say I like it.

I came to this little conclusion after the press screening of *9 Songs* a couple of months ago. One shaken viewer stormed out. The rest squirmed. I, personally,

wavered between dozing, scoffing, and reddening like a sexually repressed schoolgirl. The film tells the story of Lisa (Margo Stilley) and Matt (Kieren O'Brien), two twentysomethings living in present day London. Structured around graphic sex scenes, and footage of concerts at the Brixton Academy which they go to together, the film follows their year long relationship and its eventual demise. Plotless, scriptless - the dialogue, the production notes tell us, evolved through improvisation - and indecorous, Michael Winterbottom's *9 Songs* sets itself a strong challenge. Can the film offer us anything more than naturalism and shock value? Can a film with sex in every other scene, offer

us anything more than just sex? Well, not exactly.

There is little denying that the film looks beautiful; all digitally shot, it vacillates masterfully between grainy, sepia rawness, haunting greys and blues, and vast, dazzling whites. Yet that the film and its explicit sex scenes are elegant, tasteful, and all those other empty adjectives used to define the distinction between pornography and art, cannot obscure the fact that this is graphic, gratuitous, and at times grotesque. That the protagonists are a threadlike fashion model and a stubbly, rugged rough diamond, fornicating in a desperately naturalistic London apartment, looking beautiful and tortured, does not bestow upon the film

any more artistic validation than a seedy blue movie. This is sex for the sake of sex, showing everything, but ultimately saying nothing, and that is why, when the narrative suddenly attempts to examine the human condition in between the multiple orgasms, all it engenders is apathy. Should our hearts really break while Matt looks on as Lisa seeks

One shaken viewer stormed out. The rest squirmed.

pleasure from a vibrator instead of him (see above), simply because a Michael Nyman piano score accompanies the scene, or leap into our throats as Matt's voiceover bombards us with clichés such

as '5000 people in a room, and you still feel alone'? Most importantly, must the film enact a hopeless attempt at profundity as Matt compares the glacial emptiness and isolation of the Antarctic to the paradoxical emotional void that can exist between two people having sex?

It's all so very rock 'n' roll. Footage from a Franz Ferdinand concert; Matt and Lisa snorting cocaine before a piano recital; sex without intimacy. This is Michael Winterbottom's candid, edgy portrait of the modern life. Call me prudish and old-fashioned (or frigid, if you want to get offensive), but I like my art with a little more substance, and a little less skin.



image.net

Not so secret pleasures - Margo Stilley gets down and dirty in *9 Songs*

Martin Scorsese - the Varsity jury's out

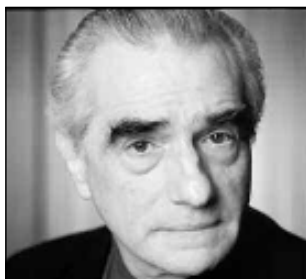


image.net

The work of a Goodfella

Recently, like Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese has favoured glossy Hollywood schmaltz in order to attract the attention of Academy voters - *Gangs of New York* and *The Aviator*, to name but two. It seems that

one of the mould-breaking directors of the 1970s

Scorsese, one of the mould-breaking directors of the 1970s, has turned full circle to take his place amongst the establishment.

Indeed, in this light it is all too easy to forget about the radical pictures that he originally gained fame and notoriety for. Starting with *Mean Streets* in 1973, Scorsese's brutal, unflinching portrayal of violence is electrifying, injected with a healthy and invigorating dose of autobiography. This unrelenting attitude to cinema is perhaps best depicted in *Taxi Driver*. The film, about a deranged Vietnam veteran turned vigilante, is a terrifying depiction of a lost generation, epitomised by the legendary "You talkin' to me?" scene.

And Scorsese has shown that he is capable of so much more than the gangster films that have made his name. Exotic period dramas such as *Kundun* and *The Last Temptation of Christ* have demonstrated his versatility, while more low-key affairs such as *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* show that Scorsese can do character development as well as he can blood and guts.

