

activism

Jess Holland
on reforming
student politics

INCLUDING APU

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interviewed

Salman Rushdie, Guy Ritchie, David Adjaye,
Malcolm Purkey, Gary Younge, Emma
Thompson, Sugababes, David Gower



Varsity

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

ACCESS: THE BLAME GAME

A year before the introduction of top-up fees of up to £3000
who is responsible for the access problem?

State Schools

Blamed by: Senior University
fellows and Independent
Schools. Cambridge
University
Conservative Party

If coherent academic aptitude and
training are the proper criteria for
admissions then why do most
state schools so comprehensively
fail to foster them?

Dr John Lonsdale
Trinity College



The quality of teachers, the
design of the curriculum, the
introduction of AS Levels,
modulisation, all have an
effect

Senior Fellow

Cambridge

Blamed by the Government,
CUSU, State School
Headteachers, Cambridge
University Labour Club,
Cambridge University
Liberal Democrats.

The university
just doesn't
get it

Laura Walsh
CUSU President



There is a massive gap
between Cambridge's public
policy and admissions poli-
cies

Headteacher
Lancashire

Oxbridge schemes
only target
extremes

Carol Horseman
Hatlepool Sixth Form
College

Government

Local MP David Howarth,
CUSU, Senior University fig-
ures, the political opposition
and the Institute of
Continuing Education.

The heart of the problem
lies in the relentless dumb-
ing down and impoverish-
ment of the the state sector

Chris Padfield
Institution of Continuing Education

I suggest that you
begin by asking
Mr Blair

Dr Peter Linehan
Dean of St John's

I am very disapointed by
the figures. Many state
school pupils are worried
about the percieved costs
of coming here

Prof Patrick Bateson
Ex-Provost of King's College



Refusal to shoulder the blame for the serious under representation of state school students appears to have become an institutional norm. Recently published higher education league tables make depressing reading for the Government, but also for the Universities and Schools who have channelled colossal amounts of time, money and energy into reforming the university admissions system. Falling 18.4 per cent behind HESA (*Higher Education Statistics Agency*) benchmarks for state school recruits and dropping from 57.6 per cent to 56.9 per cent in their numbers, Cambridge appears out of sync with a country in which only 7 per cent of students attend independent schools.

That the number of state

school pupils recruited to Cambridge has declined is worrying, but the real worry is that no one seems able to explain why, nor to accept responsibility for this statistic. The root of this problem lies in one of three factors:

■ CAMBRIDGE IS RESPONDING TO GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES WITH NOTHING MORE THAN LIP SERVICE.

■ STATE SCHOOLS ARE NOT ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE FOR THESE INITIATIVES.

■ THESE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES ARE FUNDAMENTALLY INEFFECTIVE.

Jonathan Shepherd, the

General Secretary of the Independent Schools Council said of Oxbridge that "all the evidence is that universities are putting their academic reputations first and recruiting the best candidates." The University defended itself against all charges made by detailing the enormous amount of work carried out by both CUSU and the Admissions Office. Many Cambridge academics explained to *Varsity* that the "abysmal quality" of parts of the state system mean that a greater degree of equality cannot be achieved without drastically lowering academic standards. Professor Bayley argued that "everybody knows the core of the problem lies in the relentless dumbing down and impoverishment of the state

sector... you should be asking how state schools can produce candidates worthy of admission to Cambridge, rather than asking how Cambridge can be forced to modify its high standards," a sentiment concurred with by the headmasters of independent schools St Paul's, Oakham College and Eton

College. Yet Sir Peter Lampl, (a government advisor on widening participation and chairman of the Sutton Trust) is quoted saying that "it looks like a lot of the good work that has been done over the past few years is being reversed." Chris Padfield suggested that it is impossible to express anything

other than bewilderment and frustration at the recent figures, telling *Varsity* "These issues are utterly maddening for all involved."

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MINISTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
Bill Rammell >>page13

Black History Month Feature

You can't have a functioning multi-racial society working from a mono-racial understanding of its past says Gary Younge >>page17

news in brief

Oxford win crocodile boat race
Oxford beat Cambridge in another boat race - this time at a regatta on Lake Zambezi in Africa, to commemorate the 150th discovery of the Victoria Falls by the explorer David Livingston. The start of the race was delayed by a family of hippos who wandered across the course.

What makes a teenager?
Teenagers from Hinchbrook School in Huntingdon have teamed up with scientists from Cambridge University to discover the key to youthful behaviour. It is hoped that the study will shed light on why some teenagers thrive during adolescence whilst others struggle.

Ben and Jerry stop the melt
Ben and Jerry's are planning to open a 'climate change college' aimed at students seeking a career in environmental issues. It is designed to give them the training they will need to become future environmental campaigners, including a trip to the Arctic to study global warming.

Cock crows once for Peterhouse
Peterhouse escaped reprimand this week when an unfair dismissal claim brought by a former employee was rejected at an unemployment tribunal. Bobbie Elsom held a secretarial position at the college between March 1996 and September last year, when she was made redundant. The tribunal said they were 'satisfied that the college had genuinely wanted to retain the services of the claimant'.

Lensfield Road break in
On the night of Friday 23rd thieves attempted to break in to the ground floor bedroom of a Downing student living in college accommodation on Lensfield Road. Student Natasha Close was asleep when the window was forced up at about midnight and her CD player taken. A Downing porter admitted there were security problems with the room.

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CUR 1350

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Departure of controversial King's Provost clouded by rumour

Joe Gosden

Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas, the first female provost of King's College, resigned at the end of last term after a two year tenure marked by controversy and confrontation with both the students and fellows. She announced her decision to leave, following a years sabbatical ending in August 2006, to the King's fellows in a congregation on 15th July 2005.

Her resignation has been surrounded by rumours that she may have been forced out. A King's insider told Varsity that she was "ousted" in a vote by the College's governing body, having fallen from favour with the fellows through not spending enough time in college due to other business commitments. In 2004 the college had taken the unprecedented step of appointing three fellows, Dr Nicky Zeeman, Dr John Dunn and Dr David Good, to "advise and guide" the provost in her work. A senior King's source told Varsity that they had in effect been appointed as 'babysitters' after concerns were raised over Dame Judith's financial management in the wake of the scandal surrounding the sacking of Roger Salmon as Bursar.

In an official statement the King's fellows said "Dame Judith has presided over a time of major change in the College, which has led to the formation of a new and forward-looking management team". They went on to add "all of us at King's wish her success in her future career and are pleased that she plans to retain her links to the college."

Ex-CUSU president Paul Lewis told Varsity that "Dame Judith's time at King's was a classic case of culture clash. She hoped to bring the hard-nosed brutality of the corporate world to a college of equally trenchant lefty liberals. Unsurprisingly, she failed." He added 'I remember a tense conversation with her in which she whispered through gritted teeth: "you stu-

dents are powerless in this college – I hold all the cards'. She overplayed her hand. And now she can go and play poker politics elsewhere."

Her departure leaves behind a wave of controversy, with allegations emerging that in the autumn of 2003 KCSU ran a smear campaign against her to "indoctrinate as many of the first year as possible" into an "anti-Judith position" so that they would then be favourable to the KCSU position on the rent strike that was due to start that Michaelmas. A King's student who sat on the student council told Varsity "certain upper echelons of KCSU...decided that part of this indoctrination would involve an anti-authority-based smearing of the new provost. Therefore from the first week of term anti-Judith and anti-college propaganda were rife."

He went on to say "Following the scandal surrounding the sacking of Roger Salmon, however, I think Judith discovered that she had more vocal, and probably more dangerous, opponents amongst the fellowship itself. Sometime around then the various scandals that may or may not have contributed to her resignation swung themselves into motion".

Ben Harrison, who is the current KCSU coordinator, when told the content of these allegations, responded "the make-up of the exec has changed completely since the last rent strike, and the vast majority of those students involved have left the college altogether. I can, however, refute any claim whatsoever that KCSU has undertaken any such campaigns since I have been coordinator."

Another King's insider, who did not want to be named, told Varsity "whether it is true or not, it happened two years ago and it is ridiculous to suggest that [the smear campaign] had any direct effect on her departure"



Katy Long, ex-KCSU exec member, told Varsity "There was never a KCSU 'whispering' campaign to "indoctrinate" freshers against Judith Mayhew: we all hoped her appointment would usher in a period of improved relations with College. However, within a very short space of her arrival at King's serious failings became apparent, not least her refusal to meet elected student representatives. Mayhew's unpopularity was a consequence of her own misjudged and misguided actions as Provost: there was no need for spin doctoring."

Dame Judith was appointed the first female King's Provost in October 2003 in the hopes that her experience at both Birkbeck College, London, and the City of London Corporation would be able to ease the college's crippling financial deficit of £1.2 million.

Her appointment was controversial, with her record of city-executive attitude and lavish personal expenditure raising concerns from the student body, many of which were recorded in Varsity. Despite the college's efforts to cut back Mayhew was paid £50,000 more than her predecessor, ordered new furniture for the Provost's Lodge, had her personal garden landscaped using college funds and allegedly used up hundreds of thousands of pounds of college funds in her legal battle over sacking former bursar Roger Salmon. This increased expenditure coincided with staff cutbacks and a reduction in the number of post-graduate studentships available.

During some of her disputes with the student union she had been seen as deeply unpopular with King's students and her tenure was marked by controversy, in particular over rising rents and the repainting of the

student bar in more neutral colours. She was accused of having made the college bar, which she referred to as "a den of drinking and smoking", into something more akin to a conference facility. She defended her actions, saying that the previous (socialist) red "could be intimidating to right wing students".

Dame Judith's responsibilities will be taken on by her deputy, Dr Tess Atkins, while a successor is chosen. According to ex-CUSU president Paul Lewis "King's needs a Provost that reflects its historical values, not someone intent on changing them. My money's on Lord Hattersley". At the time of going to press we had received no word from Lord Hattersley on whether he would be interested in running for the position.


www.kings.cam.ac.uk

Radioactive leak stains Cambridge's image

Charlotte Forbes

Cambridge University has been fined £16,000 after being found guilty of disposing up to twice the legal level of radioactive waste at a centre in Addenbokes. The Wolfson Brain Imaging Centre, which claims to be the best equipped centre for acute brain injuries in the world, admitted five charges of malpractice between July and October 2003 in relation to its PET scan procedures (Positron Emission Tomography). The scan requires small amounts of the radioactive substances


Oxygen-15 and Fluorine-18 to be administered to the patient via an injection or through inhalation of the gases. Interaction of the sub-atomic particles is then interpreted by a computer which is able to detect the location of cancerous cells. The technique is also used for research into head injuries, strokes and brain tumours. After the procedure, waste gases are collected in a hood above the patient, which filters into a decay system. It is thought that the leak was caused by a broken seal on one of the decay tanks, which ought to be checked weekly. Although the gases are not particularly harmful to the public as they decay quickly (the danger to

the patient being roughly equivalent to that of an x-ray, two of the charges were brought by the Environment Agency. Martin Harris, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, said: 'Although the environmental impact was not significant, this case raises major concerns about the loss of control of the operation by the University and its failure to comply with a number of authorisations over a long period of time.' In addition to charges faced over disposal of the substances, the University was also found guilty of keeping inadequate records of emissions, and failure to monitor the equipment or procedure


properly. The penalties for these charges amounted to nearly two-thirds of the total fine. Expressing her 'extreme concern' at the breaches of procedure, chairman of the magistrates Mrs Holling also ordered the University to meet costs of £20,000, but acknowledged the benefit the clinic gave to the public. It is one of the few centres outside London to offer such a service. Following the hearing at Ely Magistrates Court, Dr Tim Mead, of the University's Registry, said: 'The University has admitted failing to meet standards agreed with the Environment Agency on a number of counts. At no time

during the six month period in question ... was there any risk whatsoever to human health or to the environment. The fine is disappointing; every pound fined is a pound less to spend on vital medical research. 'I wish to assure the general public that strenuous action has been taken to address any shortcomings. It is our sincere hope that such occurrences will not take place in the future. We welcome the Agency Inspector's recent site report which finds that the new monitoring system appears to be working well.'


The Week In Weather




FRI




SAT




SUN




MON



TUE



WED



THUR

Loopy Professor and the science of cereals

"Cheerios effect" shows us not even breakfast is safe from science

Steve Elliot

The most compelling scientific work to find its way out of Cambridge over the summer is unlikely to attract the attention of GM activists or animal rights campaigners. It won't be interesting nuclear physicists either - that is, unless they are partial to a bowl of cereal. The phenomenon of floating objects 'clumping' together, observed frequently at breakfast time when pieces of cereal in milk form miniature rafts, is known as the "Cheerios effect", and now it has been explained for the first time.

Dominic Vella, a PhD student in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, collaborated with Harvard's Professor L. Mahadevan to produce an explanation of the Cheerios effect, published in September's American Journal of Physics. The authors have combined scientific literature with their "own experience at home, in the kitchen, and in the laborato-

ry" to produce a simple explanation for the effect.

A dense object such as an upturned drawing pin can float if its weight is balanced by the liquid's surface tension, but this puts a dent in the surface, like that made by a ball placed on a

“

THE TECHNOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHEERIOS EFFECT ARE FAR FROM FRIVOLOUS

”

rubber sheet. Other upturned pins can then slide down this dent and join the original one, producing a small cluster. The same goes for pieces of cereal. Also, as the surface of milk curves upwards at the edges of a container (a passing NatSci will no doubt identify this surface as a meniscus), a floating Cheerio near the edge of a cereal bowl will move right up to the edge as

the curvature enables it to float that extra bit higher.

Similar behaviour is shown by bubbles on a surface, with the slight difference that because the bubble's gas is less dense than the liquid, the surface around a bubble bends the other way, creating a small swelling. This means that bubbles will attract other bubbles, but repel a piece of cereal, and vice versa.

Vella and Mahadevan maintain that "the technological implications of the Cheerios effect are far from frivolous", as a possible application is the self-assembly of tiny electronic systems. The explanation can even shed light on water walking insects, and exactly how they move around on a liquid surface.

However, the paper's unusual subject threatens to place this research among such (genuine) scientific efforts as "An Analysis of the Forces Required to Drag Sheep over Various Surfaces", and the inspired "The Effect of Country Music on Suicide."



GU scammed

Lillie Weaver

The troubled Graduate Union has become embroiled in yet more controversy. "European City Guides" [ECG] has threatened to take legal action over a bill of over £2,000 that has been run up, after an advertising 'contract' was signed in 2001 "without realising", by a representative of the Union.

This latest blow comes against a backdrop of ongoing financial troubles, executive bickering, rashes of high level resignations, and as a result, a reluctance to take up positions on the committee. New president Alex Broadbent faces a tough challenge - shoring up the Union's finances and trying to restore confidence in a notoriously troubled institution. As recently as last year, the situation was so serious that there was no graduate representative on the University Council, and they made no appearance at the Freshers' Fair. Soon afterwards, the then president, Ribu Tharakan, departed ignominiously after a vote of no confidence.

In this latest setback the Union has fallen foul of an ongoing 'guide book' scam, which conceals exorbitant advertising fees in a simple request for information. A company, 'European City Guides', currently operating from Valencia, Spain, mail-drops leaflets by the thousand to unsuspecting businesses and organisations. These forms look like genuine requests for information, asking the company or association to supply information about their location and type of business. This is supposed to help



Photo: Michael Derringer

ECG in compiling their "inter-professional guide" to cities across Europe. In actual fact, buried in obscure language, the lengthy small print at the bottom of the form contains a statement binding the organisation concerned to place an advertisement at a cost of £857.00 [approx £580]. It also states that this advertisement will be re-inserted every year for at least 3 years, at additional cost.

The Union became involved in 2001, when a former employee signed and sent back the form, describing the Union as "a student support body" citing as

additional information that they offered "cheap stationery". She did not have the authorisation to sign the document, as she worked in the Union shop. Since then, Premium Recovery AG, a debt recovery agency engaged by ECG, have been bombarding both the Union - and the University finance department - with correspondence threatening to take them to court, unless the sum is paid. Broadbent is adamant that they will not capitulate, despite holding a fairly tenuous legal position. He believes that "the fact they are still after us, and still promising

to sue... indicates strongly that they will not take action." Despite this, he does admit that if legal action were taken, "there is a small risk that it wouldn't go our way, since they could argue that there exists a contract."

Many thousands of businesses have fallen foul of this con, including a number of Cambridge-based firms such as sandwich sellers Peppercorns, Cambridge Wine Merchants and the Cambridge Contemporary Art gallery.

Matthew Boucher from Cambridge Wine Merchants told Varsity how he has also experienced harassment at the hands of ECG, after they initially contacted him in June. "As soon as they sent us an invoice, out of the blue, I called to say we'd never booked an ad and that we wished to cancel it anyway. The account handler said he'd see what he could do. He clearly did not do very much because we have simply received further requests for payment". Boucher has since lodged a complaint with Trading Standards. Their spokesman Kevin McNamara said: "These scams go to considerable length to look legitimate but they are all to the same end, namely to part local businesses from their hard earned money."

The British Advertising Standards Authority has received so many complaints about the ECG that they referred the matter to the European Advertising Standards Alliance. EASA states that the leaflet is "misleading", as 'it is... natural that many recipients thought, in good faith, [they were signing] what ECG had described as a "request" with no obligation to place an order'. The company continues to operate.

Birthday Money

Cambridge is celebrating. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alison Richard explains why it needs a billion for its birthday.

Our university is one of the world's best and in 2009 we will celebrate 800 years of excellence.

But what is it that makes Cambridge great?

I believe it is our collegiate structure, providing our students and our staff with intellectual and social communities; our academics who are amongst the best in the world; and our exceptional students, who are tomorrow's academic, political, business and cultural leaders

We have recently launched the 800th Anniversary Campaign, which for the first time embraces both the Colleges and the University and which aims to raise £1billion by 2012. Our objective: to secure excellence at Cambridge and ensure that we continue to provide the outstanding opportunities that enable individuals who work and study here to make their mark on the world.

That is why the Campaign's investment targets are simple and indicative of our commitment to:

- our students
- our staff
- our freedom to discover
- our collections and architectural heritage

Specifically for our students we aim to raise £300 million. These funds will help us provide

substantial increases in needs-based financial support for undergraduates and fully funded scholarships for graduate students from the UK and abroad. Many Colleges are also focussing on improving accommodation particularly for graduate students and all of us want to see student facilities continuously improve. We hope for example that the Campaign will enable the construction of a new indoor sports complex in West Cambridge.

This is a defining moment for all of us. Higher education faces political and economic challenges and we are facing intense pressures as we seek to maintain our excellence and distinctiveness and to ensure that a Cambridge education is available to the most talented students whatever their background. Our response to these challenges is forthright: we are determined to define the future of Cambridge for ourselves; and we are ambitious.

As the Campaign moves forward there will be many opportunities for today's students to participate and help in Campaign activities both in the Colleges and the University. More information on the campaign can be found on the Campaign web site at www.cam.ac.uk/800campaign

Cambridge in Extremism Row

Amy Goodwin

Cambridge University has been caught up in a row over the presence of extremist groups on UK campuses. It was identified in a report by Professor Anthony Gleeves and Chris Pope of Brunel University as one of thirty-two institutions where extremism has been detected as a growing phenomenon. 'When Students Turn To Terror' was

published this week by the Social Affairs Unit, and whilst its main focus is on the threat posed by Islamist terrorism, universities such as Cambridge have come under fire for effectively ignoring the existence of extremist and terrorist activity by the BNP and the Animal Liberation Front.

The link between universities and terrorism and extremism is

summarised by Professor Gleeves in the statement that 'ideas lie at the heart of higher education...and at the heart of all violent and terrorist political movements from Jihadism to Animal Liberation'. Whilst recognising that 'terror is the antithesis of intellectual activity', the report argues that the core integrative value of free speech makes universities vulnerable to being 'exploited by groups who do not themselves support or uphold the liberal attitudes which produced modern western universities in the first place'.

In the case of Cambridge, Gleeves points out that the leader of the BNP Nick Griffin, who has been convicted several times of the crime of inciting racial hatred, graduated from Downing College. He also alleges that BNP literature has been found at Cambridge. A University spokesman made it clear that the BNP is not a registered society and the Proctors, who are responsible for overseeing discipline and public order, 'have not received any recent reports of unacceptable behaviour relating to the national political party'. Deputy Vice-Chancellor and President of Wolfson College Gordon Johnson has also expressed serious reservations about the accuracy of the report, describing it as a 'hasty appraisal' of 'weak' analysis wherein the narrative is 'decidedly thin'. He argues that the sources used

'don't add up to a compelling argument that higher education is a breeding ground for radical discontent and terrorism'.

The BNP has also reacted strongly against the report, released a statement decrying the prominent place given to the party by the media. It points out that Gleeves recognises the BNP as a 'legitimate political party' and that Griffin has never been accused of terrorism himself. A spokesman also raised the question of whether the SWP and their associate 'scum' qualify as terrorists, given their 'outrageous violence...certainly real "terror" towards Griffin when he was invited to speak in Cambridge in 2000. Dr Phill Edwards claimed Gleeves had 'no right' to discuss the BNP in the same report as the terrorists responsible for the July 7th bombings in London. He told Varsity that Gleeves' recommendation to university authorities that they monitor student BNP activity was no different to asking them to keep an eye on CUCA, the University's Conservative Association. 'We have the same methods and the same aspirations as the Conservatives, we only differ on policy'.

The BNP have, however, made no secret of their hopes of building support amongst the current generation of university students, a threat which the Student Assembly Against Racism has consistently warned

against. Professor Gleeves' report cites examples of the BNP infiltrating student debates to ask controversial questions and monitoring attendees' reactions in order to isolate those who appear to agree with their ideas after the discussion. Although the Far Right has found minimal support for its views within British universities in the past, the YBNP (Young British National Party) claimed in 2004 that it has a presence at 17 universities across the UK and membership had recently increased by 44%. Modern communications such as internet chat rooms and text messaging have made it far easier for the BNP to approach their target supporters. Handing out flyers and leaflets incurs the risk of being spotted by the Special Branch policemen who are stationed at Freshers' Fairs at particularly 'at-risk' universities to monitor groups who might apply inappropriate pressure to students. Although the NUS has a No Platform policy which aims to provide a safe environment for its members by stating that 'racists and fascists should not be provided with an opportunity to speak to an audience at any NUS event', extremist groups have proved able to elude these bans, often by such simple measures as renaming their societies.

The BNP's Dr Edwards, who as the possessor of a first-class honours degree and a PhD is emblematic of the educated

image the BNP is attempting to cultivate, has spoken of the change in climate between his time at university in the 1960s and today. 'In the '60s it was all leftist shenanigans... anti-apartheid and all that crap'. He believes that people are tiring of the current 'cultural censorship' which 'stops people debating whether multiculturalism is a good thing'. Professor Gleeves, on the other hand, whilst stressing that he is an adamant supporter of free speech, warns that universities have become complacent about its possible ramifications and should develop monitoring systems to prevent terrorists using universities as a base for their actions. He states that the British higher education system has become 'deeply ensnared in the extremist-terrorist nexus'.

Professor Gleeves admitted to Varsity that security is automatically tighter at Oxbridge due to the admissions and supervision systems which do not make use of UCAS' Clearing system and later make it harder for students to 'disappear off the radar'. However, he also noted that Gordon Johnson's objections to changing security measures at Cambridge derived partly from cost and bureaucratic impracticability rather than a belief that the current system is totally impermeable. Johnson warns that several of Gleeves' suggestions risk 'destroying trust and the cultural values that are to be defended'.

On Campus

UL Extension

A £6 million extension to Cambridge University Library looks set to be fully operational by this autumn. It will be used to house the university's extensive archives and rare book collections, and will free up 30,000 metres of shelving elsewhere. More fundraising is already under way to facilitate the final phase of the library's development; a further £7 million is needed to build another extension in the gap now visible from Grange Road.

Park and Cycle

The University has this week been presented with a 'Safer Parking Award' for its Park & Cycle initiative. Set up in 2003 and situated off Madingley Road, the Park & Cycle provides secure parking and cycle storage for University staff driving into Cambridge from outlying areas. The system has been commended in the past for improving the health of its users and lowering levels of pollution.

ADC Access

Builders moved in to the ADC again this summer as part of the second phase of the theatre's multi-million pound redevelopment. The latest stage of improvements includes an extended bar and new

lighting and sound rooms. However, perhaps the most important addition is that of a lift, which will allow the ADC to offer disabled access for the first time.

New Court for Selwyn

Selwyn College has celebrated the completion of the first phase of £7.5 million development programme with the opening of a new building. The new building boasts 44 new student rooms and 15 offices and was funded entirely by donations from college alumni and friends. Master of Selwyn Professor Richard Bowring called it a 'significant moment for Selwyn'. He went on to explain that it was 'the first major expansion of the college's buildings since the 1960s'.

PC to Visit College

Community beat manager for the colleges, PC Carole Langton, will visit Magdalene College on Wednesday, 5 October to speak about crime prevention in Cambridge and to mark students' laptops. During the last academic year there were more than 500 crimes reported by students. The talk will take place between 2.30 and 4 pm.

Cross Campus

Notes from a small University

Well known travel writer and former journalist Bill Bryson has been appointed the chancellor of Durham University. Bryson, who fell so in love with Durham so much he offered to let readers take his car to visit, said "I could ask for no greater honour"

Glasgow in need of a fresher up

Glasgow Student Union forgot to tell any of its students that it was putting on any events during Freshers week and by the start of September had only sold 600 tickets, out of an estimated 3000. They were forced to splash out on a massive last-minute publicity campaign with Student Union president David Grant praising the organisers for what "should have been the best Fresher's Week in years"

Leading the way in crime

There were 34 reported robberies at houses owned by Leeds University students last week, resulting in the theft of almost twenty laptops. Three students were threatened at knife-point for their computers before having their wallets emptied. One of the students described having left the front door open as "a bit of a schoolboy error".

Animal Rights Fundamentalists claim Oxford Boathouse Arson Responsibility

Animal rights activists have claimed responsibility for the arson of the Hertford college boathouse in Oxford over the summer, stating that "Oxford University's holdings now hold the contract to build the South Parks (Animal Testing Centre) Lab and must take responsibility as a whole".

No Charges for Girton Six

Six students who were arrested on suspicion of raping a male undergraduate are to face no further action. Those accused, all studying at Girton, had been due to answer bail on September the 20th.

Cambridgeshire police spokesman Neil Franklin confirmed that, "six men arrested on suspicion of rape in connection with an incident at Girton College have had their bail cancelled following discussions with the Crown Prosecution Service."

The university will not run an internal investigation and their press office stressed that as far as both they and the college were concerned the matter was now closed. A spokesperson for the Girton confirmed they 'would be taking no further action'.

The allegations were made in March following an end-of-term event, and despite an ongoing investigation the six returned to sit their exams. The college would not say if the students involved were back in Cambridge this year.

A Girton student who wished to remain anonymous said that although the incident had been 'concerning', the student body were 'hardly affected'. However he did say he hoped the college had since reviewed its security.

Andrew Jeffries, Girton College's Senior Tutor told Varsity "We take the safety, security and welfare of our students extremely seriously and will continue to review and maintain the highest standards."



"I sat near you, scribbling something"

The only known portrait of Ted Hughes by Sylvia Plath is being auctioned on Monday. Ted Hughes later recalled that the portrait was drawn in Cambridge when the recently married couple lived at fifty five Eltisley Avenue. It is expected to fetch £15,000 - £25,000.

Battle of the Bruces

It's strictly serious as top dance coach returns to help regain Varsity title

Rachel **Divall**

Top dance coach Bruce Lait will return to train the University team this year despite suffering injuries in the London bombings of July 7th.

“Six weeks ago I thought I would never be dancing again” said Lait, who dances professionally and performs worldwide. Fortunately for Cambridge he made a full recovery from his injuries and is currently on tour with the Strictly Ballroom Dancing stage show.

Lait will coach in Cambridge three days a week, concentrating on the University's dancesport team. He is confident that they can break Oxford's six-year stranglehold on the Varsity title. “On some occasions I think Cambridge should have won the competition...this year I hope to make all my students more consistent.”

Cambridge's Dancesport team, who compete annual-



ly against Oxford, are part of the Cambridge Dance Club (CDC). In Oxford the dancers take competing very seriously, their coach Bruce Richardson admitting, “we are entirely focused on winning”. The Cambridge team however pride themselves on being more laidback. CDC's Press Officer, Chris Newton, doesn't believe this will hamper their performance: “we can maintain our relaxed attitude and still succeed at competitions”.

Whereas in Oxford competitors can earn a full blue and enjoy external sponsorship, Cambridge's dancers earn only a half and have no external funding. This means they bear much of the financial burden themselves: those competing at university level should expect to pay up to £500 a year for lessons and match costs – and team member Nicola says this is on top of extras like shoes and ‘the all-important fake tan’.

Both teams claim their Bruce will lead them to victory. Bruce Richardson told The Telegraph, “If Cambridge want to win then they should hire me.” Newton rubbished the suggestion, “We'd just like to say sorry, Bruce, but we're not that desperate. We like our Bruce much better!”

CDC has seen a recent boost in popularity, last year boasting 2400 members. Lait says this largely thanks to television shows such as Strictly Come Dancing, Strictly Dance Fever and Strictly Ballroom, which have ensured dancing is no longer seen as ‘old-fashioned and sissy’. Nicola agreed, saying that show this these have helped eradicate dancing's ‘gays and grannies’ image.

Richardson predicts the Varsity competition could become as well-known as the boatrace.

Controversial new stem cell centre in Cambridge

Peter **Morton**

It is hoped that stem-cell specialist Professor Austin Smith, recently ‘poached’ from Edinburgh University, will speed-up Cambridge's research into neurological diseases.

Professor Smith will lead the new Institute for Stem Cell Biology's £16 million programme which scientists hope will lead to major developments in the treatment of diseases such as cancer, Parkinson's disease and Multiple Sclerosis. Cambridge's concentrated

resources are ‘the best opportunity to make real progress and compete globally’, commented Professor Smith, who will work for both institutions until moving to Cambridge permanently next year. However other experts are cautious about the potential of

the science. ‘I view the current wave of optimism about embryonic stem cells with growing suspicion’ warned eminent scientist Lord Robert Winston. Cambridge has also attracted many US-based academics, frustrated by American unwillingness to

fund stem cell research. Professor Roger Pederson left his senior post at the University of California four years ago to join the Cambridge team. He preferred its ‘favourable circumstances and tremendous support’ to the prospect of ‘sitting on his hands’ for years in the US.

The university hopes that the Institute will become a European focus for ‘the next generation of medicine and scientists’. It has promised over £12 million to the Institute and hopes to attract more funding from charitable organisations.

Catz Win by a Whisker

David **Marusza**


St Catharine's College have topped the Tompkins Table, which ranks Cambridge Colleges by Tripos results, for the first time ever. The results of the table were published by the Independent newspaper on August 1. The unofficial table, which is nonetheless eagerly perused by dons and gives an indicator of a college's overall undergraduate academic performance, is calculated by awarding colleges five points for a first, two for a 2:1, two for a 2:2, and one point for a third. The results are then shown as a percentage of the maximum points that could have been scored (i.e. the points awarded if all students in that college had achieved a first). The table was devised by the former Cambridge Maths undergraduate, Peter Tompkins, and has been published in the Independent since 1981.

Besides Catz' vault from seventh to pole position, notable changes were that of Kings, which rose ten places

(from twentieth last year) and Christ's, which fell below the second position it had occupied for the two preceding years, to fourth. Selwyn College fell sharply from eleventh to nineteenth position, but significant falls were also experienced by Newnham, Corpus Christi, and Trinity Hall. Emmanuel College lost the pole position it had occupied for two years, but did not drop far – placing fifth in the league table.

St. Catharine's Senior Tutor, Dr Paul Hartle, claimed to be experiencing ‘immense pleasure and not a little post-impact concussion’ following the result. He said the record crop of 122 firsts represented the ‘finest academic performance’ in the history of the college, and was a testimony to the hard work of academics and examinees alike. The college represents roughly the same student background as the university as a whole, with 43 per cent of intake coming from independent schools and women occupying two fifths of undergraduate places.

1	St Catharine's College
2	Gonville and Caius College
3	Trinity College
4	Christ's College
5	Emmanuel College
6	Pembroke College
7	Jesus College
8	Queens' College
9	Clare College
10	King's College
11	Robinson College
12	St John's College
13	Fitzwilliam College
14	Sidney Sussex College
15	Downing College
16	Corpus Christi College
17	Trinity Hall
18	Churchill College
19	Selwyn College
20	Magdalene College
21	Newnham College
22	Peterhouse College
23	Wolfson College
24	Girton College
25	New Hall
26	Homerton College
27	Lucy Cavendish College
28	St Edmunds College
29	Hughes Hall



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weekdays
DAVID HOWARTH
IN BLACKPOOL

sunday

Blackpool- not my choice for a week beside the sea. The whole place seems set up only for stag nights and hen parties - okay for one night in a lifetime, but not a whole week. My first appointment is a debate on devolution. We have argued for decades for more power at local level. My first speech, as shadow local government minister, is on the future of regional government.

monday

I sign pledges to switch off computers after use and turn off taps when brushing my teeth. The environmental theme continues with a meeting with WWF - we find that our views very much coincide. Later I'm obliged to make an appearance on stage as each of the party's new MPs is paraded before Conference. The showbiz aspects of politics have never appealed to me, and this occasion is no different.

tuesday

A quieter day. Only two speeches. The main Conference puts off a discussion on the future of the Royal Mail. The idea was to raise money for local post offices by turning the Royal Mail into a company partly owned by its shareholders. Employee ownership is a very old Liberal theme. Dinner with the Met Office to discuss climate change

wednesday

My speech on 'neighbourliness and social capital', discussing the dangers of an oppressive, net-curtain-twitching concept of community! I meet with Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats Mark Gettleson and Seth Thevoz. Later, at the end of conference sing-song, Mark and Seth organise a Cambridge and ex-Cambridge choir to give a loud rendition of 'The Liberal March', an old campaign song.

thursday

Charles Kennedy's speech is the sole big event of the day. Media reports of the Conference have questioned his future as leader, but the speech is a robust riposte. Charles is especially strong on Iraq, on civil liberties and on the environment, with a condemnation of Tony Blair for making excuses for George Bush on global warming bringing a roar of approval.

News Reporter

Cambridge was thrown into disarray over the summer after new talking ticket machines were installed in Lion Yard car park, complete with authentic American accents. Customers complained about the 'broad stateside drawl' in which the phrases 'That will be two pounds ninety pence please' and 'Have a nice day' were pronounced. Many of the critics were disappointed American tourists who had been expecting a more traditional English greeting.

The Labour councillor Lewis Herbert was first made aware of the issue when

approached by a visitor who felt this 'little piece of America' was out of place in this 'wonderful historic city. He immediately took action on the issue, concerned that people 'might worry that we have sold off our car parks to the Americans'.

Car Park Manager Steve Simonett replied to the Council saying that the Japanese-made machines had been originally intended for the US market and the vocal software supplied with them reflected this. Lion Yard officials 'made representation to the supplier in

this regard' and were informed that an upgrade to English-accented voices could be effected.

A happy ending was in order as Councillor Herbert told Cambridge citizens the 'great news' that local dialect was to be restored. 'I am not sure what type of English accent we will end up with - estuary English, East Anglian or perhaps even John Arlott, but it has to be better than an American voice synthesised in Japan.'

"American tourists had been expecting a more traditional greeting"

An American Invasion



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Online editor:
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Sub-editors:
Involved in the production and setting of the paper and editing of articles.

Graphics team:
designing the content and layout of the recently re-designed paper and website.

Illustrators:
submitting artwork throughout the paper

College Reps:
an easy way to be come involved in the paper and contribute stories of any nature.

Production assistants:
assisting the business manager and helping with the running of Varsity Publications.

And... Contributors
the writers and artists whose work contributes each issue

If interested, please contact editor@varsity.co.uk for further details of how to apply.

No experience is necessary and Freshers are encouraged to apply.

The Varsity Squash
Friday 14th October
7pm @ Soul Tree
Free Club Entry

incidentally
zoe organ



As my plane descended into a grey holiday destination, I thought I made out some microscopic creatures, wrinkled and multicoloured, shuffling beneath the cloud. They seemed to have their snouts raised into the air. As we got closer I realised they were files of plane-spotters, bright-eyed despite their weighty binoculars. They looked up at the white underside of the plane, as if it was the belly of a great sky-shark. But when we got to our cottage, the view from the living room was of the backs of hundreds of birdwatchers. In the kitchen, which overlooked the bay, enormous charts identified parts of whales and porpoises. This was all voyeurism at its most pure. But wasn't this obsessive classification all a bit Victorian? Hasn't modern psychology yet persuaded us to recognise the repressed pied wagtail in every gull? The latent porpoise in every whale? Should we not celebrate the androgynous mixture of the avian and the marine in every aeroplane, rather than reducing it to a

number, based on such chauvinistic factors as engine size, girth or cockpit? But perhaps these 'spotters' are not latent racists, repressed by modern society. Perhaps we should let them take a closer look. From recent events it seems we are premature in our desire to overlook ethnic and religious inequality in favour of a blindly optimistic emphasis on nationality. In glossing over the behaviour of racial groups, we become blind to their suffering until we are embarrassed by disaster. It is no wonder, for instance, that people in New Orleans felt rejected by the government's slow response to Katrina. In this case it took a hurricane to illuminate the poverty-stricken black communities, to bring the camera to the victims. The stasis in the local economy petrified them: they were unable to use the infrastructure of 'their' country to move at all, let alone to escape a crisis. Europe also shies from letting foreign cultures develop within our own - perhaps in banning the burka, or insisting on an oath of loyalty primarily to the government. In so doing we let multiculturalism dissolve into the flimsier multi-ethnicity. Unlike the watchers, our lenses are tinted, and to agree to see a coloured person

through our pink lenses is far removed from a celebration of their colour. Birdspotting uses physical characteristics as its sole means of identification; it may be full of assumptions which might seem primitive. Conversely, it is only with this affectionate attention to detail that the abnormal behaviour of any group under pressure, seeking disguise, attempting flight, can be accounted for. In these initial weeks of term everyone is looking at each other, trying not to stare. Three years later, Freshers will laugh at their assumptions, but it is surprising how long these may have survived. To stop skirting around the distinctive issues, we need the calm, interested stare of the birdwatcher. In Fresher's week, this might get a bit freaky. No one should be taking their binoculars to Cindy's. Neither should they be assuming, like I did, that they should go out with the 'thesps' and not with the birdwatchers. On the coast, in college, in parliament, we need less of the hammered out rhetoric of freedom, less, in fact, of the theatre, and more of the local action. Freshers: Explore your fellow creatures!

"But perhaps these 'spotters' are not latent racists, repressed by modern society. Perhaps we should let them take a closer look."

NUMBING THE PAIN

Recent news reports linking painkillers to fatal heart attacks have provoked fears over their wider use. **ZOE SMEATON** and **KRYSTYNA LARKHAM** ask whether Cambridge students' casual approach to over-the-counter use is cause for concern.



As thousands of students descend upon Cambridge this weekend, an inescapable bout of Freshers' flu looms on the horizon once again. Given that 100% of students questioned in a *Varsity* survey reported often turning to over-the-counter painkillers, most of us will probably resort to popping such pills if we do fall ill.

According to the survey, the student's favourite painkiller is paracetamol, because 'it's cheap and easy to get hold of', followed closely by ibuprofen, codeine and finally 'wonder-drug' aspirin.

With luck, there will be no major incidents similar to last year's poor, period-pain-stricken Cambridge student, who dialled 999 after running out of painkillers. Nonetheless, the city's pharmacies are sure to prove a popular haunt for flu-suffering students in the first few weeks of term.

But perhaps concerningly, drugs are not just the preserve of flu-time. Twenty per cent of students said that they regularly turn to painkillers, 'even if they are not in that much pain.'

Sport is the reason for many - one student suffering a back injury, which at its worst meant he could hardly walk, continued to play football despite his doctor's advice to rest. He explained: 'I'd use

loads of ibuprofen gel before games and during half time, and that plus adrenaline was usually enough to get by.'

Many of us also seek help from painkillers to aid us through the exam, period when serious headaches are rife, and there's little time to recuperate.

One student, who asked to remain anonymous, admitted to finding everyday life in Cambridge stressful enough to justify taking painkillers regularly. 'I take over-the counter painkillers as a matter of course throughout term, usually for headaches and sometimes because I'm just so tired,' she reported.

'In general I'd say that by the end of a term I'll be taking some form of painkiller daily, often the maximum recommended dose. As a result, I've tried to cut down my use in the holidays, but often find that during the first few days I'll reach for the painkillers just out of routine more than anything else. Although I'd like to use fewer painkillers during the term, I just don't think this is realistic.'

But doctors warn that taking painkillers regularly, or even occasionally, can cause problems, as this student seems to have discovered: 'I am aware that the painkillers I use can cause problems like stomach ulcers, and I have often noticed

that I'll get quite painful stomach cramps after using them.'

Worryingly, though, 55 per cent of students *Varsity* surveyed were unaware that painkillers could have any negative or painful side-effects at all, and just thirteen per cent had ever been warned of these effects when purchasing painkillers.

Taking painkillers too regularly has long been known to cause kidney damage, with high concentrations being potentially fatal.

But perhaps the most common problems caused by over-the-counter painkillers are the indigestion, stomach pains and even bleeding in the stomach caused by taking NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) like ibuprofen and aspirin.

A 2004 British Medical Journal report estimated that negative reactions to medications could cause more than 10,000 deaths per year in the UK, many of these due to bleeding in the stomach.

NSAIDs work by inhibiting an enzyme called COX (cyclooxygenase) at the site of pain. They block the enzyme's production of prostaglandins, which are the chemicals responsible for the inflammatory response and the sensitisation of nerve endings which leads to the pain sensation. Unfortunately the COX enzyme

is also prevented from producing prostaglandins in the stomach where they are normally present to protect the stomach lining from damage by gastric acids.

Drinking alcohol can enhance these effects of NSAIDs, and one of the 50% of students who admitted to having combined alcohol and painkillers said: 'It didn't prove a good idea.'

Mixing alcohol with codeine is also a bad idea - this painkiller falls into a class of drugs called opiates, which are recognised by specific receptors in the central nervous system. When these receptors are occupied, they block transmission of pain messages to the brain, and so when taken with alcohol, which also depresses the central nervous system, a fatal overdose can occur.

Codeine can also cause negative side effects, including nausea and sedation, making them unsuitable for exam time use. The drug can also lead to feelings of euphoria, popular with many people as one website raves: 'Codeine is an excellent opiate to start experimenting with. The effects are subtle like marijuana.'

Codeine is an addictive substance and last year, doctors at a conference of the British Medical Association warned of the risks of becoming addicted to over-the-counter painkillers.

They estimated that 30,000 people may be addicted to drugs available at high street chemists.

As has been widely reported recently, a study this summer linked some painkillers - NSAIDs - to an increase in the risk of suffering a heart attack.

However, 52% of students told *Varsity* that they were not at all concerned by these reports, with one remarking 'So can lots of things (cause heart attacks), like drinking, not drinking, eating red meat, and not eating red meat.'

Indeed, the report's researchers have themselves admitted that their results could have been skewed by other unforeseen factors. But, coming as it does in a summer which has seen drugs giant Merck ordered to pay \$253million to Carol Ernst, after she proved her husband had died after through taking the painkiller Vioxx. Experts had previously concluded that the drug could put users at an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes.

So before reaching for painkillers at the slightest hint of flu this term, bear in mind that whilst the immediate benefits of painkillers seem to outweigh longer-term risks, there are clear risks of negative side-effects. They are worth fully understanding before using any drugs, to avoid any dangerous problems developing.

MANY SEEK HELP FROM PAINKILLERS FOR EXAM - PERIOD HEADACHES



100% of students surveyed use painkillers

21% admit to using painkillers even when not in much pain

55% were not aware of painkillers' potential negative side-effects

50% drink alcohol while on painkillers

26% have taken more than the recommended dosage of their painkiller

BRAGGING ABOUT THE BOOKS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Amy Harris questions Melvyn Bragg’s reader’s dozen

Twelve Books that Changed the World is the somewhat bold title of Melvyn Bragg’s new four-part BBC series. The choice of books made for the series - written, edited and presented by Bragg - has predictably received a huge amount of media attention.

While popular discussion of literature and its influence on the modern world can only be welcomed as a good thing, at times it has seemed that the literati who are wont to regard Bragg and his *South Bank Show* as the guardians of cultural excellence have become enchanted by the trend for ‘Top 100 Lists’ that so dominate our television screens in the current era.

The list seems not to have been compiled via debate and survey but by Bragg’s own very personal taste. *The First Rule Book of the Football Association, 1863* is included, a decision clearly derived from his personal interests as a modern historian and avid football fan. Surprisingly, the list does not contain a single non-British book, relegating numerous seminal works to the dustbin of world history. Fortunately, however, *Patent Specification for Arkwright’s Spinning Machine 1769* makes it on.

Indeed, the final dozen books are generically so particular in their sphere of influence that they might best be re-titled *Twelve Books That Changed My World*.

Bragg’s twelve books in full are Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (1859); *The First Rule Book of the Football Association* (1863); Shakespeare’s *First Folio* (1623) Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (1687); Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776); William Wilberforce’s *Speech to the House of Commons* (1789); *The King James Bible* (1611); *Patent Specification for Arkwright’s Spinning Machine* (1769); Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792); Michael Faraday’s *Experimental Research in Electricity* (1855); Marie Stopes’ *Married Love* (1918) and the *Magna Carta* (1215)

Nevertheless, inspired by Bragg, *Varsity* asked Cambridge academics, students and businesspeople for the books that have influenced and affected their lives. Their reasons for regarding their choices as seminal are detailed right.