In all his films, from *The King of Comedy* to *The*

he will always be one of Hollywood's greats

Aviator, Scorsese ruminates on the fear of obscurity which shadows the dream of 'making it big'. As Henry Hill complains at the end of *Goodfellas*, "I'm an average nobody. I get to live the rest of my life like a schnook." But Scorsese need not preoccupy himself with this worry; he will always be one of Hollywood's greats.

Ben Sillis

Load of raging bullshit

Slip into any cinematic conversation, and sooner or later, Scorsese's name is bound to crop up. Invariably this will be accompanied by whelps of overenthusiastic admiration, closely followed by clichéd comments such as 'one of the great twentieth century directors' or 'I can't believe he's never won an Oscar'.

Well, he's up for Best Director, again, this year, but I, for one, don't think he should pick up the award that moviegoers proclaim he's deserved for so long. True, his filmography is longer than most, but then so is every one of his films.

Out of all these, there are only three to which most

his filmography may be longer than most, but then so is every one of his films

people give anything more than passing interest, namely *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, and *Goodfellas*. And there hasn't been anything better from him since 1990. Billy Idol was still topping the charts then. It's a long while ago.

The problem is that once upon a time, violence in a movie was fairly novel, and

violence was what Scorsese had going for him.

Sadly, the novelty's been lost, not only because each new production of his is simply a parody of the last,

Tarantino has usurped his cosy seat in the best director's chair

but also simply because comparative newcomers like Tarantino have usurped his cosy seat in the best director's chair.

So why are so many people besotted with his myriad of overrated creations? As with so many successful entrepreneurs, Scorsese's commercialism has sold him to the media and the cinematic layman, who in return have spread the ignorant, misguided word that he's a great director. And once again, we've all been successfully duped. He may be good, but he's certainly not great. Still, don't believe everything you read: if you really want to, go ahead, watch a Scorsese film. Just remember you've been warned against it.

Alex Dillistone

And the Oscar goes to...

Best Picture

Hell yes: *The Aviator*. If only for the last (infinitely repeated) line.

Hell no: *Sideways*. Well, not exactly 'no' - more like 'not quite'. Hugely enjoyable, but not exactly award worthy.

Best Director

Hell yes: Martin Scorsese for *The Aviator*. Oh, go on.

Hell no: Clint Eastwood for *Million Dollar Baby*, merely as punishment for the cinematic offense that was last year's *Mystic River*.

Best Actor

Hell yes: Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Aviator*. Back on form after a tragic lapse in artistic judgement.

Hell no: Clint Eastwood in *Million Dollar Baby*. Delivering your lines like a husky automaton isn't fooling anyone.

Best Supporting Actor

Hell yes: Clive Owen in *Closer*, for the aquarium scene (comedy of misunderstanding at its optimum) and the post-adul-

tery showdown with Julia Roberts.

Hell no: Thomas Haden Church in *Sideways*. Honestly.

Best Actress

Hell yes: Hilary Swank in *Million Dollar Baby*, always packing a remarkable punch.

Hell no: Kate Winslet in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Competent, inoffensive, but pretty average.

Best Supporting Actress

Hell yes: Cate Blanchett. An imitation, maybe, but a bloody good one.

Hell no: Natalie Portman in *Closer*. She fetishized the wig, looked incredibly attractive draped around a pole, but didn't quite manage to transcend that nauseating quirkiness that has come to define her. Just no.

Best Original Screenplay

Hell yes: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Innovative, unique and challenging.

Hell no: *Vera Drake*. Unfortunately, Vera's tea leaves a distinctly hammy aftertaste.



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Will the 77th Academy Awards see DiCaprio flying high?