Nineteen Eighty-Four

Laura Walsh,
President,
CUSU

I’d say it was George Orwell’s *1984*. Apart from being the year I was born, it is possibly the only book I have read more than once. I first picked it up when I was 15 and, along with the music I was listening to, it got me interested in new things. At the time I was intending to study Maths, Biology, and Chemistry for my A-levels; six months later I was enrolling to do Politics, History and Sociology - good job too as I don’t think I would have got in here to do NatSci. It was the first book that had excited me and it showed me that I wanted to know more about the state, about politics and about people. It led me on to read more political novels, but Orwell is without doubt my favourite (and he wrote a book about my hometown).



The Solitaire Mystery

Liza Barry
PhD student,
Hutchison/MRC Research Institute

I would have to say The book which has most influenced me is *The Solitaire Mystery* by Jostein Gaarder. It is a story which questions what we think we know is real and what is fiction. I think I first read it when I was 14, and liked it initially because it’s just a really good story, but also because it really made me think and ask ‘the big questions’. Its main influence was that it helped to convince me to study science and philosophy at university (because I thought they might provide the answers). I’ve read it so many times and every time I get something different from it because it can be read and interpreted on so many levels, and it still makes me re-evaluate what I believe every time I read it.



Sons And Lovers

Professor John Beer
Faculty of English,
Peterhouse College

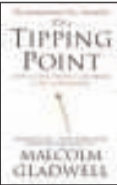
Although I have often been influenced by various texts, there is no doubt in mind about the impact on me of D.H.Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* in the late 1940s. This was partly because I had recently worked in a Nottinghamshire coal mine and so well knew the countryside about which he was writing, but even more because I so well recognized the ethos of the community—still, in my time, deeply puritan in its instincts, along with its openness to new experiences. Lawrence has since become unfashionable, partly, I think, because of the belief (unfair, surely) that he propagated false views on gender, but he remains for me, along with Virginia Woolf, one of the most gifted and brilliant writers of the twentieth century.



The Tipping Point

Mr. H. Lewins
CEO
Prescription Clothing UK

It’s really quite hard for me to pick out the one specific book that has been the most decisively influential in my life. However, recently I have been very interested by *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell. It presents the reader with some very easy access theories of psychology and really makes you look at the world in a more analytical way. As the general well-being of my company consistently depends on who buys what, and why, this book made for both fascinating and essential reading. Even if you are not in the business of marketing, or anything remotely related, this book makes you take a long hard look at how you are effected by adverts and branding, be it consciously or sub-consciously.



Keats: Collected Poetry

James E. Montgomery,
University Reader in Classical Arabic,
Trinity Hall

I remember clearly the first time I read Keats’ “Ode to Autumn”. It was 2.45pm on a Wednesday in February, 1981, during a school English lesson. I realised suddenly the power of words to create a type of beauty I had never encountered before, and though I didn’t have the vocabulary to articulate my feelings, I was overwhelmed. The maths lesson twen-

ty minutes later seemed an insult to my newly awakened sensibility and I could not attend to a single algebraic equation.

Keats does not change the world, in Melvyn Bragg’s terms, but he changes individuals. He writes about the private imagination and the right not to conform to public conventions and expectations. He celebrates the capacity of reading to transport one to other places and to resist the outside world. So he’s the great poet of adolescence: rebellious, self-indulgent and full of wonder.

The Bible

Jonathan Middleton
Fourth Year Maths Student
Gonville & Caius College

Growing up I was fascinated by making new discoveries. Failing to obtain answers to questions can be extremely frustrating and has a tendency to put people off science. Being able to find the answers (and new questions) in science books was clearly very influential on the path I have taken.

However, the book that has influenced me more than any other is not

a scientific one, nor one I have read in its entirety, nor is it one I especially hold dear. Although not particularly religious, the Bible has certainly had a large bearing on my thinking and my ethical views, and hence on the way I interact with others. It taught me to think about ideas that are presented to us, to challenge beliefs, instead of accepting them blindly. If our beliefs, whether a mathematical conjecture or something more theological, cannot stand up to questioning, then why should we believe them? Through encouraging me to think, the Bible is without question the book that has most influenced my life thus far.

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Adam Welch

THE STATE WE'RE IN

Student politics stands prepared again for a year of criticism and questions of its relevance to university life. **Jessica Holland** finds disgruntled activists splintering from the NUS and a new CUSU President determined to change perceptions of our union

As freshers open their university information packs and get used to the deluge of sexual health leaflets appearing in their pigeonholes, many will ask what CUSU is, and what it does, other than put on Tim Westwood at the Soul Tree and hand out dental dams at the Kelsey Kerridge fayre.

But it's not a question that can easily be answered by many Cambridge students. While a *Varsity* poll reveals a widespread lack of awareness of the activities of Cambridge's student union, even some of those directly involved in the organisation found it hard to define what CUSU's role is and ought to be. Meanwhile, at a national level, a new network for student activists is growing, which could provide an alternative campaigning base.

This comes at a time when the national student union is also facing financial crisis and almost unprecedented criticism. "I think that the NUS has lost its way," CUSU President Laura Walsh told *Varsity* earlier this week, adding that the lack of campaigning over the last year, the postponement of the annual national demonstration, and the cutting of the NUS annual conference from four to three days were due to NUS's focus on "trying to get their house in order." The organisation is currently £700,000 in debt.

Accusations of time-wasting bureaucracy and self-interest have also been levelled at both CUSU and the NUS. Mark Gettleton, current chair of CUSU council, told *Varsity* that "to call [the NUS] unrepresentative is an understatement. It seems the ultimate example of 'rule by those who show up'." He also said that "NUS conference hosts some of the worst-quality debates anyone has ever imagined," hyperbole that many feels contains more than a grain of truth.

Questions were sparked about the importance of the NUS and its affiliates, such as CUSU, when a new student activist network called 'Education not for Sale' was formed in September. The convenor, Daniel Randall - himself a member of the NUS execu-

tive - was inspired by frustrations at the proceedings and outcome of the annual NUS conference. In a statement, he criticised the NUS and its president Kat Fletcher harshly. "She and the clique around her, many of them former left-wingers, have done nothing to restore a campaigning link between the NUS structures and the students they are supposed to represent. They have refused to organise a fight to repair the years of damage inflicted by right-wing government policy."

"For the last two or three years there has been a real lack of a political network to mobilise rank-and-file activists in the student movement," he told *Varsity*. "ENS hopes to become such a network." The splinter group held its launch at a conference in Docklands in September, attended by many CUSU members in attendance, including Walsh.

Walsh said that she benefited from the campaign workshops the conference provided: an example of training that NUS should be providing, but are not. "It's going to play an important role with giving the NUS a kick up the backside, which I think they probably need at the moment. But it's not a threat to us. It does things that we can't do by law, and it encourages political interest."

There is an ongoing debate about the degree to which the Cambridge and national student unions should hold a political stance. Some are frustrated by what they see as a 'watering down' of the once radically frontline NUS, while others are adamant that as a body representing a diverse population of students it should not take a specific party line. The legal requirements are that the NUS and its affiliates should campaign only on what affects the lives of students, but as Laura Walsh points out, there is no clear line to be drawn. "Issues like women's academic under-performance affects students in Cambridge but it's also linked to other issues in the outside world about discrimination against women and oppression. It's not so black and

“WE SHOULD SORT OUT OUR OWN BACKYARD BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE”



white."

The majority of students polled by *Varsity* felt that CUSU operates best when focusing on small-scale local issues, like the campaign for better lighting on Parkers Piece and the 'Save Architecture' campaign, both high-profile successes. They thought that wider issues should be left to autonomous groups on campus such as Roots and Shoots, CU Amnesty International, People and Planet and the new Education not for Sale. Walsh's own election manifesto was 'bringing CUSU back to Cambridge', and she told us she believes that local issues "are the bread and butter of CUSU's work. We should sort our own backyard out before we start doing anything else."

It's a backyard that many feel is in disarray. She admits that communication between CUSU and the student population has been insufficient over the last year - "they've been absolutely crap at letting people know what they're doing" - and vows to do better. In response to the time-wasting propositions brought to council last year such as motion that the *Ghostbusters* theme-tune should be played 'at least once an evening, preferably more' at CUSU club-nights and the 'renam[ing of] 'Easter III' [the third Council meeting in Easter term] 'Princess Sarah Council' in honour of the chair,' she has no regrets. "If two people want to propose a motion about anything I fully support their right to do so; whether I vote for it or not is a different matter. Those motions weren't written by me or by CUSU people."

"Most people don't know that anyone can propose a motion to council. You just need two people and then it has to be voted on by council. But council consists of JCR presidents, JCR officers and MCR officers. I don't even get a vote on council. The JCR president of your college actually has more of a say than I do."

CUSU is launching three awareness campaigns this year: about mental health, educational equality and women in sport respectively. "You see women's first teams playing in

the old men's third team kit, and the BBC doesn't even show the women's boatrace. If you think we've achieved gender equality, just look at a sports field." These campaigns will be formally announced in the next week. Walsh is also steeling herself for rent struggles with college bursars and the ongoing fight for access to Cambridge from a wider range of schools.

Both Walsh and NUS President Kat Fletcher have made it clear that they will also be lobbying against the cost of tuition fees rising when the cap is removed in five years' time. "That's something we still have to fight," Walsh said, while Fletcher promises that "the student movement and others in the education sector are organised and ready for 2010 to make sure that doesn't not happen." She is launching a campaign specifically to address the issue called "On course... for a fair future" which was unveiled yesterday at the Trades Union Congress headquarters.

While Education not for Sale is also committed to a fight for "universal, free, secular education", they also aim to address wider global issues such as "anti-war, environmentalist, global justice, anti-sweatshop and anti-capitalist movements". Since the Education Act, the NUS is unable to do this to the same degree. In the words of Mark Gettleton, "the NUS and individual students unions have been left with a still unanswered crisis of faith, now legally unable to take the plight of the world on their shoulders."

It is for this reason that the formation of a new, organised network for student activism has been seen by some as a direct threat to the centrality of the NUS as a campaigning base on campus. The sizeable overlap in membership of the NUS, Education not for Sale and other student grassroots groups such as People and Planet suggests that they can co-exist without competition, but if the group continues to criticise the NUS so outspokenly, their existence may feel less like "a kick up the backside" and more like a kick in the teeth.

Survey: The most important service CUSU provides:

44% Health advice and provisions

31% Campaigning for minority rights

13% Discounts at shops

12% No services CUSU provides are important

Someone has found out a sensitive problem I have. They send me e-mails offering to fixing it, but I'm perturbed they found out in the first place.

The people e-mailing you don't know a thing about you. They're sending you spam (unsolicited junk e-mail), in the hope that they might find someone to buy their product. They send out millions of e-mails very cheaply, and bank on at least one or two people visiting their website and buying something.

So is "\$4.99 4 V14gRa" good value?

Probably not. Viagra is a prescription drug, only available via a trip to the doctor. Igor really only wants your money, whether or not he helps you with penile dysfunction.

Who's Igor?

Egor is the Russian hacker who bought your e-mail address from another nefarious internet user. They could have obtained it in a myriad of ways, possibly just by randomly combining letters and numbers for known domain names.

So isn't it illegal to buy and sell my address?

Possibly, it really depends on where you and Igor live.

O.K. let's suppose it is illegal, is Igor likely to find himself at the wrong end of an AK47 sometime soon?

Probably not. Spam is big business and usually results in profit for someone powerful. Hence most countries anti-spam laws are drafted using overblown rhetoric and unenforceable penalties. For instance the U.S.A's Can-Spam Act 2003.

Bummer. Is there anything I can do to stop Igor and his comrades?

Spam is big business, but so is stopping it. You could buy an 'off the shelf solution' (e.g. McAfee SpamKiller, 24.99 for a one year subscription) but there are other, cheaper, alternatives.

I don't like spending money, so how am I going to keep my sparkling new Hermes account clean and reconstituted meat product free?

Be careful who you tell your e-mail address to. Signing up for newsletters online can induce a flood of spam. As can leaving your address in chat rooms and on message boards. Signing up for hundreds of societies at Freshers fair can wreak havoc with an inbox - though this isn't *strictly* spam.

And then?

You can use Hermes' inbuilt junk mail filter. Log in. Click on 'Manage'. Then click 'Junk Email'. Change 'Filter threshold' to 5, then click 'Enable Filtering with this threshold'. E-mail that Hermes now thinks is spam or junk is sent to the junk folder.

Doug McMahon

on
the
web

THE (EXTREMELY) TALENTED MR RUSHDIE

His new novel **SHALIMAR THE CLOWN** has divided both critics and readers, while his views on religion and politics remain as vital and controversial as ever. **EMILY STOKES** meets **SALMAN RUSHDIE** to dissect his celebrity

I am Salman Rushdie's fourth interviewer of the day, and not the last. He greets me warmly, but I notice he looks a little weary. Cheerily, I ask him about his touring: Brazil, Edinburgh, London, America. 'The speed of it is such that you get to a level of tiredness at which you never get rested,' he says slowly.

He sighs, and for a moment he looks as if he might drop off on the spot. 'People have decided that the cheapest way of selling books is to get the author to be his own salesmen,' he sighs.

'Julian Barnes and I were on the same radio show together and he's coming to the end of his book publicity. He said that in the last four months he's written four hundred words. I mean, writers are supposed to write and this is preventing us from doing it.'

Rushdie is clearly fed up, and for a moment I wonder if he will last the hour-long interview. He shakes his head suddenly, like a bird ruffling its feathers, and lightens up: 'Anyway, I mustn't bitch,' he says brightly. 'Lots of writers would love the sort of attention that Julian and I get.'

But I soon see that it is precisely the 'sort of attention' Rushdie regularly attracts in the press that is bothering him. Perhaps more so than any other contemporary author, he is by now truly a household name: the subject of caricaturists, comedians and gossip columnists alike.

I had always assumed that he rather enjoyed his celebrity lifestyle: the cameo role in Bridget Jones's Diary; the glamorous parties in New York with long-term girlfriend, Padma Lakshmi (Bollywood movie star, cookbook writer and Harper's and Queen's twenty-eighth most beautiful woman in the world); the holidays with old friends Ian McEwan and Martin Amis, dancing with Nigella Lawson, Highland Games with Billy Connolly.

But, and perhaps due to the endless line of interviews he is persuaded to do, he seems explicitly aware of the fact that his own public life has in many ways overtaken his writing.

The main reason for this is

“WHEN I LOOK BACK AT MY YOUNGER SELF, I'M IMPRESSED BY HOW DOGGED I WAS”



not, of course, his glamorous lifestyle, but rather the still-continuing aftermath of the publication of his *Satanic Verses* in 1989, when he was condemned to death under a fatwa by the former Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

He seems infuriated that some quarters of the press are suggesting that this is the first time he has been allowed to travel abroad since the fatwa, and rushes answers about his past life that have evidently been used many times before: 'Nonsense, nonsense. It's been happening seven or eight years now. For me it's an old story.'

But for most of us, this 'old story' is far too sensational to be forgotten any time soon, and Rushdie's writing as a political journalist since then has meant that its essence has never been out of the newspapers for long.

I ask him about how he feels about being seen as a political authority on the Iraq war, on terrorism and Islamic extremism. 'There is a problem,' he says, nodding. 'People who don't know my writing - my fiction - tend to think of me probably more as a kind of political entity, you know, because they see me on the news pages a lot. And for me it's a real dilemma - on the one hand, I do think these are important matters, and I do think I have something to say about them.'

It seems that if you feel you want to actually be part of a conversation about the world in which you live, it's difficult to say 'I won't do (political commentaries) because it might give people the wrong idea about me.' But, it *does* kind of give people the wrong idea about me!

I'm slightly surprised by the preoccupation Rushdie has with his public image; he seems to find it very important that he is known principally as an author of fiction.

He explains that he has been writing a monthly column for the New York Times syndicate. 'I think I might stop, actually,' he says, as if the idea had just occurred to him. 'I think I'm going to go into retreat. If, instead of writing those twelve columns a year, I could write

what three short stories, I'd be happier. I might occasionally make some foray if something really gets my goat, but I think that's better than having a constant presence on the news pages.'

I sense his relief when we get on to the subject of his new (ninth) novel, *Shalimar the Clown*. I enjoyed the book; it is fast moving, characteristically busy and a quicker, more gripping read than many of his books - a bit like a thriller. It is the story of American ambassador Max's murder by his Kashmiri driver. What seems to start a story about terrorism ends a revenge tragedy about lost love. It takes travel across continents and time zones - and explorations into several family histories - to fully explain the murder.

Rushdie tells me about a group of travelling players he met in Kashmir when visiting with a television crew, who inspired him to write about Kashmiri village life. They would tell him incredible stories off-camera, but, for fear of reprisals, 'as soon as the camera was on, they would say, 'our lives are fine, we are very happy.'" I glance at my tape recorder, wondering if it is having a similar effect. I do notice that when he tells stories like this, he becomes immediately animated, less wary, and somehow more natural than when talking about himself. When he imitates the speeches of the Kashmiri players, he puts on an exaggerated accent, smiles in a rather crazed way and wags his head from side to side. It's really quite a picture, and so funny that he can't help laughing at himself.

Rushdie makes clear that this novel is not supposed to be controversial, or even necessarily to contribute to current political debate: 'A lot of people are saying to me that this novel is very topical, and I think 'well, okay, but that's a complete fluke' - because it's a book conceived in 1999 and published in 2005; I couldn't really think about it being topical.'

But despite his claims that the novel, with its story of murder and attempted murder, its unravelling of identities and

backgrounds and its passionate love affairs, is neither current nor autobiographical, it is almost irresistible to read his own experiences into those of the book's characters. Unfortunately for Rushdie, we can no longer read a Rushdie novel without imposing onto it our own dramatised version of his biography.

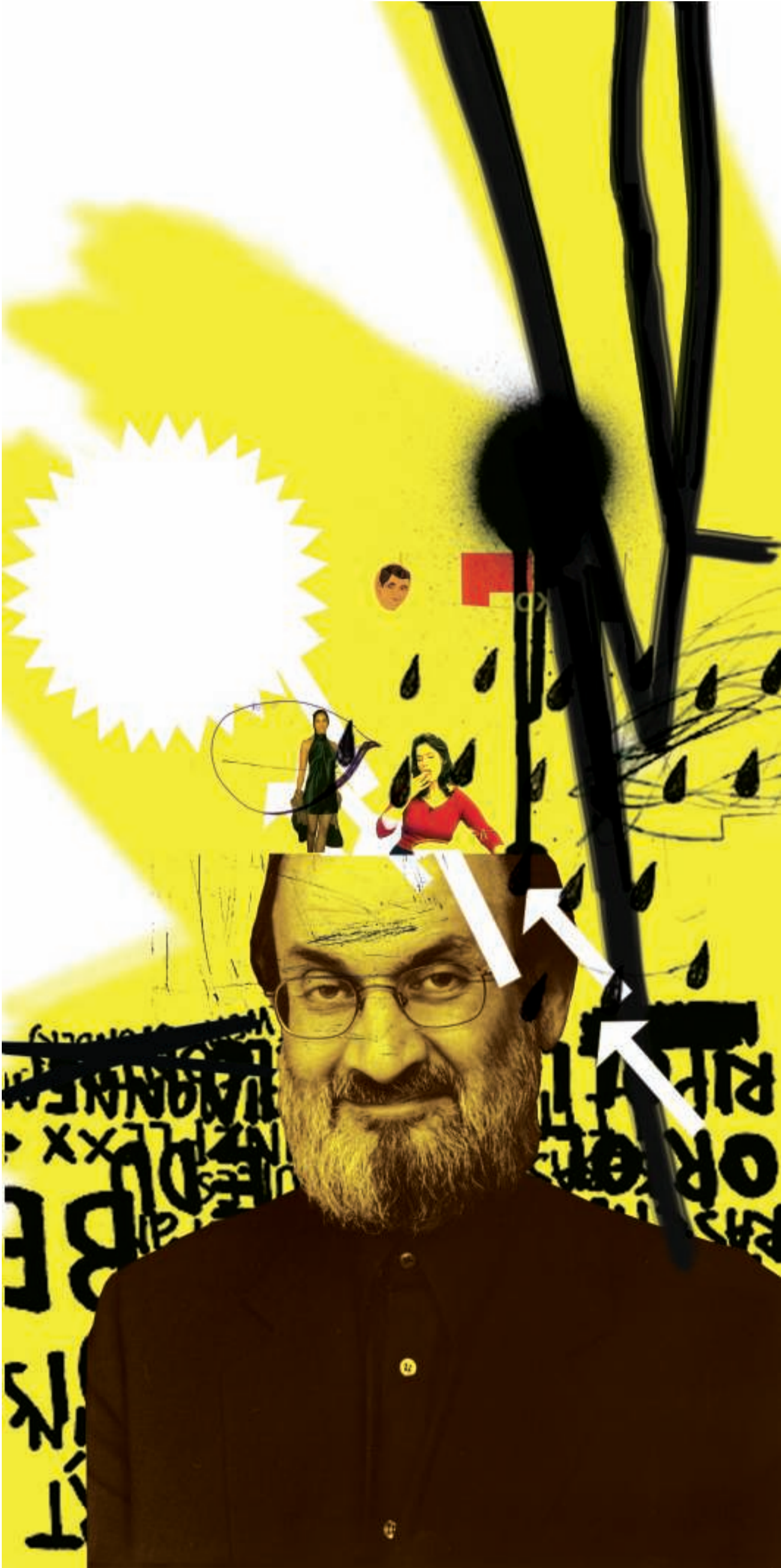
But even Rushdie himself seems slightly fatalistic about his life, grateful for the way things have turned out, and happy to look back on his own history as if to admire the view from the top.

It was when he was studying at Cambridge that he found the story for the *Satanic Verses*: 'without that, things could have been very different,' he says, dryly. As a History student at King's, despite receiving an Exhibition, he missed a First; 'I became involved in student theatre, and it began to seduce me, I'm afraid. The college was absolutely furious with me.' I laugh, and he shrugs: 'It hasn't really hurt me.'

His first novel, *Grimus* (1975), had little success, and he continued a part-time job in advertising while working on *Midnight's Children*: 'There was no reason to believe that I ever would have any success. I'd see people like Martin [Amis] and Ian [McEwan] with their first books becoming very very successful, and it just wasn't like that for me. If I look back at that younger self, the thing that I'm impressed by is how dogged I was.'

The clichéd concept of looking back at one's younger self is strangely appropriate for Rushdie, whose life, like those of so many of the characters within his novels, has never stopped metamorphosing into new phases or changing locations.

He fantasises about staying in New York at Christmas with Padma: 'Maybe we'll just sit in a room and look at each other, and watch TV and not go anywhere' he says, dreamily. Evidently, what constitutes a normal Christmas for most of us has become a novel concept to Salman Rushdie. 'It would be very nice just to live in one place and get on with it, but I guess that's not my fate.'



Mirror, Mirror



01. The Perfect Shave

Step One: Take a hot shower to open up and relax your pores. Or, let the warm water run and get your face as wet as possible. This will soften the beard. Shaving is like a Trojan horse; you have to pamper the skin with gifts before you ravage it.

Step Two: Exfoliate, rubbing the product against your skin for several minutes and rinse off. It's hard to find the right product for you. The wisest thing to do is to work your way into the hearts and rooms of girls with good skin. While she is recuperating from throes of passion, raid her bathroom. It beats the embarrassment of having to go to Boots and ask for samples. Clarins One-Step Gentle Exfoliating Cleanser is a good two-in-one, available for under £20 at Boots.

Step Three: Now that the skin is soft and the hair relaxed, massage shaving foam into a thin layer over your beard. Anthony's Shave Gel for sensitive skin makes pores feel like they have just taken a breath mint, because of the aloe and sea kelp. Anthony Logistics for Men is a line of products developed especially for men and its minimal look and mathematical sounding name soothe the hurt male ego (as well as the skin).

Step Four: Work out what direction your beard grows in. Generally it grows down to the neck and up to the chin. This is the direction you will be running your blade. I suggest the Gillette M3 Power Razor. Generally the rule is the more blades the better

(fewer strokes mean less irritation). But c'mon - this one vibrates. And it looks like a light sabre in neon green. Keep skin tight to avoid nicks and cuts.

Step Five: Rinse everything off with cool water and dab dry with a towel.

Step Six: This the step that will keep you looking adonis-like.



Where you would normally stop, grimace at yourself, red-faced and itchy and head off for another day. No longer. Now there's Creme de la Mer. Developed by some scientist to cure himself of chemical burns, this is the most advanced cream available. But quality comes at a price. At £120 a jar it will last you two months used twice daily. Or, £1 per use. But you might as well - you're only going to spend it on alcohol. But unlike a pint, which dehydrates skin and makes you fat, it will leave your skin glowing and fresh. And it will make you truly happy and fulfilled with life. Now everyone will want to be you.

Benj Seidler

quick recipe



Sausage and Baked-Bean Casserole

Freshers - let's start modestly. Get back to basics with this soft introduction to gyp room cooking - a hearty dish that serves two or three. What better way to get to know your new staircase?

Estimated Price: £3

Ingredients

- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 small tin chickpeas, drained
- 1 small tin kidney beans, drained
- 1 pack sausages, cut into 3cm pieces
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp olive oil
- salt and pepper (to taste)

Instructions

- 1 min - Heat oil in pan
- 5 mins - Add onion and garlic; fry on a medium heat until soft
- 7-10 mins - Transfer to plate; add sausages to pan and fry until golden brown
- 10 mins - Add rest of ingredients, including onions and garlic. Cover and cook on a medium heat for 20 minutes

You will need

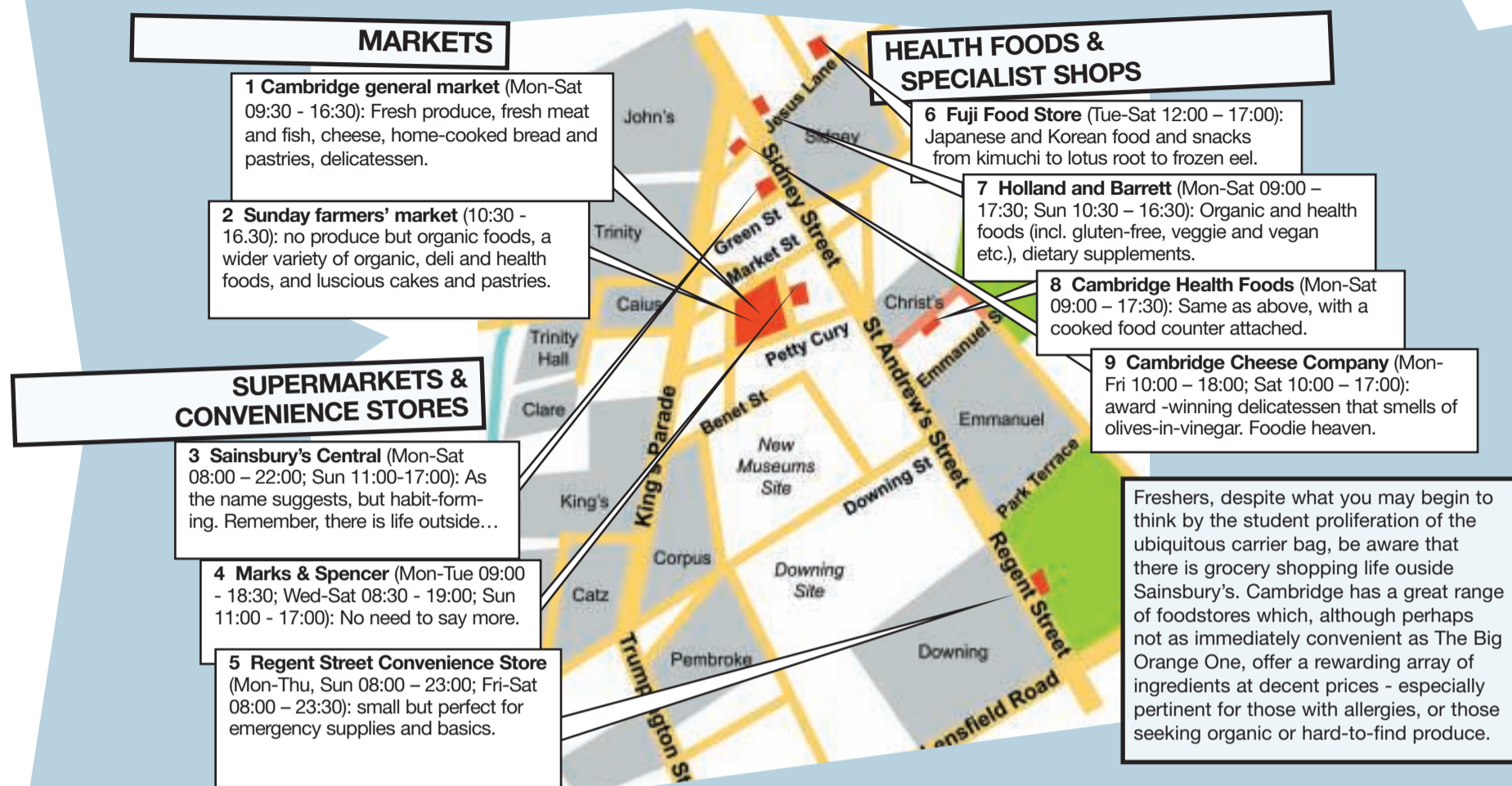
- 1 medium-sized knife
- 1 frying/saucepan
- 1 wooden spoon
- 1 hollow plate or bowl

Serve with

A fresh salad and crusty bread

Lionel Nierop

THE BUYER'S GUIDE: where to buy



Wendy Tsang Man Pun & Tom Kingsley

High-Street chic

We rate Cambridge's prolific chain restaurants

By Joe Schutzer-Weisseman

We all have friends who will one day organise birthday parties in fast-food chains for their brats. And for all their brat's friends, in fact for everyone in that brat's class because they are not cruel enough to recognise that, even aged six, some children are just brats. These well-meaning friends are just the type to send round-robins about their charity work in Sri-Lanka, they probably have more face-book friends than, well, friends and they will often, in lieu of real parties, organise trips to chain-restaurants just like proper grown-ups do. Like these platitudinous little friends, chain-restaurants cannot always be avoided and are often actually quite nice.

Loch Fyne is the best. The food is reassuringly expensive and generally unpretentious - "pan-seared" and "poached" appeared on this menu

before Jamie Oliver did on TV.

Brown's tries hard to be "classic," a futile pose whose end result, by some popular twist of logic, is the utter dearth of anything decent to drink except cocktails. The indoor foliage is grimly reminiscent of a hospital, which is what it once was.

Chèz Gérard is better than Café Rouge though the food is essentially the same. Both are founded and founder on two trendy misconceptions: the first being that café culture has never existed in this country because we're just not sophisticated enough and that, despite British weather and dress-

sense, it ought to. The second, more fiercely held here than in France, is that French "cuisine" is somehow more "haut" than any other local swill. In France this is often true, but over here it basically means paying more for your bit of Friday night "je ne sais quoi". That is a direct quotation from the Café Rouge website as is "the vibrant atmosphere that moves with your moods throughout the day." If that doesn't put you off, maybe the Edith Piaf will.

Pizza Express is always tasty, cheap, unremarkable and thus commendable, as is the pittance they purportedly give to save the sinking Stones of Venice. In Cambridge the word on the street is (and has been for some thirty years or so) that the Pizza Express pittance pays for the Pitt Club above. If this is true then you can feel yourself doubly benevolent every time you go (for saving the sinking Stones and the stinking Sloanes.)

Don't ever go to "the Filling Station" even if you're trying to be funny. It's about as witty as Talking Ts opposite.



A benevolent missive from our man in the pulpit

It seems that some Cambridge actors fell victim to the curse of the Scottish play at this year's Edinburgh Festival. Cambridge's leading actor(s) were advised by one reviewer "to look for a day job after graduating." CV available at cambridgeleadingactor.com. Further acclaim must be piled onto the celebrated Cambridge comedy troupe that won the coveted Time Out award for the worst show at the festival.

CUSU members (that's you) might find it reassuring to check out their Academic Affairs Officer Drew Livingston's Facebook profile, in which he offers up the 'interesting fact' that he 'hasn't read a book in 3 years!!!'

Does anyone know why disgraced ex-Graduate Union president Ribb Tharakan has taken to wandering around Cambridge with an armory of Louis Vuitton suitcases? What

is he carrying? Why hasn't he left yet? Isn't he wanted in Monaco?

Decades behind the beer pump leave your arms as burly as a wrestler's, as two Jesus undergraduates recently learned. After the consummate consumption of six pints each, one of them disgraced himself, leaving the pub floor awash with ale and amino acids, which he was then forced to clear up. It's a hard mop life!

The male Freshers' reps at which sport-loving college have been strictly instructed not to take advantage of their college daughters in an effort to prevent a repetition of last year's love romp, in which there were allegedly five incestuous couplings? Woody Allen wannabes should not be unduly alarmed, however, as the ban only extends to the first two nights.

Acolytes who attended the Labour party conference have

"An embarrassing high-profile spat at the launch of The Mays saw a former editor accuse his successor of copying his ideas - to which the youngster quipped in reply that his accuser, best friend and appointer was incapable of original ideas

brought back happy news of a former CUSU bigwig. Apparently he now spends his days "fluttering like a butterfly from one reception to another, surrounded by a whirl of adoring fans." His denials of any political ambition have done little to quell rumours that he is destined for Downing Street (ahem).

"The male Freshers' reps at one college have been strictly instructed not to take advantage of their daughters"



The Pro Bono brigade

It's annoying when bio-bashers bite back

Katherine Poole

Bloody Bono. Just how sanctimonious can a click of the fingers be? Yet if we respond to the Irishman's exaltations with mild distaste, we should also spare a thought for the singer himself. As an ecologically aware individual, I have found myself in the 'Bono position', and have a measure of sympathy for its difficulties.

For you see, we do-gooders feel it too. We sense your disdain. We cringe in advance. Indeed, so strong is this feeling that I get nervous loitering before the organic, hovering around the recycled; fearful of creating the impression that I might be some kind of Bio Basher. This is not, therefore, another article asking you to be more eco-friendly. It's an article asking why you must get so grumpy when asked to be more eco-friendly.

Whenever I drop into conversation anything remotely environmentally aware, (however well hidden the inner monologue of "No! Disposable dusters? Why?!!") it's almost as if I've just told a particularly tasteless joke (have you heard the one about Michael Jackson and his new penchant for twenty eight year olds?)

Yet the student population generally has a solid tradition in terms of ecological activism: there must be some

deeper psychological drawbridges at work here.

Suggesting that some-one adopt different habits and values is

terms this is understood as nagging, producing a mental block equivalent to three foot of lead at the request, say, to switch the TV off at the

that there is a yearning for boundaries, instruction, cooperation and community - but with the implicit assumption that other people are

establishment, green-ness can also be Quite Middle Class. 'Ethical living' is actually a coolness black hole (see Chris Martin). There is a

out to its own advantage. Besides, when no other blighter is lifting a finger the burden of planet saving falls on the few, and this inevitably results in vegan shoes and knitwear the colour of tree fungus. Coolness is new, now, tomorrow. Green-ness is last week's yoghurt pots used to plant next month's seedlings.

Reared on a binge versus diet mentality, we see fun as naughty carelessness, and any kind of self-restraint as dull.

Yet as our lives are inescapably moulded by all manner of influences, why not an environmentally sensitive ethos? It's not about self-righteousness, it's about doing a bit - your bit.

Poor, impoverished, economy brand scoffers some of us may currently be, but at some point we will all be part of that giant focus group known as 'consumers'. Often it's just a case of rejecting nonsense, such as those pre-packed salads with a little tray to separate the cucumber from the tomatoes from the cheese. It's a bit much when even salad items are demanding their own dressing (ho ho) room.

Small changes don't mean you'll never see a cheap luxury again, and there's no risk of presenting Bio Bashing symptoms yourself, so try not to be so sensitive when quizzed about your choice of chicken.



regrettably close to telling people what to do and how to think, which has an unfortunately negative air of autocracy. Furthermore,

set instead of leaving the little red light on.

The developing tradition of arse-whipping 'advisory' programmes (see: Supernanny,

the problem. Meanwhile the eco equivalents of these shows are tucked away early on a BBC2 evening, where no one goes unless they fancy a

vast distance (no doubt an area the size of Wales) between peat and moss and, well, Pete and Moss. Essentially leftie, green-

"There is a vast difference between peat and moss and Pete and Moss"

people are understandably wary of being given direction, in case in the end it turns out to be a bit wrong. In domestic

That'll Teach 'Em, that one where they set up a trailer park of nightmare neighbours, and so endlessly on) suggests

bit of nagging.

For despite having all the necessary credentials of being innovative, kooky and anti-

ness entirely fails to capitalise on its subject matter, allowing practically every other damn product to whore nature

Please sir, can I have some more?

In defence of Channel 4's annual Big Bother

Tim Roach



Another summer gone, another series of Big Brother down the televisual drain.

And with it, the celebratory drinks clinked to the what-a-load-of-crap-Big-Brother-is argument. The contestants were either too boring or too weird. And who cares anyway, so the argument goes - why should such nobodies plague our prime-time?

The retort seems simple: just don't watch it, then. But I will not be so unambitious. With all its faults, BB serves us a very genuine public good. Not only should it be shown all year round; but we should, in the authoritarian spirit of its namesake, be forced to watch it.

Consider for a moment our daily interactions. With good friends, with not-so-good-friends, with people you wish you never had the misfortune to ever meet, with complete randomness. Each merits a minimum of a look in the other direction, but most will involve some form of conversing.

The art of conversation, I suggest, is the

discovery of a point of connection sufficient for the participants to feel comfortable enough to bring it to a conclusion. For good friends, this might be after two hours; for others, after two minutes. This is not to infer that we enter every interaction looking for the quickest exit - but that in order to exit we need to find commonality; even if that is us having nothing in common at all.

To borrow from Donny Rumsfeld, I am interested here in the known unknowns: as I define, people too familiar to ignore but not close enough for us to care about what they have to say. Conversation with such individuals is distinctly imperfect: awkward, forced, dull, and inefficient.

Even at University - a supposed hive of intellectual communication - our interaction with known unknowns is dominated by template conversations. The type that takes little effort, and achieves nothing at all: How are you? Great. And you? Fine. How was your Christmas? Not bad. And yours? Quiet. Just spent it with the family. How is the work going? Not sure I'll get it

all done! And you? Oh, it's alright. Need to write an essay tonight though! Shame, we're all going to the bar.

Ahhhhhhhh! We wouldn't put up with a daily kick in the balls; or being urinated on; so why should we endure continual communicative diarrhoea?

I'm not suggesting we shouldn't take an interest in our peers - or that (even worse) we try to be 'out there' and propose some random conversation that neither can cope with and serves only to prolong the agony. But - shock horror - most of us don't really care what known unknowns are doing over Christmas; or how their work is going; or whether they will be in the bar tonight. So why talk about it?

And when there is nothing obvious beyond our templates to converse about, the unimaginative ritual can extend far beyond what we would like. Not only are such interactions inevitably longer because they are so open-ended, but we become so bored of the same chat that it is harder to find a sufficient point of connection enabling us to exit.

If we waste 15-30 minutes a day conversing with known unknowns, it means that for every 48 years of our lives, we lose one entire year.

But for three summer months, we are able reclaim some of our life. BB is juicy enough to speed up our interactions, universal enough for most of us to know something about; yet vacuous enough not to dwell on.

So Channel 4, please, not just 24/7 on E4, but 24/7/52: for nothing satisfies a point of connection more efficiently than recounting a shag in the hot tub or a wine bottle in an orifice.

juicy enough to speed up our interactions, universal enough for most of us to know something about; yet vacuous enough not to dwell on.

So Channel 4 Executives, please, not just 24/7 on E4, but 24/7/52. At least when exams are beginning, not just ending; for nothing satisfies a point of connection more efficiently than recounting a shag in the hot tub or a wine bottle in an orifice.

MINISTER
FOR
HIGHER
EDUCATION



Bill Rammell

There can be no doubt: education in the UK is getting better. Standards in schools are higher than ever - more pupils are getting the quality teaching and support they need to succeed in life.

But we have a lot to do to raise the aspirations of more of these pupils to get them to university. The benefits of widening participation for the economy and for society are clear.

We know there will be a significant increase in jobs requiring HE level qualifications. Enabling more young people to fulfil their potential by going to university is one of the biggest tasks we face in education and one at which we are determined to succeed.

And we are making progress. More students from state schools and less well-off backgrounds are in university than ever before. There were an estimated 26,000 more starting full-time degree courses in 2003/04 than in 1998/99 - an increase from 85 per cent to 86.8 per cent. Figures for young entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods also showed an increase over the same time period - from 12.3 per cent to 13.9 per cent, an estimated 7,000 more entrants.

Young people from the most advantaged areas are five to six times more likely to go to HE than those from the least advantaged areas. And we know that too often, students with high grades from disadvantaged backgrounds are simply not applying to universities with the most demanding entry requirements.

This is a trend we need to reverse. We have a long way to go, but are certainly moving in the right direction. From 2006, there will be more financial support to help students from less well off backgrounds go to university. Students whose family income is less than £17,500 will be entitled to an annual grant of £2,700 and there will be help for all students whose joint parental income is less than £37,425. We estimate that over 50 per cent of students will be eligible for some level of financial support.

Universities are responding too, providing £300 million in bursaries to nearly half a million students from lower incomes.

We are also working with universities, schools and colleges to make application procedures fairer. One of the resounding conclusions from the Schwartz report is that a system that relies upon predicted grades cannot be fair. Our proposals for a Post Qualification Application process would ensure that students get a place at university based on actual ability rather than often inaccurate predicted exam grades. We are also supporting research into the validity of using a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SATs) in university entrance, to find out whether it would help identify students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to benefit from higher education.

I am confident that we are building an education system giving everyone the opportunities to get on in life. For many young people, going to university is a life-changing experience, and the best route to a secure future. We have some of the best universities in the world and it's only right that all able students, regardless of their background, can enjoy them.



The general election had a low turnout. Big Brother gets lots of votes. To make this situation better, first we have to make it worse. Let's take the 'one man one vote' idea at face value. Every man and woman in the country is issued with one vote at the start of a new government. It is their democratic right to use this vote as they wish – either save it for the general election, or spill it on Big Brother or some such. Maybe a Richard and Judy poll on whether you think Kate Moss should donate her face and bottom to a better mother. It would make for an interesting dilemma for Tory MPs at the moment – get Ken Clarke in as leader at the expense of being able to vote for him to run the country.

Just what you needed: some bloody good satire to give a kick up the arses of the people who need it and make the world better than it was before you read it. For every student who reads that first paragraph, approximately five hypocrites will become sorry. And if one of those hypocrites reads it – wow! Badness will become just a concept, not a thing... Politicians will be better, even in the past... Disease will move out and get its own semi'... Ex-lovers will mend the hearts they broke... All our Christmases will be white and God will turn up and explain everything in a way which makes an awful lot of sense and we'll be able to tell from the tone of his voice that it's a proper reason, not just an excuse. Peace will be larger, and 'wars' will be 'was'!

It's dripping in whimsy... there's some irony stuck on its shoe... the topicality's six months out of date... Welcome to Satire!

George Orwell said 'Every joke is a tiny revolution.' Not for the first time, he was wrong*. Many jokes do nothing but reinforce received opinion and common ideologies – see Jimmy Carr** and his funny jokes about disabled people, gay men and female women. The problem with ironic bigotry is if your audience laugh, they haven't got the ironic bit. † The only desirable reaction is a sentient clap.

But here we'll have thoughtful, angry, partisan comedy. † Every line will be dwelt on. Every line will have a purpose. Starting next week. Varsity Satire will grow and seep into places where you wouldn't expect it (like Sport or maybe Comment, or in the middle of an otherwise enjoyable Chick Lit novella). Contributors will come and multiply and disagree and be funny. And if one of them doesn't turn out to be the next Swift, I'll self-harm.

That last line wouldn't get in. Nor would that one. This one would. Next week: More Satire, less whimsy.

To help you think properly about this, lines are marked with a '†' if they are definitely not ironic. †

* See '1984' and 'Animal Farm.' 1984 went without much ado, and pigs are still silly.

**I really don't like Jimmy Carr. Nor should you.



Intern (v.): to imprison or detain

Work experience is dull. But is there a more serious problem?

To the fresher meat amongst you, a sincerely warm welcome to this ridiculous place. To those chewy with the gristle of years: welcome back, you jaded bastards. If all is going to plan, the former should be indulging in a bewildering week of vast opportunity, too much alcohol and not enough time. Meanwhile, we latter curmudgeons might spit that this five-day feeding frenzy makes for a neat microcosm of what can be expected over the next 500 or so.

Three years, for most of us. Nine short terms in which to really shape up for the Other Side – to live independently, form a robust set of principles and opinions, elbow into the right social circles, purloin a future spouse and, of course, to sufficiently master an academic discipline to squeeze out that decent 2.1. Still feeling calm, freshmen?

But just as you will be shocked at how quickly Lectures Thursday comes, so most of us will be spat into graduate existence feeling as if Matriculation were only yesterday. I know I'm not alone in my desire to live a perpetual part IIA, but there are plenty who seem decidedly unfazed by this Cantabrigian culture of haste. You know the type. Perhaps it's you. Getting in was fine, but your eyes have long been fixed on the next phase. Citigroup over Christmas, McKinsey at Easter and, for the long Vac, secretly running the show at Number 10 while Tony tans with Sir Cliff.