Work Hard, Play Even Harder

Tom Burrell rather nervously meets and profiles College football's hard-men

BOTH CURRICULAR and extra-curricular Cambridge activities are normally synonymous with outstanding achievement, excellence, refinement and an overall majesty in behaviour and performance. Perhaps college football is something of an anomaly then, as there are a plethora of participants who might be described as disgraceful, despicable and downright dirty. I have spent the week getting to know these somewhat revered individuals, and have compiled a list that separates the Vinny Joneses from the Griff-Rhys Joneses, and the Paul Gascoignes from the Bamber Gascoignes.

Name: Saravanan 'Chettz' Chettiar

College: Corpus Christi
Position: Right-Back
Dirty Player Credentials: Even "Chettz-nut"s team-mates are scared of him. When Chettz goes in for challenges, the rest of the team gawp, expecting a deep-toned Mortal Kombat-like 'FINISH HIM' command to follow. And Chettz invariably does, damaging more metatarsals than David Beckham sends infidel messages. David Beckham is notorious for contacting his detractors. Chettz has promised to be on-hand if difficulties arise.
Sendings Off: 0.
Would a referee risk it?
Most Despicable Incident: His commitment to the team means he would never allow a long-ball to bounce, but his recklessness meant that on one occasion his goalkeeper's head was mistaken for the ball, in one gigantic hoof up field. Near decapitation was the result.



Mortal Kombat star 'Chettz'

Name: Steve 'Simmo' Simons
College: St. Catz
Position: Striker

Dirty Player Credentials: Just as determination and desire follow Simmo, so too do aggression and violence. His volatile temperament and his acumen for intimidating profanities render him both folkloric and frightening.
Sendings-Off: 2
Most Despicable Incident: After seeing 'red mist', Simmo threw a well-aimed punch at a defender. The referee rather surprisingly offered just a caution. However Simmo was surprised by even this recrimination, and retorted "you don't know what you are f**king doing, you f**king c**t", which then produced the red card.

Name: Thomas Copeland

College: Caius
Position: Right-Back
Dirty Player Credentials: At first sighting you might describe Cope as clumsy; 6ft 3ins, a colossal build, mammoth legs, giant arms - and absolutely no coordination. On revision, you realise he is dirty. Not since John Fashanu has their been a better exponent of the flying elbow, and

bruising is provided without discrimination, be it in the white-hot heat of the 6th Division or a friendly with a girls' team on Parker's Piece.



Cope-ing strategies

Sendings Off: 0.

3 ambulances have been called to matches, although nothing to do him with him he insists. Most Despicable Incident: Cope sees it as his duty to personally deal with every single ball that enters the penalty box. With the ball bouncing safely into the goalkeeper's arms, he charged towards it, swung a telescopic leg at it, missed, flew into the keeper, sending both of them sprawling to the ground. With the inevitability of Greek tragedy, an opposition striker was on hand to slot the ball into the empty net.

Name: Richard 'The Machine' Staff

College: Girton
Position: Centre-Back
Dirty Player Credentials: Quite simply the man is made of metal. And if metal could have mental illnesses, his affliction would be Tourette's, grunting with every tackle, and swearing after every pass.
Sendings Off: 0
Most Despicable Incident: For despicable, read mental,

for mental read metal, as 'The Machine' played a whole 2nd half with a badly broken foot.

Name: Steve Hall

College: Pembroke
Position: Left-Back
Dirty Player Credentials: A veteran in his seventh season at Pembroke, Hall has no regard for his own physical well-being let alone that of younger, faster, more skillful opponents. His disproportionately short-stumpy legs combine well with his long body to make some of the most horrific challenges in the league. Legend has it that Hall's two footed lunge broke one unlucky players shin pads.
Sendings-Off: 2
Most despicable incident: Steve was dismissed from one match for stamping on the head of the opponent's goalkeeper. True to form, Hall showed no remorse and had to be restrained to stop him fighting the rest of their horrified team.



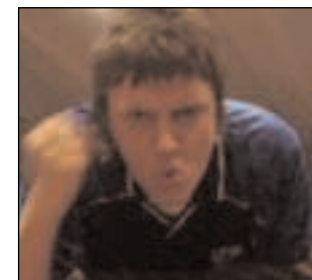
Red-card 'veteran' Steve Hall

Name: Mark Addison
College: Sidney Sussex
Position: Centre-Back
Dirty Player Credentials: Addison has the pre-game ritual of sharpening his studs

before matches, in order to rake down strikers' legs. Those with sensitive hearing should be warned when watching Addison, as opponents are frequently heard shrieking in agony at "The Animal"s predatory tactics on strikers.
Sendings-Off: 0
Most Despicable Incident: Mark played a whole game whilst wanted by the police for stealing shop signs. His on-the-pitch behaviour would hardly provide a character reference for his off-the-field-antics.

Name: Ben Auty

College: Emmanuel
Position: Centre Back
Dirty Player Credentials: It's not always known whether the crowd is shouting 'Ben Auty' or 'Ban Auty'. Despite the former being his name, the latter would be more apt. Ben has no feeling in his right foot, which he likens to 'meat on a stick.' Imagine this swinging unsuspectingly into your calf and you get the idea.
Sendings Off: 0
Most Despicable Incident: The day his team-mates realised that the reason Ben could appear to challenge so aggressively, without regard to his own pain threshold. 'Haven't been able to feel anything for years', he told his compadres, 'don't miss it either'.



Ben, or Ban, Auty?

Name: Anton Bojkov
College: Trinity Hall
Position: Centre-Back
Dirty Player Credentials: Gasps of horror are heard when opponents realise the Beast from Bulgaria is on the field. Anton's dad might own CSKA Sofia, but he has more cult fans at Trinity Hall. Anton cannot run or jump,



Eddie Croven

The Bulgarian Beast

but when his fearful eyes and expression alone can cause defenders to surrender the ball, he probably does not need to. Sendings-Off: 0. He is consistently substituted in order to prevent this outcome. Only after he has decapitated the opponent's best players. Most Despicable Incident: A long-ball characteristically bounces over Anton's head. Anton is characteristically out-paced as the opponent takes the ball on 12 yards from goal. Anton typically scythes his opponent to penalty. The ref points to the spot. Anton is outraged, but you can't change the referee's decision. Anton can. His glare and rage see the referee swap his decision for a free kick outside the box. The opponents are consternate. Anton quickly attends to them too.

Blues back on track Varsity Victory

continued from back page

...was controlled by Cambridge, despite the HAC's 3-5-2 formation giving them an extra man.

However, the HAC stood firm until half time, the Blues unable to score due to a combination of a lack of intensity in their play and some very poor finishing.

The intensity was regained after the interval, though, and an increased determination to push forward and dominate the HAC was rewarded by a second goal. Following a period of sustained Blues pressure, Stephen Bailey scored with a long-range effort, which looped over the helpless goalkeeper's head and into the back of the net.

This second goal placed Cambridge well in command, and the urge to add to the lead was plain to see, with excellent

movement up front combined with good runs forward from the midfield. The strikeforce of Mike Adams and Richard Payne were working well in attack, really keeping the HAC defence occupied and allowing the midfield to further assert their dominance. After an hour, Payne gained the reward he deserved for his efforts, scoring with a first time finish into the bottom right corner of the goal after an astute through ball from Stevie Smith had split the HAC defence.

In the 75th minute, Smith managed to get himself on the score sheet. He made a fool of the HAC defence with an incisive run to the edge of the box, before rounding the keeper and finishing in style. This goal really killed off the game as a contest, and although the Blues continued to press forward, they lacked conviction, know-

ing that the win was secure.

The HAC continued to disappoint, despite this slackening by Cambridge, and failed to control any meaningful possession in opposition territory for the whole of the second half. Consequently, Cambridge were able to see out the remainder of the encounter with relative ease, the home penalty box seeing very little of the action.