Intern (v): 'to imprison, detain or confine.' But don't just take the Oxford English chaps' word for it. Ask some of your fellow students, who spent their summers inputting endless rows of data, assessing just what are the risks of a man walking a dog or, much worse, being in constant proximity to management consultants.

They'll be easy to spot. Those odd little bruises up their arms? That'll be all the self-pinching, convinced of it being a terrible dream they're trapped in, and not the real-life set of The Office.

But at least, like Tim Canterbury, they

could take solace in their salaries, however meagre. Unlike me. Yes, I have dabbled; now I want to confess. For horror tales of casual work experience's ritual humiliation, of days in which clicking 'refresh' on the BBC online Ashes scorecard represented the height of both physical activity and intellectual rigour, just ask your humble reporter. I did it all, gratis, and I feel dirty.

But even for our remunerated heroes, can these eye-bleedingly dull pursuits really be about the money? Personally, I doubt it. And as vital as the proper transfer of skills and traineeships are, it seems quixotic to imagine that the industrial wisdom of generations might be absorbed by some process of osmosis-by-photo-copying.

The potential is considerable and serious for a quietly renewed entrenching of opportunity by the privileged few

Why, then? We all know why. In case somebody else does. For fear that the precious CV addendum might fall into the hands of a future job interview rival, whose month spent having an Excel spreadsheet permanently fused onto their line of vision will prove them far better qualified than us. And then we might have to become a teacher, or something.

And as we see neighbours fretting over securing that vital placement, so we fret. And we make everyone else fret. How on Earth did we get into such a state?

By levelling the playing field, perhaps. While the new statistics on state school university admissions showed that results are still far from satisfactory, a perverse comfort might be derived from the unanimous discontent expressed on their

release.

But as paths of principle have been broken into higher education's middle class exclusivity, and the old-boy network's power over place-securing wilted, perhaps the insecurity bred by meritocracy has bitten. How to set oneself apart when anyone – from anywhere – might obtain a top degree simply by being intelligent enough? Make damned sure your CV reads like a copy of the Top 100 Graduate Employers guide, that's how.

And so, I give you a simmering access problem of the future. Just as Oxbridge gets off its backside and recognises the need to plough application-shy areas for poorer-background stars, so those who can afford to spend their vacations swanning around the city get one over on those who must put in the hours at Safeway just to live and eat here during Term.

Yes, some placements are paid, often quite well. But of these, where are the most CV-boosting positions based? In London, hundreds of miles away from thousands of Cambridge students. For those looking to break into fields like Law and Banking, rent will gobble any earning potential. And for those keen to take positions in traditionally unpaid sectors, like shadowing in politics or the media, feasibility becomes smaller still.

Simply, the potential is considerable and serious for a quietly renewed entrenching of opportunity by the privileged few, without any of the public awareness and pressure to reverse it felt by our universities in more basic issues of access.

So, a plan: everyone promises not to apply for any more life-sapping internships, and we all enjoy our vacations – and Terms – safe in the knowledge that no one is crippling anyone else's career prospects. It seems unlikely, I suppose. Still, to all freshers, whether wide-eyed and overwhelmed or mildly irritated at this necessary distraction before all the big money starts rolling in, a plea: relax, and savour your three – or however many – years here. They will go far too quickly.

Jon Swaine



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Varsity has been Cambridge's independent student newspaper since 1947, and distributes 10,000 free copies to every Cambridge college and APU weekly. Varsity is proud to be the holder of numerous student media awards and a vast number of alumni now working in international media. Varsity also publishes BlueSci magazine and The Mays, an online edition at www.varsity.co.uk, and broadcasts weekly on CUR1350.

To be involved, contact the relevant section editor, turning up to a section meeting (right) or by coming to the Varsity squash - 7pm on Thursday, 14th October at The Soul Tree (advertisement on page six). No experience necessary.

Section Meeting Times:

News - The Munby Room, King's: 7pm, Sundays
Music - Upstairs, Clown's Cafe: 3pm, Friday
Literature - Tatties, Trinity St: 2pm, Friday
Sport - the Eagle, 5pm, Saturdays

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VARSITY

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Shifting the blame

Continued from front page...

Admissions tutors defend themselves by discarding targets as being unattainable because they solely focus on an A-Level system that allows uncontrollable numbers of students to achieve top grades. Cambridge has made it clear that they will not be exercising any form of positive discrimination. Bill Rammell, responding in Varsity today, has clearly stated that individual universities are responsible for admissions. He has previously been quoted as saying "the challenge is for universities and colleges to reach out to communities, attract new students and offer new opportunities to everyone with the ability to participate." Martin Stephens responded to this claim saying "how long can we carry on blaming the universities when it's not their fault? Universities simply harvest the crop, we cannot blame them if the farmer has simply not prepared them well enough."

Headteachers of state schools reacted angrily against these accusations, pointing out that it is difficult for sixth form heads to dedicate substantial amounts of time to encouraging potential Oxbridge candidates given the range of academic ability in non-selective schools. 'The workload is enormous for one person, and twelve hour days not unusual. Training needs to be given to more staff'. Many went further to engage in direct criticism of the admissions procedure in place at Cambridge. The fault is alleged to often lie with individuals, particularly admission tutors who 'confuse confidence and intellect', alleges Carole Horseman of Hartlepool Sixth Form College. 'A gap exists between the University's public policy and attitudes actually held by individual admissions tutors'. The collegiate system is seen as a lottery by John Oakley of Notre Dame Sixth Form College in Leeds. His experiences with Cambridge admissions have led him to designate Selwyn College alone as a 'shining beacon' in comparison with other colleges where interviewers 'seemed to deliberately intend to suppress students' personalities'.

Academics and admissions tutors expressed grave reservations with current government policy. Challenged as to why state school students continued to be underrepresented, Peter Lineham bluntly said 'I suggest you start by asking Mr Blair'. Chris Padfield stated that 'much of the story has to do with policies and situations which lie beyond our control', a suggestion reflected in the frequent citing of tuition fees as a major barrier to increasing state school applications. This is an issue which CUSU President Laura Walsh feels passionately about. She believes a resolution to the problem can be effected 'by the Government outlawing private schools where teachers know how to play the admissions game' and dropping plans to introduce tuition fees, which are making CUSU's access work 'depressingly' fixated on the financial aspect of applications rather than the task of inspiring potential students.

Despite a £300 million spending drive, ministers have certainly moved slowly in considering alternative admissions options. If access issues are working, there is little tangible evidence of their success. 'Ivy League' American universities have set a celebrated precedent of introducing aptitude tests for potential applicants. Yet pupils who suffer from poor teaching will even be at a disadvantage if offered these. Certainly, post A-level qualification applications (PQAs) to Cambridge could put all candidates in the same positions. But this would likely wreak havoc within the university's admissions set-up as well as costing unrealistic amounts. Yet it would tackle the problem of low esteem identified by so many of the head teachers at the state schools that Varsity has spoken to. It would also remove the complications, inevitable prejudices and lengthy processes involved with teacher's predicted grades for prospective candidates.

College admissions tutors do not choose prospective candidates according to who will benefit most from the courses that they offer but instead who offers most in a UCAS form and an interview.

Headteachers' leaders have called upon the Government's admissions watchdog to "sharpen its claws," calling upon the Office for Fair Access to impose heavy fines upon universities failing to reach targets for increased state school access. Potentially, this department could refuse Cambridge's right to charge up to £3000 in top-up fees if they fail to meet these targets from next September.

One seemingly successful venture can be identified in the assignment of different LEAs to Cambridge colleges, where a focus will be directed towards these areas because they have previously sent insufficient numbers of pupils to Oxbridge. All students asked at Selwyn College knew that their LEA was Leeds. None in Jesus College were able to answer correctly.

Those sent into areas known to yield fewer Cambridge applicants upon recruitment drives are evidently successful, but both the university and Government have been criticised for sending these "apostles," to only the most extreme examples of such neighbourhoods.

It is certainly true that "the student body today seems staggeringly politically impassive." Jessica Holland's analysis of the decline in student activism presents a complacent student population who care about access issues but fail to sufficiently vocalise their dissatisfaction with the current system. CUSU President Laura Walsh explains that "the University just don't get it," but CUSU fail to adequately inform the student population why. When they do, their approach has too often been undermined by its overly political and insufficiently practical language.

We mustn't trivialise Cambridge by seeing our University as one amongst many others in a confused national picture. Access must be about showing that Cambridge is exceptional because it is a diverse, tolerant and progressive learning environment that should lead the way rather than follow. Those who exclusively blame secondary schools do so pathetically. Those who suggest any form of social engineering do so unfairly.

Geoff Parks, Cambridge's Admissions Tutor has argued that the nature of the task being undertaken will make the admissions process inevitably slow. Yet both the Government and Cambridge have adequate vehicles at their disposal for widening access immediately. Without properly employing these, the 'black admissions hole' will only be greyed at the edges and potentially never filled. Until both do so, both are to blame.

The university's OFFA agreement can be found at www.offa.org.uk/acc_agr/statements/H-0114.pdf www.offa.org.uk/acc_agr/statements/H-0114.pdf



Something to say?
email us: letters@varsity.co.uk

or write to: Varsity, 11-12 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QA

The joy of ICM cold calling

Dear Sir,

Has anybody else had the pleasure of being part of an ICM survey this summer? Next time you receive several cold calls in an evening followed eventually by an call in which you're asked if you want to help with a survey, then say yes!

Not only do you get the pleasure of being able to rant and rave at some poor unfortunate, underpaid teenager at the other end, who has to write down everything you say word-for-word, but a couple of weeks later you can turn on the TV news to watch a politician being rubbished over the results of the survey.

I would recommend it to anyone as the best piece of

free stress relief that you can have.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Gosden
Downing College

More options needed

Dear Sir,

As a new batch of freshers arrive, there are thousands of us preparing for our final year and the daunting prospect of life outside of the Cambridge bubble. There will be a number of students who know exactly where they are heading, especially those in so called 'vocational' projects.

However, there seems to be a disproportionate emphasis on career events based in investment banking, consultancy etc. compared to the one media event which is hosted each

February.

Although it would be ridiculous to suggest that a molly coddling approach should be used for finalists who may be anxious about career choices, more opportunities and support are definitely needed.

Whilst companies such as Goldman Sachs can afford to host lavish events in colleges and venues, there needs to be more career opportunities and fairs for those interested in fields such as publishing, advertising and other types of media.

Although the careers service at Stuart House provides an excellent service for students, it is most effective to speak to those who are already working in those fields.

Natasha Anders
Sidney Sussex College

Letters

Weak Chat

Dear Sir,

A note on trite conversations in freshers' week: "Hello my name is x, y, z and you are?", "Oh, I'm a, b, c it's nice to meet you." How many seconds is it before the next person comes along and you have forgotten about x, y, z and moved onto d, e, f? Oh, the monotony and fickleness of fresher week! But there is hope... role on five nights clubbing, one pub-crawl, and a few kisses and cuddles later, freshers' week is over and thank God because all that forced banal chitty-chat was beginning to piss you off.

Shantelle David



Letter of the Week

Dear Sir,

As the government ploughs on with its plans for ID cards, I hope Cambridge students of all persuasions will join with us in standing against them. In principle, ID cards are an appalling idea, the relic of a police state.

At the moment, we trade forms of ID for a particular service - a driving licence for when we want to drive, a passport for when we want to travel abroad, a National Insurance card for when we want to claim benefits. But to have to produce

an ID card just to prove that you exist is an unwarranted and unjustified breach of civil liberties.

Last term we had a great deal of three-party support in Cambridge, and I urge all freshers to join the No2ID campaign and help protect our freedom - if terrorists can't take away our civil liberties, neither should the government.

Seth Thévoz
Chair, Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats

The Answer

Letter of the Week wins a specially selected bottle from our friends at Cambridge Wine Merchants, King's Parade



"The Students were not Superbeings"

Varsity's correspondents write.

This Week: The New Fresher



Emily Wright

I haven't started packing, my room is an absolute mess, yet in just a few days I will be leaving home for the first time, starting life as a student at Cambridge.

Although I've been preparing myself for a long while, it still feels incredibly surreal. To say that I have mixed emotions would be an understatement. On the one hand, I'm terrified: nervous about making new friends, worried I won't be able to live without parents, filled with horror even at the thought of having to do my own washing. Still, underneath the fear and doubt is an enormous sense of excitement. I can't wait to become a Fresher.

What do I expect from Cambridge? I'm not entirely sure. My mind is full of all the predictable things yours probably once were: clubbing until the wee hours, working

deep into the night trying desperately to finish an essay, rolling out of bed at 9am to rush to a lecture.

However, the one general expectation I do have, regardless of what ever else happens, is that I will meet a diverse mix of interesting people, many of whose opinions and interests will probably be very different from my own.

And yet I'm looking forward to getting to know these people, challenging and debating them, learning from them and having fun along the way. I hope that some of the people I am about to meet will be my friends for life.

The feeling of College community and belonging is one of the main reasons I am so eager to come to Cambridge. When I first started thinking about universities, Cambridge was the last place I wanted to study. To be perfectly honest, my impression of

Cambridge was the stereotype: old-fashioned, rigid and highly demanding. Like many, I took some convincing that I was the sort of person who would fit in and enjoy it.

It was my parents who eventually persuaded me to consider Cambridge and encouraged me to apply. And I am glad they did. I was almost too stubborn to find out what Cambridge was really like. Almost.

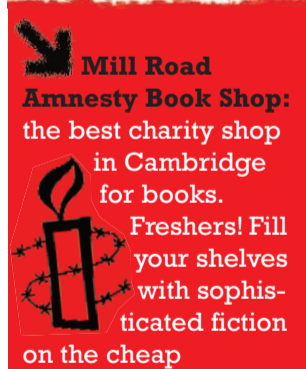
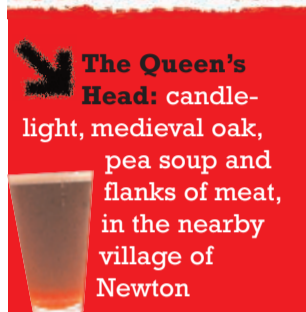
On coming up to visit for the first time, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the students were not, as I had suspected, strange super-beings from a different planet, but that in fact they were very normal and grounded.

But yes, also, I instantly fell in love with the place. I could easily imagine myself living there and the atmosphere of the city centre was more stimulating than any campus I had

been to.

I still expect high academic standards from Cambridge - who wouldn't? I also expect to have to work hard. Perhaps it was only upon finding out I had been accepted that I worried I wouldn't be able to cope; that everyone else would be more intelligent than me. A familiar, irrational anxiety, I'm sure. But, just as familiar is the reassurance that 'they' already have faith in my abilities.

I am capable of overcoming obstacles. Besides, I am looking forward to being challenged, having to think profoundly and even re-evaluate my views of the world. Of course this is what university is all about. Not only a place to study, but a chance to really mature, to form relationships and, most importantly, to enjoy yourself. I intend to do just that.



NO MORE BLACKING UP

As **BLACK HISTORY MONTH** celebrates the contribution of Black citizens to Britain's cultural life, Varsity looks at cultural life at a university where there are **FEWER BLACK STUDENTS THAN STUDENTS WITH THE SURNAME WHITE**. **EMMA PATTERSON** discovers a serious lack of Black Student involvement in our cultural scene, **GARY YOUNGE** puts things in perspective, and interviews with the legendary **MALCOLM PURKEY** and **DAVID ADJAYE** demonstrate how far we are behind the times.

Throughout my life, despite my African-English heritage, people have told me that they think of me as culturally white. Why? Because I spent seven years at an independent school, and I am now in my final year at Cambridge. To some, maybe I'm a traitor, to others, even a symbol of emancipation. To all, perhaps, I have stepped away from the tribe, and entered a white man's world.

Fellows have been fighting with this description of Cambridge for years, but, as CUSU President Laura Walsh told *Varsity*, the percentage of black students in the university remains "pitifully poor". It is no secret that there exists an under-representation of black students at the university. Chine Mbubaegbu was absolutely right when she commented in *Varsity* that this is "an issue that becomes increasingly tiresome the more and more it is brought up." We know that there are more people with the surname White than there are black undergraduates, and that despite the efforts of access officers to attract ethnic minority students, the number of black students has only increased by two in the past two years. These are all damning and inexcusable statistics. Yet they are accepted. What goes unmentioned, however, is how those black students who *are* here are being forced to stand on the periphery of the university's cultural scene.

Today the nation begins to celebrate Black History Month, an occasion designed to promote the knowledge of black historical experience, and to observe and pay tribute to the positive cultural contributions of black people to British society. David Adjaye and Malcolm Purkey, interviewed for this spread, provide two examples of Black professionals at the top of their respective fields yet

still artistically aware of their ethnicity. The past few months have witnessed countless events held in its honour; the exhibition 'Back to Black' at the Whitechapel Art Gallery offered us a broad survey of the Black Arts Movement during the 1960s and '70s; the British Film Institute presented 'Black World' exploring the history, evolution and cultural impact of black cinema; and Renaissance One, an independent agency in London set up to promote poets and novelists, is currently leading the 'Bittersweet Tour', which brings together the finest contemporary female black poets. The city of Cambridge itself celebrates the month with a high profile programme of events (listed opposite). That such a celebration exists is a refreshing and stimulating mark of progression, acceptance and open-mindedness. But in a modern, multinational society – and one that the Labour government has proclaimed as just and integrated, 'where diversity is valued' – it is also surely to be expected. I, for one, would not expect anything less. And yet, at my university, I have grown to see.

It is hard to defend your university against accusations of being a microcosm of a white man's world when it is rare to see a black face within its arts community. No one that I know can remember seeing any black actors in an Amateur Dramatic Club production for years. Neither has there recently been a black playwright represented by an ADC theatre production. No black writers were published in last year's Mays anthology. One out of the twenty members of the Cambridge University Jazz Orchestra is black, and for the two years before this there have been no black members at all. It would be irresponsible to separate these figures from the

minute proportion of black students in the university as a whole, but it would be even more so to use this alone as a justification for them. That the university rugby club boasts over half a dozen black players emphasises this artistic dearth by comparison. What is most evidently an admissions issue is also inextricably bound up with a collective mindset that is passively accepting of the status quo and undemanding of change. The President of the ADC, Benjamin Deery, whilst acknowledging the absence of artistic diversity, declared that he was unwilling for the Club to employ methods of positive discrimination in order to deal with this void. He told *Varsity* that "hope for a broader spectrum of theatrical diversity is totally understandable and justifiable...the theatre societies of Cambridge are totally receptive to those who would effect this change", comfortably recognising the need for progression but distancing the responsibility to enact it from his own hands.

It seems fair then that Robin Sivalapan, an enthusiastic actor while studying at Cambridge, explained to *Varsity* what he felt was a "vicious cycle" of inaction within the world of Cambridge theatre: "People say 'There aren't enough black actors so you can't cast it, so you can't put it on.' But the fewer plays there are with roles for black actors, the less confident the black actors in Cambridge become – because confidence comes from performance – and the less willing they are to audition when there is a role for them, and the roles just gradually disappear because you can't cast them'. And he's right. Identification is central to both a sense of acceptance, and of self-belief. If an African student sees only English names upon a newspaper

page, is there not the implicit message that African names are not meant for, and will never be seen on, that page? What is created is a chain of inferiority in which the black student sees only white success, and becomes alienated from extracurricular life.

But how far is it merely passivity that contributes to this alienation? Posted upon the CUSU forum board is the quotation: "I've been in Cambridge for nearly four years now, and when I'm out in the city, I definitely get more racist abuse shouted at me now than I did four years ago. I find Cambridge to be an increasingly hostile place to live. The university has its share of vocally racist students."

One actor tells me that, when faced with the problem of finding a black actor for a lead role, it was suggested to the director of the play by the ADC that she blacken a white actor's face. Stacey Gregg, who directed *Six Degrees of Separation* for the Pembroke

Players last year described to *Varsity* the difficulties she faced trying to cast for the Caribbean male lead: "I had to audition for over a month, no one was coming forward and it reached the point when I was being advised to cast an Indian actor instead." Stacey ignored these suggestions and ultimately persuaded a black student to make his debut on the stage in her production. Similarly, a director was told at a European Theatre Group interview that staging a production of *Othello* would prove unrealistic. Such information, though anecdotal, paints an intolerant and depressingly ignorant picture of a university that is supposedly working to attract and admit a greater number of ethnic minority students.

I don't need to gaze up at a black face every time I visit the ADC simply because I am half black. But in a university that boasts of a rich and diverse arts community, what I do need is to know that I can if I make the choice. And a black student auditioning for a part in *Romeo and Juliet* shouldn't be restricted to the role of Mercutio, simply because he was played by a black actor in the Baz Luhrmann production. He should be able to play Romeo in a production that makes the Montagues a black family because in one of the country's leading universities, no actor should be racially distanced from a work that is not, and never has been, racially specific.

There are no easy solutions. And perhaps I render myself as guilty as those I accuse of passivity and inaction by declaring that I have none. But a tiresome and unsolvable issue or not, to voice a defiance of its evils seems only fitting as we approach a month of cultural events dedicated to a celebration of the courage to do exactly that.





LEFT TO RIGHT: SIMON WEARS: SCARF - STYLISTS OWN, SHIRT - OXFAM (£5.99), BELT - DIESEL AT DOGFISH (£30), ZEN WEARS: BLAZER - GAS (£170), SCARF - STYLISTS OWN, SHIRT - TOPMAN (£20), JUMPER - ARTHUR SHEPHERD. ORAZIO WEARS: SCARF - STYLISTS OWN, NECKTIE - CAMBRIDGE MARKET (£5), SHIRT AND ARMBANDS - FROM A SELECTION AT EDE & RAVENSCROFT, WAISTCOAT - TOPMAN (£35), TRAINERS - OFFICE (£34.99).
STYLISTS AND IMAGE: ROSIE IBBITSON AND TOM TRUE

BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN CAMBRIDGE

This October Black History Month is being celebrated in Cambridge for the second time. A series of events have been organised, highlights of which include:

Set It Off, the Cambridge launch of Black History Month 2005, with graffiti, dance, drumming, and stalls selling African food and art. Free entry to the Meadows Community Centre on Sunday 2nd October.

A night of 'slam' poetry and spoken word, featuring Ainsley Burrows and Faro-Z with a live jazz/funk band, at Clare Cellars on October 30th.

A series of lectures at the University's Centre of African Studies, every Monday at 5pm from 17th October to 28th November.

GARY YOUNGE ON RACE AND CHANGE

Gary Young, British journalist and author, writes a column for The Guardian and is currently their correspondent based in New York City. His book No Place Like Home, retracing the route of the civil rights Freedom Riders, was shortlisted for the First Book Award in 1999.