More performances like this and the Blues will be looking good for the 121st Varsity match on the 12th of March. Defensively strong and scoring goals freely, the Blues are in good form and will be eagerly anticipating the chance to avenge last year's disappointing defeat. Oxford however will too be prepared, and Cambridge can expect much tougher opponents than the HAC were able to offer.

Devesh Shete

AS IN 2004, the 2005 Table Tennis Varsity match was a complete success for Cambridge. The first team were led to victory by Yucheng Zhang, who beat the Oxford no. 1 in straight sets. Zhang has been in outstanding form this season, and looked to have no weakness, as he found answers to both Oxford attacking aggression and defiant defence play.

Zhang himself emphasised the contribution of promising fresher Devesh Shete at no. 4, who also beat his opponents to claim two points for the light blues. The experienced Fred Pauquay and Glyn Eggar were also in great touch and provided excellent support, ensuring that Cambridge eventually won 7-3.

The women's first team completely dominated their counterparts, winning 10-0

and not losing a single set in the entire match. Another new face, Doral Wang, who has been an inspiration to the team over the entire season, played at her usual excellent best to beat her Oxford counterparts in straight sets. Aparna Srinivasan and Arti Krishna also showed excellent composure to win their respective games easily. The great depth of the women's team was shown as Shellyanne Wilson, playing at number 4, hit some very powerful winners to dispose off her opponents, the Oxford numbers 3 and 4.

Earlier, the men's second team had been the trend setter for the day, as they cruised to a 9-1 victory over their opponents, setting the tone for the women and the men's first teams to dominate. Captain Stephen Jones led from the front as he triumphed over his

dark blue counterparts in straight sets. Andy Sims was as cool as always, defending with great agility to beat his two attacking rivals. His long-range defensive slicing of the ball was very entertaining to watch for the spectators, especially as the two Oxford opponents were very good attacking players. Johannes Wieland and Stephen Huisman provided excellent support, ensuring a 9-1 victory for Cambridge.

Overall, it was an excellent day of sport, and the spectators were truly entertained to some top class table tennis and the sight of Cambridge thrashing Oxford for the second year running. The team were quick to applaud David Atkinson's coaching, and also offered their thanks to Anthony Fox and the committee for helping to organize the event.

Cocky Blues shuttle past Oxford

Jenny Nanalal

THE ARRAY OF pre-Varsity measures taken by the Cambridge badminton squad that ranged from individual drinking bans to intense fitness sessions accompanied by banghra music clearly paid off on Saturday as both the mens and women's 1st and 2nd teams stormed to a decisive victory.

The 2nd teams set the tone for the day with the women, captained by Jenny Nanalal, playing some riveting matches to the delight of a vociferous crowd. The comfortable winning margin of 13-2 does not do justice to the determined singles performance of Lei Wang, the tantalisingly drawn out doubles, courtesy of Jenny Nanalal and Helen Wear and the assured performances of newcomers Amanda Sears and Fiona Lymburn.

The men's second team started off their campaign on a much more even scoreline with the teams level at 3-3 after the singles games. The growing crowds lining the Leys school balcony were treated to a passionate display of singles by both Owen Ingram and Chin Lik Tan, whose attempts to return even the most impossible shots occasionally left them crash-



The Men's Blues doubles pair win comfortably; all four Cambridge teams came away victorious

ing to the ground or sliding across court. This dedication was carried through into the doubles matches and eventually paid off as the men wore down their opposition and cruised to an 11-4 victory. The 2nd team did their captain James 'Shamu' Shearman proud and he was able to show them his gratitude later in pint sized measures at the post-Varsity dinner.

Thus, it was to a backdrop of victory that the first teams began their Varsity campaigns

that afternoon. The women showed true dominance from the start and were barely challenged as they charged through game after game.

The 15-0 scoreline aptly sums up their destruction of the dark blue side and captain Gemma Edgar should be pleased by such an overwhelming display of sporting superiority.

The men's 1st team provided a thrilling end to a highly successful day. Veteran players such as John Booth and ex-

captain Rob Pace gave solid singles performances and newcomer Sam Lees, who broke yet another racquet on only his third point, played confidently to put the light blues in a commanding early position.

Later exciting doubles games, which saw Cambridge's 3rd pair Mandeep Baveja Singh and Jan Moellers outclass the Oxford 1st pair, consolidated this lead.

However, the match of the tournament, and fellow badminton aficionados might go

as far as to say, the match of the season, was the truly epic battle between Cambridge's Lars Boyde and former England number 4 seed Tony Gibson. Boyde appeared undeterred by his opponent's international credentials and after losing the first set 13-15 fought agonisingly hard to win the second 17-14. The decisive third set was eventually taken by Boyde in a stirring performance that will remain in the memories of all who were fortunate enough to witness it.

This may sound like unwarranted hyperbole, but I assure you it is not. The sheer excitement of this match is difficult to convey, but it is clear that the combination of speed, agility and breathtaking racquet skills drew in a crowd that the sport of badminton is unfortunately unused to.

This sizeable, cheering mass was kept mesmerised for nearly an hour and a half by the virtuosity displayed by the two men. However, please spare a thought for the unlucky souls who were forced to compete on adjoining courts; they began to take suspiciously long between points in order to catch a glimpse of the spectacle. It was outstanding – and the same could be said of the overall Cambridge performance in the 2005 badminton Varsity games.

Sport In Brief

FENCING
The Men's Blues defeated a strong Imperial College team 125-115 on Wednesday. Imperial, who were captained by the current British No.2, won the sabre but the Blues fought back to win the epee and foil. The defending champions, Cambridge, will now face Manchester in the quarterfinals at Fenners next week and will be hoping to extend this season's unbeaten record.

FOOTBALL
In Cuppers, Trinity beat Pembroke 3-0 to advance to the semi finals in the bottom half of the draw, where they will face the winners of Christs' and Homerton. In the top half of the draw, Fitz will play the winners of Emma vs Jesus.

RUGBY FIVES
For only the second time in twelve years, Cambridge defeated Oxford in the Varsity match by one of the smallest margins ever recorded. Entering the doubles with a ten point deficit, the team clawed back into the game and scraped through.

CUR1350
The Sport Show is returning to cur1350 today at 4pm. See www.cur1350.co.uk for more details. It's not to be missed.

Men's College Rugby League Division I

Place	Team	Pl	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
1	Downing	10	8	0	2	200	115	85	34
2	St. John's	9	8	0	1	380	56	71	33
3	Jesus	10	6	0	4	187	120	67	28
4	Girton	9	4	0	5	113	157	-44	20
5	St. Catharine's	9	2	0	7	85	222	-137	15
6	Trinity Hall	9	0	0	9	58	353	-295	9

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Results: St. John's 83 - 14 Trinity Hall; Downing 24 - 14 St Catharine's

Men's College Football League Division I

Place	Team	Pl	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Fitzwilliam	6	6	0	0	25	5	20	18
2	Trinity	6	5	0	1	14	9	5	15
3	Jesus	7	4	2	1	16	8	8	14
4	St. John's	7	3	1	3	12	9	3	10
5	Churchill	6	3	1	2	8	10	-2	10
6	Darwin	7	2	3	2	12	9	3	9
7	Caius	8	2	2	4	9	17	-8	8
8	St. Catharine's	7	2	1	4	7	13	-6	7
9	Girton	8	2	0	6	12	23	-11	6
10	Downing	8	1	0	7	12	24	-12	3

Results: Girton 6 - 2 Downing; Jesus 2 - 2 Darwin; St. John's 0 - 2 Caius

Hockey sides get ready

Rachel Wheeler

THE 105th VARSITY Hockey Matches between Cambridge and Oxford Universities will return to Southgate Hockey Club on the 1st of March. For each player, with long winter months of training and preparation behind them, it is the result which will determine the success of their entire season.