Sadly we do need a Black History Month. We have to correct the imbalance in the manner in which history is both understood and taught. It gives the whole country, not just black people, the chance to hear narratives that have been forgotten, hidden, distorted or mislaid. You can't have a functioning multi-racial society working from a mono-racial understanding of its past. We should be doing that all year round of course but it doesn't hurt to concentrate on it for just a month. What I would also love to see is November being used for White History month - a month when we get to hear history rather than mythology about white people in Britain. White

people, like black people, need access to a past that is accurate, honest and inclusive. We do not need more white history; we need it better told. Black history, after all, is not a sub-genre of history. It is not an isolated part of the past with sole relevance to black people. Logic suggests you cannot have black history without white history. After all Nelson Mandela didn't jail himself and Rosa Parks didn't kick herself off the bus.

Universities, and Cambridge in particular, have an under-representation of black students principally for the same reason it has an under-representation of working-class students in general. Black people are overwhelmingly working class. They live in urban areas where social capital - schools, nurseries and other facilities - are under-funded or in crisis. Given the minimum number of resources spent on them and the amount of money their parents have to spend on them, the financial investment to simply get them through the education sys-

tem at a certain level does not exist. Add to that the fact that their parents are less likely to have gone to university and the cultural investment is often not there either. Tuition fees and student loans only compound these problems. This is primarily a question of class - wealthy non-white people have far better chances of going to such universities - but race cannot be divorced from that. In a country where most young black people's grandparents were concentrated in low-paid public service work or factory jobs when they arrived in this country their race denoted their class. A handful will get through. But most won't without greater support and investment.

My memory of the recent events in New Orleans is the sight of a great American city reduced to rubble as though it were Haiti with skyscrapers. The entire facade of America as a brazen leader of the free world was washed away by the broken levees and in its place we saw what has long been true - that

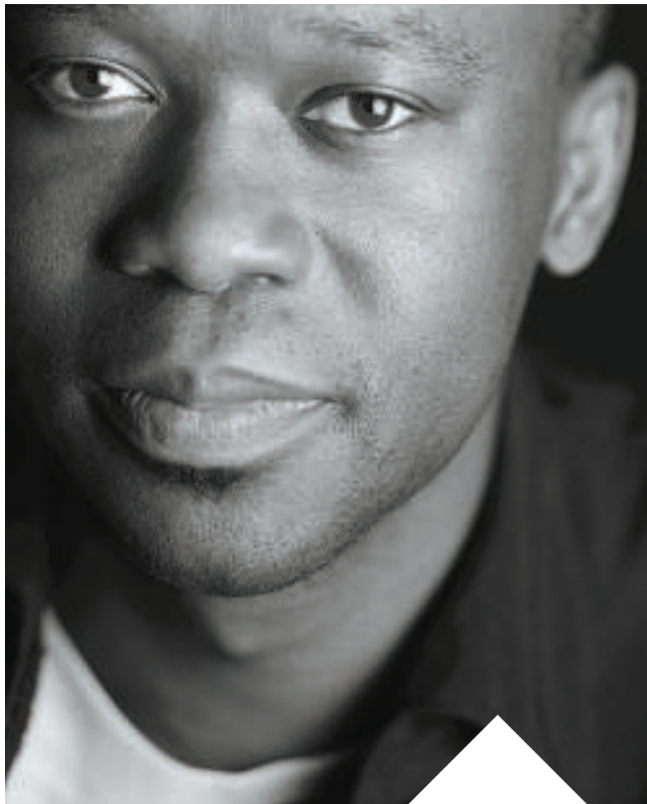
within this hyperpower there are people living in third world poverty. I will never forget the former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Michael Brown, saying, as tens of thousands of people converged on the convention centre, "We're seeing people that we didn't know exist." That sums up the present Administration's attitude to the poor, among whom the black are overwhelmingly over-represented.

I will most remember driving into New Orleans to something like a scene from *Blade Runner* with helicopters buzzing low overhead and the downtown all but deserted apart from the most eccentric and the most vulnerable. Talking to the few people outside the superdome who were boarding helicopters with no idea where they were going. I will also remember looking for my wife's 82-year-old godmother who was trapped in her house with her 85-year-old sister. We couldn't get to the house because the water was too deep and no National Guard

people would go and look for us. We later discovered that the sister had died of a heart attack while cooped up in the top floor of the house. My wife's godmother was taken to San Antonio and died there.

Who knows if journalism makes a difference? Clearly, doctors, teachers, aid workers, firefighters and the like make a more obvious difference. Nonetheless I'd like to think journalism can make a difference or I wouldn't bother doing it. It can make a difference in the way that people understand what is going on by framing issues and events in ways they maybe haven't thought of. It can also simply tell people things they didn't know and thereby arm them with information that they can use in their everyday life. Most journalism does neither of those things - although it does entertain which is also important. Journalism's importance should not be over-exaggerated; but its potential shouldn't be underestimated either.





Ambassador for the Other

Olly Wainwright speaks to architect David Adjaye

White suburban kids think it's cool to be black," complained Kanye West in a recent interview. "Is it cool to be black in design? Name me three black designers," retorts David Adjaye.

As the only prominent black architect in the world, Adjaye is also one of the coolest. His portfolio brims over with luxury homes and trendy bars for the fashionable London glam-pack (his clients include Ewan McGregor, Alexander McQueen, Chris Ofili, Tim Noble and Sue Webster), their sparkling interiors being a regular feature on the pages of glossy lifestyle supplements.

With his recent prominence, Adjaye has been somewhat forced into the position of "ambassador for the other" in architectural circles, his work influenced by nomadic, diasporic communities whose architecture has often been overlooked. "Architectural history," he argues, "is a fabrication. It imposes a clean linear model of European modernism, denying the existence of messy global pluralism for the sake of a neat evolutionary theory of design." When he started out, there was no black architecture in books or magazines. So he went looking for it.

"For a black architecture student there's no existing construction, no frame of reference in which you can operate. You're starting from scratch. You're not only asking

'how do I design?'; you're faced with the questions 'am I black or white?' 'Do I have to change?' You're handling a metaphysical dilemma on top of all the design headaches." It was this dilemma that pushed Adjaye towards seeking out and embracing the architecture of exiled communities and finding a point of orientation in the alternative - in African, Middle Eastern and Japanese practice, an escape route from the history written by a white modernist hegemony.

As a result of these enquiries - and his uprooted childhood between Africa and the Middle East as the son of a Ghanaian diplomat - his architecture appears distinctly well travelled, imbued with cultural reference and 'ethnic influence' ("oh my god, that's an awful phrase" he giggles). The narrow corridors, used in Chris Ofili's house and several installations, recall the dynamic urban condition of Moroccan souks, while the thick, dark masonry walls of his Dirty House, with a brilliant white interior, conjure up Middle Eastern vernacular. But he's quick to distance himself from suggestions that his buildings are cultural collage. "I don't do representation. That's not how I work."

"There was a period in the 1970s and 80s when architects resorted to lazy representation," he complains, "lifting motifs from other forms of architecture without a true understanding of their spatial

and cultural implications." His references are much more subtle and a far cry from the token gestures of postmodernism. Instead, Adjaye's inclusive approach to place-making and cultural assimilation seems symptomatic of the contemporary state, in which international boundaries are all but dissolved. "We're living in a completely global society and my work tries to engage with and celebrate this ener-

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ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY IS A FABRICATION, DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF MESSY GLOBAL PLURALISM.
”

getic pluralism." And regional identity? "Vernacular is dead," he asserts with a broad smile.

But despite proclaiming an inclusive architecture for all, there is little evidence of accessibility in the boutique homes and designer bars that make up his elegant portfolio. Yet this is all to change with a series of ultra-PC public projects, principally the newly opened Idea Store for the

dilapidated London borough of Tower Hamlets (a canny re-branding of the public library, complete with cybercafe and massage room) and a huge 'imbricated hyperbuilding' in Shoreditch for the Institute of International Visual Arts (inIVA), the organisation that championed the black artists Isaac Julien and Joy Gregory. As an international network for promoting artists from culturally diverse backgrounds, inIVA represents a conscious effort to redress the balance of representation in the arts, something Adjaye is keen to support. "It shouldn't have to exist," he complains, feeling the same way about Black History Month and the University's 'Black and Asian Access days'; "These are poor solutions." He is not surprised to hear that there are only two black architecture students at Cambridge.

"Racism is worse than ever before," he asserts. "It's just not as obvious, not as easy to pin down and define. It's like a virus. It has evolved and mutated into something much more sophisticated and nuanced than we were all taught at school." He fears that black kids are now brought up to believe that racism has been stamped out, which makes them even more vulnerable to these new "elegant forms of discrimination." Asked if his own career was hampered by such prejudice, his easy confidence returns: "It didn't hamper me. I'm a smart guy."

No man is an island

Jenny Lee talks to director Malcom Purkey

"You call laughing at me 'theatre'? Then go to hell with your 'theatre!'" So says Winston in *The Island* as he throws his wig to the floor in a defiant refusal to act. His outpouring underlines the extent to which theatre and humiliation walked hand in hand under the oppression of South Africa's Apartheid government. Black players were granted permission to perform in a 'white area', but only under degrading conditions. They were not allowed to use the theatre toilets and had to return to the townships immediately after the curtain came down. Constantly combating the humiliation spawned by Apartheid was Athol Fugard, a leading white playwright who formed the non-racial company Serpent Players. The players chose the name as a badge of honour after being offered a snake pit to perform in. Intrigued and challenged by the audience-actor dynamic that this might create, the company accepted the space, combating the debasing connotations of the pit by embracing its significance as a visual metaphor for their status as performers. As actors they were never safe. According to Fugard their group "was targeted as highly suspect. Rehearsals were broken up by police raids, and periodically one of our number would disappear only to turn up later in a kangaroo court on trumped-up charges, which, in turn, would lead to imprisonment on Robben Island." Such events inspired this same company to create one of South Africa's most famous plays.

The Island tells the story of John and Winston, black cellmates incarcerated on the infamous

Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned during Apartheid. The pair decide to stage *Antigone* during the upcoming prison concert. John is the leader of their project whilst the shy Winston fears the laughter of the other inmates. When John is suddenly told that his sentence has been shortened and that he will be released in three months, the play takes on a powerful new meaning for Winston. Imprisoned for life, with no hope of parole, Winston finds a painful symbolism in performing *Antigone*. In the final scene, as Winston addresses the invisible prison audience he tears off his costume, discarding the tragic role of the Greek princess

the actors and Purkey himself in preparation for my pre-show discussion with them, I felt the self-conscious tug of my white middle-class status. It's one thing to understand and another to relate. Yet this is perhaps why *The Island* has transcended the moment and circumstances of its creation. It is performed today on the basis that the story it tells is a powerful medium for cultural communication. "The play has the power to make you see what the South Africans have gone through," enthuses actor Mpho Molepo. "It carries so much emotion that it can actually take you through a time and an emotional state to show you what the South Africans have gone through as a people,

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The performance was illegal and the prison audience were forbidden to applaud.
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accepting her fate, and instead reverts to a black South African man returning to his living death.

Recently staged at the Cambridge Arts Theatre by South Africa's renowned Market Theatre, it is a play that the eminent director Malcolm Purkey and actors Mpho Molepo and Thami Mngqolo believe still has an acute relevance for both international audiences and those at home.

Having researched the play,

as a country." Director Purkey, too, is fiercely animated on this point, as he leans forward to emphasise that "we're still in transition and will be for fifty to a hundred years. We have to learn to honour those things to which honour belongs. Part of the question that we face in South Africa at the moment is 'is history dead?' There's a lot of anxiety about what we do and don't remember. But you get young audiences in and they're very receptive."



a scene from *The Island*

I mention that the students are still on holiday, and that his average audience member is likely to be over fifty. He looks disappointed for a moment but replies, "We have to learn to play the drama and not be taken aback by respectful silence. I expect the audiences will be formal, not cold, perhaps more intellectual. Listening audiences." Saying this he turns to his actors with a grin and in a gruff voice

grunts "It's a challenge, eh?" In contrast, contemporary South African audiences are famously reactive, both young and old alike fully engaging in the moment with the actors. Nevertheless, the performance I saw was brilliantly acted with an energy that defied our respectful silence throughout the production. At the end people cheered and whooped, and the man next to me cried and cried.

I should add that there was actually a performance of *Antigone* given on Robben Island amongst the many 'shows' that the prisoners organised for each other. It was, strictly speaking, illegal, and the prison audience were forbidden to applaud. Instead they would brush or rub their hands silently together.


Venue Guide: The Kambar

Where is it? Careful as it's nothing more than a doorway, directing from the main gate at King's, turn right, then an immediate left and it's eventually on your right.

Why Kambar? The drink prices are high (although I suppose reasonable in Cambridge), lager is served in a can, spirits in party cups and the abundance of stairs feels like a safety hazard, but the feel is that of a party in a fairly rich friend's attic. Only helped by quirks such as beams across the dancefloor and arcade machines. Possibly not the best place if you get claustrophobic though...

What goes on? Every Friday and Saturday are the big indie nights at Kambar. Tuesdays alternate between goth nights and metal/rock nights and have strong links with the music societies within Cambridge.

Kambar opens at 9pm and kicks out at about 2am, it's prices range between anything from £2 and £4, provided you bring along your NUS card, and it's usually cheaper if you turn up before 11. For certain nights being a member of University society also gets you a discount.

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Stewart Lee
This Edinburgh Fringe show, about the hate campaign against Lee by Christian groups, is one of the most brilliantly-constructed pieces of stand-up you will ever see.
The Junction, 7pm, £10 NUS, Friday 11th November



Hardcore 'Til I Die vs Raver Baby
Happy hardcore, the screaming, hyperactive, sugar-crazed toddler in the train carriage of dance culture, comes to Cambridge for an evening.
The Corn Exchange, 9pm-6am, £17, Friday 14th October

the essential events of the next seven days



theatre
Duck Variations
One of the plays with which David Mamet (above) made his name in 1976. The last outdoor show of the summer.
Sidney Sussex College Gardens, 3pm, £4, Monday 3rd October until Tuesday 4th



The Vagina Monologues
Tamara Beckwith (above), Su Pollard and Josie D'Arby will be gazing at more than their navels during this celebrated show's return to Cambridge.
Cambridge Arts Theatre, £10 NUS, 6pm and 9pm Friday 30th September, 5pm and 8pm Saturday 1st October



Post-Edinburgh Triple Bill
Macbeth: The Hour, The Threepenny Opera, and Footlights tour show *under the blue blue moon* (above). The actors will still be wreathed in Scottish mists.
ADC, from 7:30 pm, £4/5 each, Tuesday 4th October until Saturday 8th



film and music
Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra
Hear selections from Lutoslawski, Sibelius, and Berlioz, conducted by Gabriel Chmura.
The Corn Exchange, 7:30pm, Wednesday 5th October



Bang Bang in da Manor
A documentary about the disproportionate levels of gun violence in Britain's black community, with a post-film discussion by filmmaker Ishmahil and Dr Lez Henry of Goldsmiths.
The Junction, 6pm, free, Thursday 6th October



A History of Violence
A claustrophobic thriller from David Cronenberg, director of *Scanners* and *Videodrome*, who in 1983 turned down the chance to direct *Return of the Jedi*. Stars Viggo Mortensen.
Arts Picturehouse

Week of the Pick

All the Answers Guy Ritchie and Jason Statham

Guy Ritchie has directed Jason Statham in three films. Their latest film, Revolver, has been received with mixed critical acclaim and disatisfied many of the critics who lauded Lock Stock and Snatch on account of its ambition to marry metaphysical drama with action-packed gangster flick. Guy Ritchie and Jason Stratham offer All the Answers as to why they set their sights so high.

So, why Revolver?
Guy Ritchie: I've always been surprised that no other movie has ever been called Revolver because it just sounds cool. So I like the name but I also like the concept that, if you're in a game, it keeps revolving until you realize that you are in a game and then maybe you can start evolving. The film is based on the formula of a game: where does the game start, where does it stop and who's conning who.

What kind of a game?
Jason Statham: Chess itself is very symbolic to the movie.

We're in a game, the con of chess, the con of life. Chess is like the art of war on 64 squares. It's a killer game. You're only as good as your opponent. It's got lots of subliminal messages in the rules and the approach to the game, and how that relates to Jake's formula because the formula is applicable to many things besides chess.

If your character, Jake Green, were a piece on the chess board, which one would he be?
Jason Statham: At the beginning he's just a pawn. At the end, he's the king. He's learned everything there is to learn about yourself. He learns that perceived knowledge is worthless. Everything we think we know about ourselves means nothing.
Guy Ritchie: It's funny, I never expected as a writer-director to end up talking about high-falutin' concepts. I got into filmmaking because I was interested in making entertaining movies, which I felt there was a lack of. Jake Green isn't just Jake Green. Jake represents all of us. The color green is the central column of the spectrum and the name Jake has all sorts of numerical values. All things come back to him within the film's world of cons and games. Jake's on a journey of how to play the game.

So is the movie more complicated than Lock Stock and Snatch?
Jason Statham: I think the fun and games of Snatch and Lock, Stock... are great but now it's fun to do something different. It's such a

radical movie. You haven't seen or you won't see one like this forever and a day. You've got to be wide awake. It takes a lot of balls to get this going, without taking anything away from his previous movies. People come up to me in the street and say that Snatch is their favorite ever movie. I heard that Dr. Dre has two copies, he likes it so much. One's in the DVD player itself but just in case it gets scratched, the other's still there in the cellophane.
Guy Ritchie: The great challenge then was to take an intellectual concept and clothe it in an exciting, action-packed narrative because concepts are not necessarily interesting to look at. It's important that the film delivers on an entertaining level. What you want in the cinema is entertainment but I like to be intellectually titillated while being sensorially stimulated. It took me three years to write this film whereas Snatch took me three months.

And the Setting for revolver is far more abstract?
Guy Ritchie: The movie is set in no-man's land. It's a kind of



transatlantic destination that is really supposed to be illustrative of East meets West somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic. In fact, we shot most of it in London and the Isle of Man, which isn't quite the middle of the Atlantic but it's going that way.

A lot of critics have discussed how prominently the film discusses the nature of chance and circumstance. Can you explain this further.
Guy Ritchie: I don't believe chance exists, no. I don't know whether it does but personally I don't believe in it. Either in it. Either there's order in the universe or there's chaos. Either everything is predetermined or, by the definition of free choice, you can determine it but there's still no element of chance. Or there's the other way of thinking, that it's all chaos and there's absolutely no order and it's all chance. You can either subscribe to one or the other. I subscribe to the idea that there is order although it may look like total chaos, but I've no idea if I'm right.

And such is the nature of Guy's scriptwriting process?
Jason Statham: The script's been spun on its head so many times but that's the way Guy works. He's got such an engaged mind. He had so many amazing, colorful characters, it's a real shame some of them had to go. It's like a constant work in progress with him but that's what's interesting because everything's always being improved.

What's the most enjoyable thing about working with Guy?



“People come up to me in the street and say that Snatch is their favorite ever movie. I heard that Dr. Dre has two copies, he likes it so much.”

Jason Statham: Just the sheer lack of confidence he has in all the people around him. He makes you feel so incompetent and useless that it's hilarious. He makes it fun. He doesn't seem to take you seriously, but really he does. There's a great balance there. When you need to do something important, he'll make it what it needs to be. His environment is so serious, but then it's not. It's like "Let's make a movie and let's have some fun."

Guy, how do you feel about working collaboratively?
Guy Ritchie: If somebody has a better idea than me, I'll take it if it surpasses what we have on the page because at the end of the day, it's me that takes the credit anyway! I'm not under too much of an illusion of how smart or un-smart I am because filmmaking ultimately is about teamwork. I enjoy the process and I've usually done quite a lot of preparation before I arrive on set so I'm not a touchy filmmaker and I'm not an anxiety-ridden filmmaker, at least while I'm shooting the film. If you enjoy things, it tends to quell your negative traits.

And what has been the most enjoyable moment of the filming process?
Jason Statham: It has to be the 70's pornstar look. Two-tone snakeskin and Cuban heels. Everybody should wear those shoes once. They're winners.

Revolver is on general release

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Clockwise from top: *Macbeth: The Hour*, two of *Astrakhan Winter*, another of *Macbeth: The Hour*, *Volpone: Sex, Lies and Videotape*, and *Apocalypse: The Musical*



Angular Fringe

Chris Adams gives a rundown of this year's Edinburgh Festival

It's a light-hearted black comedy about Hitler's cat, seen through the eyes of an alcoholic traffic warden in Swansea. I'm in it. It's very good", a girl in a bloodstained chicken costume rattles out, thrusting another flyer at us, one of many to add to the swamp of soggy paper that pads Edinburgh's Royal Mile for three weeks of the year. Won't they think of the trees, we muse, as a nearby man with a papier-mache dove on his head bursts into song, a troupe of male nuns conga by, and yet more promotional material is propelled in our direction.

A NEW COLOUR-CODED SECTION OF THE FRINGE PROGRAMME COULD WELL HAVE BEEN CREATED TO COVER ALL THE CAMBRIDGE SHOWS

There's something quite unique about the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The Fringe is the increasingly-commercial sidekick to the larger 'official' International Festival, and (subject to a booking fee) pretty much everything goes – any vacant space (and I mean any – toilets, lifts, minibuses, your

lounge) is taken over by a posse of actors desperate to get anything more than two audience members to come and enjoy their public transport-based pre-West End musical romp *Bus! The Musical* or *The Importance of Being Turbann'd*. This year, just under 27,000 performances of 1800 shows happened in 247 venues; figures which are truly staggering.

And of course, Cambridge thespians did their bit for the cause, turning up in droves with so many shows that a new colour-coded section of the Fringe brochure could well have been specially created for them. Around twenty separate Cambridge casts headed northwards, creating the illusion that the ADC bar had been a part of some teleportation experiment which had dropped it unaltered into Edinburgh's C Venues, be-hooded techies and all.

The ADC went with the Scottish vibe, presenting *Macbeth: The Hour*, a total theatre adaptation of *Macbeth* squeezed into, well, an hour. A brave move, considering there were twelve other Scottish Play variations to contend with. *Astrakhan Winter* was less Scottish, but boasted a

'World Premiere' tag and was deemed 'thoroughly professional' by the British Theatre Guide. Away from death and destruction, the Broadway Savoyards shed clothes and inhibitions for a racy production of Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* which seemed to divide the punters of Edfringe.com's reviews neatly into 'loved it' and 'loathed it' categories, as so many Fringe shows often do. The Footlights were back with a scaled-down version of their tour show *under the blue, blue moon*, a show which – according to its reviews – seemed to isolate its non-Cambridge viewers a little, but which went to receive pretty favourable reviews in the provinces. *Volpone: Sex, Lies and Videotape* scandalised audiences with its stylish, sleazy adaptation of Johnson's classic. The *Macbeth*, *Threepenny* and Footlights gangs are back for a triple bill at the ADC from Tuesday, so judge their relative merits for yourself.