Last year the honours were shared, with Oxford men and the Cambridge women taking home the silverware. But a year is a long time and the form book and statistics are rarely good indicators for these crunch battles and can be thrown aside. In this one off match with such a long tradition it is the team with the most pride and determination that takes the trophy.

Cambridge Women's Blues have had a mixed season following the departure of many key players at the end of last year. Despite much of the first half of the season spent rebuilding a competitive team, there were outstanding early victories over Exeter University and UWIC in the BUSA league. Claire Frith, a 5th year medical student and Charlie Kendall, have proven an exceptional combination in defence, with the acrobatic assistance of goalie Charmaine Chua. Securing a mid-table position in the East Premier League, the Blues have conceded less goals than every other team, bar league leaders Maidstone. Lethal short corner stikes from Helen Wheeler have saved the Blues on many occasions.

Under the guidance of coach Dave Richardson the Blues are still improving with every match. An increase in the training schedule has produced an extremely well drilled and composed team. Fit and energetic, they appear to have developed a never say die attitude

and are willing to fight for everything. Most players have never been on a Varsity losing side and this is a record they will be determined to maintain. However, in matches against Oxford, they have suffered defeat twice this season and this suggests that they may struggle to maintain their hold on the trophy. It should be an intriguing contest.

A new-look Cambridge University Men's side will be on the look out for revenge after last year's 3-2 loss in the Varsity Match. Those that witnessed last year's encounter will doubtless remember the chances that went begging and the lucky deflections that helped Oxford get their first-half lead. This year, with much of the squad in their last year at Cambridge, it will be their last Varsity Match which should add an extra incentive to beat Oxford.

Although the side has lost a few players from last season, a very good fresher

intake with 4/5 freshers likely to be involved on the day should give an excellent balance of experience and new talent. If the team plays the way they have done in the brighter parts of this season, a victory is easily within their sights.

Half a season of National League hockey has helped improve everything in the Blues' game and it is important to note Oxford's lack of experience at this level. The team has been forced to adopt a more professional attitude towards fitness and training to prepare for the National League and this may well pay dividends come Varsity Day. Although, results have not been as good as last year, the Blues' hockey has undoubtedly been of a higher standard, competing with every other side in National Division 2. This is all the more impressive when considering that the side is the only true university side, consisting entirely of current students in the National League.



The Blues hope to follow the Wanderers, celebrating their Varsity win (above)



Cambridge win Varsity badminton matches

Oxford prove no match for the home side who win all four contests - page 27

Determined Blues gun down HAC

Uni football

CAMBRIDGE 4
HAC 0

Mark Oldham

THE BLUES returned to winning ways after their BUSA disappointments with a fine 4-0 victory over the Honourable Artillery Company as preparation for the upcoming Varsity match at Upton Park. For the opening period of the match, the Blues were on the back foot, with the HAC starting quickly and making their physical presence felt. However, the quality of the football was scrappy and neither side completely settled on the ball.

From the quarter-hour mark, the Blues stepped up a gear and stayed in control for the remainder of the match.

Twenty minutes in, Cambridge took the lead through leading goalscorer Mike Adams. After a rushed clearance by the HAC, the ball was played back in to the danger area where Adams controlled the ball, spun around and lobbed the keeper with an exquisite chip from 20 yards, his 14th goal of the season.

The Blues continued to create chances following the goal, with good play from Alex Mugan and Johnny Hughes down the wings. Indeed, the midfield...

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Light blues see off Oxford 13-3 in Varsity waterpolo victory



Cambridge put Oxford to the sword in this year's waterpolo Varsity match, running out comfortable 13-3 winners. Given the closeness of recent encounters with the old enemy, the result highlighted the great strides the side have made over the course of this season. President of CUSWPC Richard Folsom said, "I'm delighted to have smashed Oxford at least once before I graduate."

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