Sitting in a church hall with fifty bemused Japanese exchange students, a rock and rollin' transsexual and an Eastern Bloc punk band must rank amongst the more

peculiar experiences of the last few months, but it was certainly entertaining. Joe Swarbrick as the eponymous Hedwig (of *...and the Angry Inch* fame) and Lydia Wilson as his male/female (except on Wednesdays when it was the other way round – or something) sidekick Yitzhak made a triumphant return with an hilarious, polished and moving half-musical, half-monologue which deserves some sort of revival once again in the near future. Meanwhile, *Apocalypse The Musical* impressed crowds with cows and (more) singing nuns –

FIFTY BEMUSED JAPANESE EXCHANGE STUDENTS, A ROCK'N-ROLLIN' TRANSSEXUAL AND AN EASTERN BLOC PUNK BAND

Broadway Baby was impressed enough to call it 'the funniest musical ever'. Praise indeed.

Cambridge alumni once again caused a buzz, with ex-Footlight Mark Watson hitting the headlines with his 33-hour standup marathon, during which he discussed each of the last 2005 years in just a minute each; highlights included the burning of his

trousers after losing a round of Trivial Pursuit, and being joined by sidekicks including Dara O'Briain and Ed Byrne.

Doing an Edinburgh show is an exhausting and often thankless task. Companies dedicate vast amounts of time to production, rehearsal and publicity and whilst some shows are unexpected hits, many struggle to find their audience. Yet, surely, that's the point of 'doing' Edinburgh in the first place. Once you get past the branding, the creeping ticket prices and the dubious corporate sponsorship, the Fringe was always meant to be about risk, about excitement and about innovation. Year upon year, it's reassuring to see that Cambridge has one of the heaviest – and most impressive – presences in Edinburgh of any group of theatre enthusiasts in the country. Here's to 2006...

See varsity.co.uk for a freshers' guide to Cambridge theatre and for *Martha and Matilda* on total theatre at Edinburgh

“Performances from all the cast soon make you forget you're watching student theatre. It's a brave and successful play that really has something exciting and original to offer.” *Macbeth: The Hour*, Three Weeks - The pick of the 7 *Macbeth's* at the Fringe.

“It's a student production but it is only the youth of the performers that give that fact away: in all else it is thoroughly professional, and at a very high standard.” *Astrakhan Winter*, British Theatre Guide – Also Nominated for Amnesty, List and WGGB (Writer's Guild) Awards.

“The music is drunken and brilliantly performedwear layers and strip off as the cast do! Semi naked students snog in drag with great gusto” *The Threepenny Opera*, 3 weeks

“The opening number sees Charlie singing about the wonders of milk, backed by gurning, spacehopper-riding cows, while his soon-to-be love interest, the prostitute-cum-madam Wendy, waxes lyrical about the joys of selling sex.” *Apocalypse the Musical*, Edinburgh-festivals.com

“Magnificent welsh wit” Mark Watson, The Telegraph

“If you haven't yet seen *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, go now. If you've seen it before, go again and take a look at this new perspective on it. You won't be disappointed.” BroadwayBaby.com – Also a sell-out show.



Downfall

A claustrophobic look at Hitler's final ten days.

This controversial account of the fallen leader's descent into madness is unavoidably captivating. RRP £19.99

dvd of the week

“Physical theatre is too often trapped in the body. Enter with flourish the newest, fattest dwarf on the scene: ‘Total Theatre’...” See *Martha and Matilda's* column on varsity.co.uk



MARY BOWERS TALKS TO THE SUGABABES ABOUT THEIR NEW ALBUM TALLER IN MORE WAYS



HANNAH BRIGGS TALKS TO DEBORAH MOGGACH ABOUT HER NEW ADAPTATION OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE



4 cities in Film

Kirsty Dootson and Hannah Briggs review the summer's most exciting film festivals

Edinburgh (August)

In its 59th year, the Edinburgh International Film Festival is one of the most overlooked reasons to head north in August, showcasing features, shorts, animation, documentary and music promos from around the world.

One of the highlights of the British offerings was *The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael*. Billed as "the most shocking British film of the year", there are evident nods to *A Clockwork Orange* (despite denial from director Thomas Clay) in this portrayal of disaffected youth in a southern coastal town. While attention has mainly focused on the brutal closing sequence, the majority of the film's themes are touched upon with great subtlety. Despite the fact that most of the audience couldn't bear to look at times, the ones that could will testify to the aesthetic beauty of this film,

Top documentaries

- *Grizzly Man* by Werner Herzog
- *Shake Hands With The Devil* by Peter Raymont
- *Shape Of The Moon* by Leonard Retel Helmrich
- *Why We Fight* by Eugene Jarecki

which has been greatly overlooked due to its controversial subject matter. Other films that stood out as entirely unique included Emmanuel's Carrère's existentialist adventure *La Moustache* and *Grizzly Man*, a documentary by Werner Herzog which equals if not surpasses Carrère's surrealism.

In the current climate of remakes and sequels in mainstream cinemas this summer,

the film festival's programme offered genuine diversity and originality, and looks set to make for a very happy 60th Birthday next year.

Venice (March)

The future of the Venice Film festival remains somewhat precarious, with frequent terror alerts, no headquarters and the increasing threat of being outrivaled by Rome. Nevertheless, this year's festival, now in its sixty-second year, once again succeeded in showcasing a wealth of cinematic splendour. Of particular interest was Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*, an epic love story between two lonesome cowboys (Keith Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal). Having already gleaned the top prize Golden Lion at Venice, Lee looks set to add many more stars to his credentials belt with this film.

KD

HB

Toronto (September)

Despite its relative newbie status on the film circuit, the Toronto Film Festival has made considerable headway on its European counterparts since debuting thirty years ago. Hailed for being the festival with "the widest brim", Toronto offers cineastes an eclectic spread of over three-hundred films.

The festival opened with Deepa Metha's politically charged *Water*, which follows

the lives of Hindu widows living in India. The Canadian filmmaker has spent five turbulent years making the film, having received death threats from Hindu fundamentalists, who claim that the film "distorts Indian culture". Metha, however, has remained resilient throughout, and if the film's reception in Toronto is anything to go by, her efforts have certainly not been in vain.

Paris (July)

City dwellers and tourists alike couldn't resist sampling the offerings of the Rencontres Internationales de Cinéma and Le Festival de Tous les Cinémas in Paris last July. Those cinema-goers less concerned with the makers and breakers of the festival circuit indulged themselves on an escapist array of French classics, such as Jacques Tati's slapstick delight, *Mon Uncle*

HB

Next year ...

Edinburgh: 17th-28th August 2006
Venice: 16th-19th March
Toronto: 7-16th September
Paris: 1-10th July

(1958). The critics however favoured Georgina Garcia Riedel's début film *How the Garcia Girls* spent their summer. The story follows three generations of Mexican-American women as they each experience a sexual awakening one sweltering summer in Arizona. Despite the film's unavoidable comedy value, Riedel's thoughtful narrative also raises subtler questions about prejudice and the complexity of self-realization for women of any age.

HB

Pride and Prejudice ★★★★★

Just how do you film a "new" version of *Pride and Prejudice*? Austen's story is a well-trodden one, most famously by the 1995 BBC screen incarnation, and director Joe Wright has voiced his answer to this familiarity as aiming for a "real and gritty" version of costume drama, with naturalism of performances and camerawork. It's certainly an appealing interpretation. Ubiquitous ball scenes are conveyed with a genuinely joyous breathlessness; the Bennett sisters, whose romantic entanglements the film follows, seem scrubbed authentically free of make-up; the dialogue lacks the stiffness of what we know to be "period drama" whilst staying true to Austen's imitable style.

Yet herein lies the problem - its naturalism is the intensely studied kind, and this "revisionist" approach is nothing new. Verité-style shots of pigs grunting in a sty, wind-tatted hair and muddy hems are fast on their way to becoming as much of a cinematic cliché as the clichés they seek to overturn. What supposedly makes Wright's version something

fresh and new is not very new at all, and without this distinction it's just another handsome adaptation.

That said, *Pride and Prejudice* is still a perfectly enjoyable way to pass two hours. The story is eternally diverting, and the performances uniformly fine. Keira Knightley's oddly mannered enunciation may lead you initially you to wonder exactly who it is she's impersonating, and real chemistry with Matthew Macfayden's strangely blank Darcy is sorely absent, but her tomboyish Elizabeth ultimately engages our emotions. The supporting cast has a ball (Tom Hollander, in particular, is stellar), and the final scenes, with Donald Sutherland's patriarch tearfully realising the extent of his beloved Elizabeth's happiness, are undeniably affecting.

Ultimately, any adaptation of an Austen novel is never going to offer many surprises. Wright's interpretation may not reinvent the wheel, but it's still a beautifully shot, well-acted piece of costume escapism.

Pride and Prejudice is showing at the Arts Picturehouse

No more bonnets and teacups

Deborah Moggach, the latest writer to adapt *Pride and Prejudice* for the cinema, speaks to Hannah Briggs, while Carly Farthing reviews the film (left)

How did you cope with the constraints of fitting the novel into two hours of film?

I decided to tell the story entirely from Lizzie's point of view, which meant conflating several scenes and pairing everything down. For instance, she keeps her secrets to herself rather than confiding in Charlotte or Jane. The advantage of this is that the scenes have room to breathe, which allows for the big visual moments, reactions and access to the characters' interior lives.

Did you feel the film was successful in overcoming the clichés of period dramas with its naturalistic approach?

I wanted the film to be fresh and to avoid the 'bonnet and teacup' stereotypes of Georgian society. Instead it's full of honest details: lots of dirt, roaming hens and red nosed people dying their clothes in beetroot juice. I wanted to show people behaving as they would do normally, with houses being "lived in". I also wanted to bring an

emotional truth to the film, where comedy springs from pain and making mistakes. Take Mrs Bennet, for instance: a woman whose comedy value originates from a desperate desire to marry off her daughters and save the family from destitution.

Were there any particular scenes which you were tempted to over-write?

Yes, especially the scene where Lizzie and Darcy meet at Pemberley: "I thought you were in London" "No. I'm not." You can't have an ego when writing a scene like this; you have to trust the actors to do their job. When writing a screenplay, the core of storytelling lies in characters' actions, not dialogue.

Comedy springs from pain and making mistakes



left: Keira Knightley and, right: Deborah Moggach

You have to show what people are thinking on the page, which is so important in such a circumscribed society.

Did you feel that Keira Knightley succeeded in conveying the courage of Elizabeth?

At first I thought she was too beautiful for the role. After all, Lizzie's beauty originates from her wit and intelligence, which gives hope to all women. Furthermore, Lizzie's beauty is of a very modern kind, where as Jane's is more conventional. However, I was pleasantly surprised by Kiera's performance; she brings a certain tomboyishness and grit to the role, proving herself to be a phenomenal actress.

Did you actively seek to get away from traditional "period" dialogue?

Yes, although most of the dialogue is still Austen's language slightly combed through. Saying that, I didn't like the

Kiera brings tomboyishness and grit to the role of Elizabeth

"intercourse" line by Mr Collins, as it's a cheap joke. Besides, people wouldn't have understood that word at the time.

How have you managed the dual challenge of living up to the book and television version?

I've tried to be truthful. I didn't feel too inhibited by previous versions because this film is a unique creature of its own. Besides, in the end we have to come back to the book, which will always remain open for interpretation.

Deborah Moggach's latest novel is *These Foolish Things* (Chatto and Windus)

Are there enough opportunities for DJs in Cambridge?

Nikhil Shah says:



Definitely. If you've delved into the Cambridge music scene, you'll know the town boasts a respectable range of independent nights - mainly in venues mysterious to the average Cambridge student who finds the "trek" up the hill to Fitz a great mission (this, incidentally, has lead somewhat to the fall of the notorious Red Shift, which used to offer gig opportunities to many up and coming student DJs).

In a university of 30 colleges, there's always a party, bop or gig going on. They all need DJs - many of them have trouble finding them. This should not be the case. Anyone with an interest in playing out and confidence enough to give some chat can get a few CDs together and play in the second room at a college bop (e.g. Churchill's Pav) or downstairs in the Cow. You no longer need to be a 10 year avid vinyl collector with a 2,000 strong collection of everything from obscure Polish funk to Detroit techno.

And what about students setting up their own nights? Last year Cambridge saw independent student promotions running through everything from grime and hip-hop to indie and electroclash.

I'll end with a quick and utterly fitting plug. CUSUents has plans to hold an iPod DJ night this term - so get your playlists ready for your Cambridge DJ debut.

Nikhil Shah, aka DJ Sketchy, has been DJing for 7 years in London and Cambridge. He is now CUSU Ents Manager. If you're a DJ or in a band, email ents-manager@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Each week Varsity asks a question of Cambridge's cultural life. You ask the questions, we'll answer them: letters@varsity.co.uk.

Three North London girls who push all the right buttons

Mary Bowers talks to the Sugababes

Herded into a glass-plated room and forced to listen to ridiculously upbeat overproduced pop while being scrutinized by slitty-eyed media professionals: no, this is not some kind of cerebral torture for teenagers, but the press conference for the Sugababes' new album.

Ah, you may say, but Sugababes are the indie-man's pop crumpet, the only mainstream girl act 'alternative' enough to cover Adina Howard's 'Freak Like Me' and casually throw in a Gary Numan sample as if they'd just whipped it out of their CD collection from its place between Madonna's *Immaculate Collection* and *Speed Garage* 2003. It is possible to wax lyrical for hours on how the 'Babes are the muso's chewing gum of choice, and why they deserve to be. But that's only for those who failed to notice that that elfin-indie one was surreptitiously (though not quietly, according to certain tabloids) whipped away

'I like it. It's my favourite video.' 'It wasn't that bad... it's just the way its shot... I mean my boyfriend was there at the playback and he was, like, errrrr....' 'To me a raunchy video is good, I wish I could fit in to the shorts Muts fits into.' The three Sugababes have just waltzed in. And I like them already. Dripping with gold hoops, Adidas metallic parka pulled up around her St Christopher, Mutya sulks in the corner, her scarlet nail extensions tapping away at a text message ('I can't do anything without them,' she snorts when quizzed about said talons). Heidi sits between them, grinning around the room and clutching her handbag (she arrived without the others because 'there was nowhere else to smoke in the building') and perches as if she's in media-Wonderland, in black alice-band and immaculate black shirt. Keisha digs her heels into the carpet and peers



"You can split up over an argument - a haircut in Atomic Kitten's case!"

and replaced by the scouser one, famed for looking as uncomfortable between the other Sugas as Jade Goody in the middle of the Mobos.

Taller in More Ways is the name of the Babes' forth studio album and is released, so we are reliably informed, on October 10th. As an album, it's unremarkable: precisely the kind of unimaginative pop that will have ten years olds everywhere line-dancing to the radio and snuggling up to their *Smash Hits* posters of J.T. and Ludacris. This becomes even more worrying when you consider the subliminal messages conveyed by tracks like *Obsession*, which follows through its 80s pop/Steps/Abba/Madonna with the hypnotizing refrain: 'You're an obsession,' they whisper, perhaps unaware of their own happily misogynistic undertones, 'who do you want me to be to make you sleep with me?' Scary. Even more so alongside the video to current single 'Push The Button' which shows the tidy triplets splitting off into three consecutive lifts to do things with boys that...well, ten year old girls certainly shouldn't understand.

above leather-clad cleavage with perfect puppy dog eyes. These girls must have been individually stylized from birth. They're a neat little pop band.

'We don't have a particular sound,' insists Keisha, 'we used to be known as this kind of indie/r'n'b/pop/rock kind of group. That sound was given to us by [producers on their first three albums] Camron McVeigh and Jonny Rockstar. We have more control over our sound now.' It's difficult to have image of a girl band who actually write, instead of covering their tracks with the old 'co-writing' chestnut. Heidi, however, has some profound song-writing tips of her own: 'Sometimes it's good if you're having a bad day because then you get to write something good.' Mutya scowls. Keisha rescues the cause. Do they consider this album theirs? 'Definitely. More than ever. We worked with Dallas [Austin - of TLC/Madonna/Gwen Stefani fame]. He didn't change our style. It's us, now, rather than the producers.' Not the other way round? 'No.'

So, the Sugababes are *Taller in More*

Ways, and it's not just the high heels. Or Mutya's new baby keeping them up at night. There's got to be something remarkable about any pop outfit that has been around for five years, lost a founding member before being dropped from their label, slandered to every other label, and eventually re-signed, reformed, and, so its seems, regenerated. And all before the ages of 19, 20 and 21 respectively. What's their secret? 'Communication.' This seems a little trite, no? 'You can split up over an argument - a hair cut in Atomic Kitten's case' - cue cheeky giggle from ex-Kitten Heidi - 'but it's about communication. It's a relationship.' Reach for the stars, baby.

These girls aren't fakers: Keisha and Mutya were brought up in Kingsbury 'We're just your typical North-Westerners,' the closest London gets to ghetto kids made good. Are they welcome on the 18 bus? 'It hits some people if you're on the TV,' says Mutya, perking up suddenly. '... it's not that I'm trying to hate or anything but if that was them and this was me... then I can't say I wouldn't be the same.'

'Push The Button' is a catchy pop record, bursting with 80s dancefloor beats and sparkly S Club-bubblegum glam. Don't expect it to leave your head. Don't imagine you don't know which song I'm talking about. And don't pretend you won't be swinging alcopops round your head to it in Cindie's this Fresher's Week. Sugababes don't expect anything more from you. And actually, it's not torturous at all. In fact, it's not even in the least bit harmful. The only long-term damage I could foresee would be a sudden desire to become bitch to some famous rapper. And, of course, that slight nervous tic in your eye after too much chips and cheese.

SUGABABES FACTS

The Sugababes have released four albums: *One Touch* (2000), *Angels With Dirty Faces* (2002), *Three* (2003), and, on October 10th, *Taller In More Ways*. They've had three number one singles in the UK: 'Freak Like Me', 'Round Round', and 'Hole in the Head'.

album reviews

Sigur Rós Takk ★★★★★

The real beauty of Sigur Rós, and the reason I love them so much, comes only when you really dive into the music. Once safely cocooned inside you are free to examine the outside world with a new clarity, and gently lose your self in the ebb and flow of the music. Their notorious musical 'swells' are here again, whilst injected with enough intrigue and delicacy to set them apart from the loud/soft mediocrity that plagues lesser post-rock outfits. This new offering from the band, *Takk*, displays all the best parts of this just as well, if not better than their previous LP's.

The alien soundscapes that filled *Agaetis Byrjun* with such shimmering weirdness have lead the way to a more full, almost more orchestral sound. And the chilling (but beautiful) drones that made () so compelling have now become warmer

and have been joined by piano lines, persistent strings, chiming xylophones and even a triumphant brass party in 'Selest'.

We find the band in an energised mood, whilst retaining the softness and epic beauty that we love them for. The band describe this as their 'rock n roll' record, and they've got a point. They've developed a swirling urgency that really shines through. This is shown particularly in one of the albums first highlights (there are a few). In the majestic 'Glosoli', Jonsi's vocals spiral free above a glorious thudding bass, twinkling keyboards and sloshing strings.

If you love Sigur Rós, this is going to hit the spot. And if you don't love them yet, this may be the time to start listening.

James Tallant



Mary Bowers

Various Artists

Help! 2005 ★★★★★

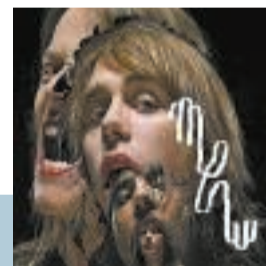
"Not another charity record" I hear you cry. Well no, actually. This is none of your Will -and-Gareth, Tom-Jones-feat.-hottest-young-thing-collaboration collection of socialist politico-pop tripe: *Help! A Day in the Life* is not MDF pop-chintz, but a nice mixture of light-hearted classic covers and epic purpose-written tracks that is as wisely chosen as they are timely.

New-wave indie punksters Bloc Party, Babyshambles, Maximo Park and the Kaisers are joined by a few diverse spanners - Kenya's rap export Emmanuel Jal precedes a gorgeous offering by Gorillaz. There are the inevitable disappointments of Christmas showbiz charity fare - Keane's cover of Elton John's 'Goodbye

Yellow Brick Road' and (Boy) George and Antony (Johnsons) unseasonal 'Happy Christmas (War is Over)' for example - but this, together with the sad addition of ethical evangelists the Manics can be overlooked in favour of the album's highlight: Radiohead unexpectedly show they can still chill and thrill with the purpose written 'I want none of this'. Stunning.

Help proves itself to be less Bob Geldof and more Bob Marley in its honesty and understated presentation - refreshing after a summer of being preached to. "We don't wanna be man-trapped/We don't wanna be shrink-wrapped/Oh, just wanna get it right sometimes" sings Chris Martin on Coldplay's opening epic. And they have, brothers, they have. And even if they hadn't, its sold in aid of War Child and it's student loan week. So don't you dare download.

www.warchildmusic.com



Mew And The Glass-Handed Kites ★★★★★

Jacqui Tedd

Distraught about the fact that Sigur Rós have somehow found chart success despite years of my tirelessly campaigning against them, listening to an album by another experimental, 'post-rock', indie four-piece was probably not the therapy I needed. For some reason, probably the glossy cover the album came in (yes, I am that shallow), I expected big things from Mew. The album is by no means dire but at no point was it exciting. Jonas Bjerre's possessed, fragile vocals over an array of guitar riffs, laden with enough effects pedals to open a shop, give Mew their own sound. Yet, the album dragged. Highlights such as 'Special' just weren't special enough. Mew have all the right components to make them a haunting and powerful band but they only teeter on the edge. Like a boy who has moppy hair and owns a pair of cons but then has David Gray listed as his favourite artist, Mew may look right but only disappoint.

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expansion and evolution

Continuing the tradition of innovation, the society has undergone a transformation in recent years reflecting the changing needs of graduates and employers. In 2002, The Cambridge University Industrial Society became Cambridge Futures to reflect its expanding focus and activities. Today, it has gained prominence as one of the largest & most active student societies in the UK holding weekly career events alongside the renowned Internship Fair.

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Everything is illuminated

Illuminated manuscripts occupy the same frightening territory as socks and sandals, train-spotting, Radio 4 and finding Charlie Dimmock attractive. A deviant place, where *Last of the Summer Wine* is considered funny and beige cardigans obligatory. This term the Fitzwilliam has mounted an exhibition of 215 illuminated manuscripts, but put aside thoughts of men with unkempt facial hair and kipper-ties, this is a masterful piece of slick, modern scholarship.

Cambridge Illuminations has bought together some pretty special things; no self-respecting art anorak should miss the chance of seeing the Peterborough and Breslau Psalters, Reichenau Epistolary, Book of Ceme or Medici Hours. Nor should you miss the catalogue: a *tour de force* of remarkable learning, including essays by Christopher de Hamel and Paul Binski. But although beautifully arranged in the stunning new temporary exhibition space of the courtyard extension, the show has a fundamental problem.

Illuminated manuscripts are both the richest survivals of medieval art and astonishing historical documents. They therefore appeal in equal parts to the Historian and Art

Historian; the problem for the curator is which path to take. *Cambridge Illuminations* tries to tell the history of the book, the Bible and Christianity, overlaid with a splattering of art history, iconography and sociology. In short it takes both paths but sticks to neither. I can see the temptation for this holistic approach. With such a rich collection of manuscripts detailing almost every aspect of Western culture - from the first book to land

The Bury Bible more is redolent of art nouveau than 12th century ecclesiastical texts

in Britain with St. Augustine in 597 to the advent of the printing press in 1450 - it would have seemed churlish not to mention as many themes and ideas as possible.

But there is an odd feeling of inconsistency. By having criteria of excellence not refined as either specifically visual or textual, the exhibition has an odd mix of the beautiful and the academic. Indeed, the limitations of the selection are acknowledged in the introduction of the catalogue, which, incidentally, is co-edited by an Art Historian and Historian.

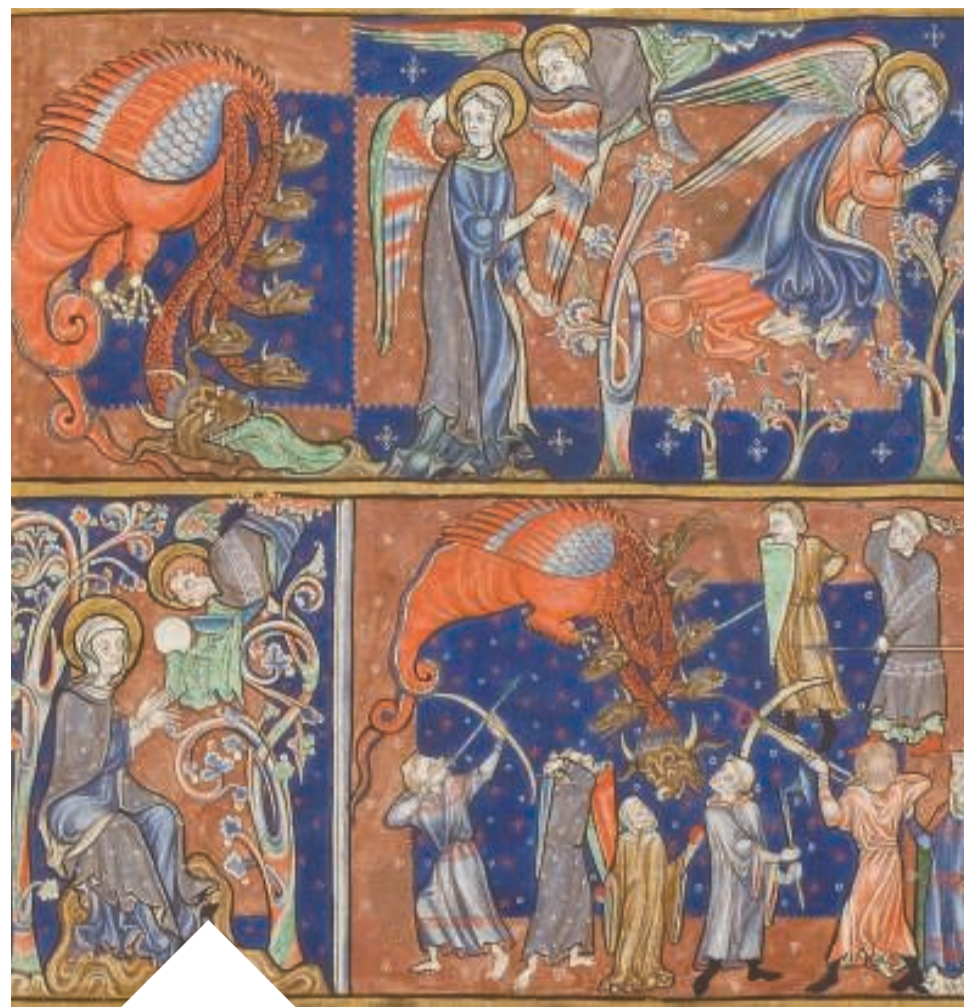
Sometimes this means the most stunning manuscripts get lost. The Psalter of Isabelle of France (1258), decorated with the same Parisian flare for gold and gothic as its contemporary Sainte-Chapelle (1243) is neglected in a confusing sandwich of later and less exciting prayer books included for their textual importance. Equally, Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora* (1236-1259)

which is arguably the most celebrated English chronicle is lost in the sumptuous surroundings of its Renaissance neighbours.

The exhibition has an awkward overture in a mass show of leaves from the Macclesfield Psalter. Rather like the Madonna of the Pinks, it was bought at great expense to 'save' it from the clutches of the Getty. A disproportionate number of images from the Psalter are on display. Presumably a requirement of the Heritage Lottery Funding, they serve merely to remind one that, although two pages from each of the other manuscripts are on show, hundreds are concealed. If only it were possible to see more of the Trinity Apocalypse, surely the wackiest piece of 13th century art? The psychedelic colours and fantastical creatures look like animations from Monty Python. In fact, it is weird how modern many of the images appear, the sinuously flowing lines and elongated forms found in the Bury Bible are more redolent of 20th century art nouveau than 12th century ecclesiastical texts.

Let's be honest, spending an afternoon looking at manuscripts is up there with *Gardener's World* for excitement levels. But, there is something immensely satisfying about following this exhibition. You see a progression in visual culture from the bold designs of Carolingian and Celtic texts where representation existed on a fantastical plane far removed from the constraints of perspective, through the elegant bling of the heavily gilded Gothic to the subtle sophistication of Renaissance classicism. There are some truly remarkable objects on display for the first time since 1908, with only a light hint of anorak.

Cambridge Illuminations is at the Fitzwilliam Museum until the 11th December, free entry.



The Trinity Apocalypse The Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge

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Chronica Majora by Matthew Paris
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Jonathan Yarker reviews the
Cambridge Illuminations
exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum



Art Around Cambridge

Henri Gaudier Brzeska, Bird Swallowing a Fish, 1914
Kettles Yard

The poet Ezra Pound described Henri Gaudier Brzeska as 'the most absolute case of genius I have ever encountered'. He was born in France in 1891 and grew up in Paris where, self-taught, he began to produce sculpture strongly influenced by Rodin. In 1910 he moved to London and became part of an important group of avant-garde writers and artists including Wyndham-Lewis, Jacob Epstein and David Bomberg. Under their influence he began to move away from the natural-

ism of his earlier work. Brzeska often sketched in Hyde Park, and *Bird Swallowing a Fish* was based on drawings made of the Serpentine lake. Brzeska could not afford the traditional sculptural materials of marble and bronze, and this work is made of plaster, painted green to imitate bronze.

It was produced in 1914 at the height of Brzeska's engagement with the Vorticist movement. Britain's answer to Italian Futurism, Vorticism was championed by Wyndham-Lewis in his journal *Blast*. Like the Futurists, in their art and writings the Vorticists celebrated the distinctive features of the modern world, and built upon spatial transformations pioneered by Cubist artists to explore the aesthetics of the machine. An important ele-

ment of this was an attempt to portray elements of the natural world as if they too were machine-like. In this sculpture Brzeska simplified the bird's features, as recorded in his drawings, into an abstract schema of legs, wings and beak. Soft organic forms were transformed into a stylised, angular geometry, the fish is given the appearance of a piston, and the body of the bird has often been likened to a hand grenade. Alongside Epstein, Brzeska was pioneering the development of a distinctive modernist sculpture in Britain. A year after completing *Bird Swallowing a Fish*, he was killed on the battlefields of the Somme.

Each week we highlight an object of aesthetic interest in Cambridge. Send suggestions to letters@varsity.co.uk

TV: *Lost*

Wednesdays at 10pm on Channel 4

Move over *Desperate Housewives* - *Lost* is here. The latest TV sensation from the US debuted here in August to rave reviews and record viewing figures and is gathering the same cult following as it has done in the US and Canada. It's not so much the surprise hit of the summer as the fully expected one. Much has been written about the bizarre plot twists that *Lost* keeps throwing up - the sixteen year old signal, the polar bear on a tropical island, the mysterious monster that is yet unseen, the enigmatic Rousseau who is searching for her child Alex and these plot twists are what keeps the viewer tuning

in. The all consuming question of where the survivors have actually crash landed has provoked intense speculation and it's not a question that is set to be answered in the first season. So where exactly are the survivors? Theories are plentiful and bizarre. One is that no one actually survived the plane crash and that those who think they did are actually in purgatory, as they work through the problems in their past and pay for their sins they will be released. This certainly ties in with the weekly exploration of the background of one of the characters. A more outlandish and fanciful theory is that the

island is actually a ship or the top of a vast submerged submarine, which is where the polar bears have come from - it was once near the Antarctic, it also explains where Rousseau is getting her power from, the cable leads down to a ship. Yet another theory is that they are all in a coma and are sharing a mass hallucination. Whatever the truth turns out to be it won't be revealed to the British viewing public anytime soon. With the second season just beginning in the US and rumour of a third in the works, it looks like the suspense is set to continue for some time to come.

Charlotte Keane



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To book your place at this event, please submit your CV and a covering letter, explaining why you would benefit from attending, to www.csfb.com/standout by 17:00, Friday 14 October. Please note that expenses are covered and that only a limited number of places are available.

www.csfb.com/standout

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Alice Russell at the Soul Tree (1st October, 9.30pm, £8 or £6 before 11) has been called the best soul singer in the UK. **The Paddingtons** at the Junction (4th October 7pm £7.50) will be showing what rock lessons they learnt on tour with Babyshambles. **Noxagt** at the Portland Arms (6th October, 8.30pm, £6 or £5 concessions/advance), from the same label as the awesome Lightning Bolt, will be churning out some Norwegian drone metal in the back room of a pub. Most of the colleges will have some sort of cheap bop where the music will be incidental wallpaper for the alcohol saturated awkwardness. A possible exception is **Soundcheck** at Fitz (4th October 9pm-1:30am £9/£7 adv) which has a live bands room as well as drum'n'bass, hip hop, electronica and the obligatory cheese.

NOXAGT WILL BE CHURNING OUT NORWEGIAN DRONE METAL IN THE BACK ROOM OF A PUB

You've missed September's **Rawganics** at the Junction, but there's more UK hip-hop on the horizon this term with both **Klashnekoff** and **Yungun** set to appear at Clare in the next few weeks. The Junction hosts a comedy tour, Edinburgh & Beyond (5th 7pm £12), which recently appeared at the Edinburgh Festival. Sponsored by the Paramount Comedy Channel, the night features **Russell Howard**, **Russell Kane**, **Ray Peacock** and the critically acclaimed, Perrier Award nominated **Reginald D Hunter**. There's also **Patrick Kielty** at the Corn Ex (6th 7pm £12/£10 concessions). If you've been to something great or something awful, or if you're promoting an event yourself, get in touch on **music@varsity.co.uk**.

stage



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Shakespeare's tragedy in sixty minutes, back from Edinburgh (above).
ADC, 7:30pm, £4/5, Tuesday 4th October until Saturday 8th
The Threepenny Opera
Brecht's bawdy musical, also back from Edinburgh.
ADC, 9pm, £4/5, Tuesday 4th October until Saturday 8th

screen

Bang Bang in da Manor
A documentary about violence in Britain's black community.
The Junction, 6pm, free, Thursday 6th October
Arts Picturehouse
Friday 30th September
Pride And Prejudice (U) 12.30, 3.10, 5.50, 8.30
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30
Late Shows:
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 11.00
Videodrome (18) 11.10
History Of Violence (18) 11.20
Saturday 1st October
Pride And Prejudice (U) 12.30, 3.10, 5.50, 8.30
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00

Duck Variations
Mamet's comedy about mortality and alienation, also back from Edinburgh.
Sidney Sussex College Gardens, 3pm, £4, Monday 3rd October until Tuesday 4th
under the blue, blue moon
The Footlights Tour show.
ADC, 11pm, £4/5, Tuesday 4th October until Saturday 8th
Martha Loves Michael
A lonely woman stalks the King of Pop.
The Junction, 2pm and 8pm, £5 NUS, Tuesday 4th October
The Vagina Monologues
Three women bring the Broadwayhit to Cambridge.
Cambridge Arts Theatre, £10 NUS, 6pm and 9pm Friday 30th September, 5pm and 8pm

Saturday 1st October
The Real Thing
Tom Stoppard's marriage comedy (below).
Cambridge Arts Theatre, 7:45pm, £10 NUS, Monday 3rd October to until Saturday 8th October
Stomp
Brooms, dustbin lids, and so forth.
The Corn Exchange, various times and prices, Tuesday 27th September until Saturday 1st October
Patrick Kielty
Fame Academy host tells jokes.
The Corn Exchange, 7:30pm, £14.50, Thursday 6th October
Frankenstein
A Spanish-language adaption of the classic chiller.
APU Mumford Theatre, 7:30pm, £8 NUS, Friday 30th September
Once On This Island

A calypso musical.
APU Mumford Theatre, 7:30pm, £6.50 NUS, Thursday 6th October until Saturday 8th
World Dance Day
Part of Black History Month in Cambridge: an afternoon of music, dance and culture.
Arbury Community Centre, 1-4, free, Saturday 1st October



Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30
Late Shows:
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 11.00
Videodrome (18) 11.10
History Of Violence (18) 11.20



Sunday 2nd October
Pride And Prejudice (U) 12.30, 3.10, 5.50
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30
Broken Flowers (15) 8.30
Monday 3rd October
Pride And Prejudice (U) 12.30, 3.10, 5.50, 8.30
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30
Tuesday 4th October
Pride And Prejudice (U) 5.50, 8.30
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30

Ryan's Daughter (15) 1.30
Wednesday 5th October
Pride And Prejudice (U) 3.10, 5.50, 8.30
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 11.00
Stroke (PG) 9.00
Thursday 6th October
Pride And Prejudice (U) 12.30, 3.10, 5.50
History Of Violence (18) 12.00, 2.15, 6.45, 9.00
Howl's Moving Castle (U) 1.10, 3.40, 6.10, 8.40
King's Game (15) 4.30

exhibitions



Ways of Living
Contemporary sculpture from four internationally renowned artists. Each exhibit explores the relationship between art and life (above).
Kettle's Yard, free entry, 1st October until 20th November
Cambridge Illuminations
The largest and most comprehensive exhibition of illuminated manuscripts including ten centuries' worth from Cambridge collections.
Fitzwilliam Museum, free entry, 26th July until 11th December

Coveney: Island Identity in the Fens and Currency in Africa
Two of several small exhibitions in the Andrews exhibition gallery that explore the extensive reserve collections of the museum.
Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, free entry, 19th September Until 1st December
The Real Madagascar
An exploration of the flora and fauna of the strange island of Madagascar, from pre-history to the present day.
Museum of Zoology, free entry, 19th July until 24th December
Naini
This one woman show explores the an Indian artist's output since she arrived in England in 1992.
New Hall, free entry, 10th September until 9th October

Misthu Austin: Batik
A show of textiles that proves there really is more to batik than tie-dying.
Clare Hall, free entry, 23rd September until 9th October
The Antarctic Photographs of Herbert Ponting
Photographs taken from the original negatives of the intrepid photographer who accompanied Scott's expedition to the Antarctic in 1910-1914 (right).
Scott-Polar Research Institute, free entry, 1st September until 31st March 2006
Being and Not Being Black
Part of Black History Month in Cambridge, curated by Hakim Onitolo.
Artspace Gallery, free entry, 4th October until 26th October



Generator
angular-fringe indie
9:30-2 £3
Kambar
The Get Down
hip hop for townsfolk
9-2:30 £8
The Soul Tree
Hot!
'smart casual, no trainers'
9-2 £7
Ballare
Boogie
disco inferno
10-2:30 £7
The Junction

Alternation
sweatier rock and indie
11pm free
Kambar
Big
it's all gone Pete Tong
11pm £10
The Junction
Cool
beats for reptiles
9-2 £8
Ballare
Instinct
soul singer Alice Russel
guests
9-230 £8
The Soul Tree

Clear
electronica DJs and
Digital live
8-12 £3
The Cow
Sunday Roast
the opposite of church
9-1 £4 NUS
Life
Smutt
the legendary Kenny
Dope plays funk
11pm £10
Soul Tree

Fat Poppadaddy's
the 'alternative' alternative
9-2:30 £2 NUS
Fez
International Student Night
pohjanmaan kaulta!
9:30-2 £5
Life
Salsa de la Buena
salsa lessons until 9
7-12 £4 NUS
Po Na Na
School Days
'free entry in school uniform'
9:30-2 £5
Ballare

Soundcheck
Varied college ent
9-1:30 £7
Fitzwilliam
Top Banana
CUSU's weekly
fruit-market
9-2 £4 NUS
Ballare
Unique
LBG night
9:30-1 £4
The Paddingtons
flailing punk
7 £7.50
The Junction

The Editors
gloomy post-punk, support from We Are Scientists and the Cinematics
7 £8.50
The Junction
Rumboogie
the student magnet
9-2 £4 NUS
Ballare
Club Goo
indie night with the Chalets and the Moderns
8-2 £4 NUS
Soul Tree
The Khe Sanh Approach
support from the Resistance and the Smalll Deaths
8:30 £4
The Portland Arms

Bad Timing
grindcore from Noxagt and Volt
8:30 £5
The Portland Arms
Andy Smith
Portishead hanger-on
10-2 £4
Light Bar
Dogs
predictable garage-rock
8 £6
APU Academy
International Student Night
na zdravje!
9-2 £4
Ballare

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Scherzo no.2

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Any query, please contact the producers at:

Yueyang: yz206@cam.ac.uk, Lala: yl290@cam.ac.uk

Director Lin at: lc363@cam.ac.uk

Music Director Rachel at: hy239@cam.ac.uk

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Football vs cricket? Dwindling attendances vs mass euphoria; ultra-defensive 4-5-1 formations vs passion and aggression; an underperforming national team vs the heroism of Freddie et al; arrogant, overpaid professionals vs hardworking and honest sportsmen. If you believe all the rhetoric cricket has overtaken crisis-ridden football as the sport closest to our nation's hearts. But don't write off the beautiful game just yet.

Yes, cricket has seen its best summer for 18 years. A victory in the Ashes is a sporting achievement to rank alongside the 2003 Rugby World Cup triumph as one of the greatest sporting moments of our generation. We witnessed remarkable sportsmanship between the fiercest of rivals, wonderful drama and spine-tingling tension played out by the finest cricketers in the world, and all watched by an exuberant nation who basked in the glory of Michael Vaughan's heroes.

But why were we so gripped by the Ashes? Undeniably we were captivated by sporting theatre of the highest calibre, but what else was there to get excited about? "England's Big Summer" as the sponsors christened it was unusual not only because we managed to beat the Aussies but also because it was devoid of an alternative source of excitement. We endured humiliation for the Lions in New Zealand, an abject Wimbledon and a desperately uneventful World Athletics Championships in Helsinki. Cricket was afforded its own place in the sun, and shine it certainly did.

But not for long. The turning of Earth brings a seasonal shift, and the sporting spotlight is repositioned. I was fortunate to experience Ashes fever at first hand during the second test at Edgbaston, but



when I returned to the scene of the so-called "greatest test" just a few weeks ago for a Totesport League day-night encounter between Warwickshire and Surrey, two heavyweights of the domestic game, the stands were deserted. Why? Football was back.

As the nights begin to draw in and the autumnal rain returns, away go the lightmeters and hastily purchased cricket bats to be replaced by the mud-coated football boots for another nine months of unrelenting abuse. Sports pitches all over Cambridge will be a hive of energy and enthusiasm once more as hundreds of us battle it out in the college football leagues and JCRs will be packed once again for those Champions League thrillers, domestic cup giant-killings and unmissable international qualifiers.

Freshers and football are like exams and cricket. The timetable which governs our lives dictates our sporting preferences, and so the identity of our national sport is a cyclical phenomenon. Football and cricket are not substitutes, they are complements. Our jubilation in marveling at our national cricket team has reinvigorated our passion for football. Yes, we are moaning at the domineering excellence of Chelsea and the youthful exuberance of Mr. Rooney, but that is because we care. There is certainly no lack of interest in football, and with the World Cup looming ever larger on the horizon it is only set to increase. So, the result in the football vs cricket encounter: a score draw. The challenge for cricket though, is to maintain its soaring popularity when the nation is gripped by the next batch of sporting frenzy and patriotism in just 251 days time in Germany. Let's just hope we'll be heading back for another party in Trafalgar Square.

Hare and Hounds streets ahead



Photo: www.srpf.ucam.org/cuhh

Alex McIntosh

On Sunday 18th September over 300 teams competed in the 15th annual Chariots of Fire relays. This unprecedented multitude gathered from all walks of life, with teams from the University, colleges and departments, from local businesses and institutions, and groups of friends bravely stepping up to the gun for charity. Each member of the six-person teams ran 1.7 miles (2.7 km), from Queens' Backs, winding down Silver Street and pelting across Market Square, before a quick dodge through Trinity College towards the home straight. Here they faced a seething mass of runners from which they had to somehow single out their screaming, frantically arm-waving team mates.

First to hand over was Will George of Cambridge University Hare and

"we remembered the true meaning of Chariots of Fire"

Hounds (CUH&H) in the noteworthy time of 8:02. Seven more teams followed in swift succession, with the CUH&H B team, at the back of this pack. Alex McIntosh, next to take the baton for CUH&H B, rose swiftly through the ranks to leave CUH&H in first and second place. However, Michael Scott Associates dogged the CUH&H B team closely, and finally crept past them halfway down Trinity Street on the fourth leg. The medal positions were maintained throughout the rest of the race, before the CUH&H A team pulled steadily away towards a

victory time of 49:32, four minutes faster than last year's fastest time.

The CUH&H women's team, led off by Claire Willer's devastating 9:15 leg kept up the pace and kept well ahead of the pack all the way round. Among the college teams, all began well for Wolfson, whose Ulrich Paquet went on to run the third leg for the CUH&H B team. The first of four Trinity teams, however, passed Wolfson on the second leg, and kept ahead for the rest of the race.

An impressive number of fellows competed in the college teams, among them Dr Roger Griffin who this month celebrated his 70th birthday by running 35 miles around his block for charity. Sir Arthur Marshall stepped up on to the podium to make the presentation of prizes. After competing in the 1924 Olympics Sir Arthur instigated the first Chariots of Fire relays in Cambridge. The event has swelled in popularity ever since. He is now 102, and his hesitant, but rousing speech reminded us of the true meaning of the Chariots of Fire – to run your heart out for your team mates, and for a very good cause.

Coming up:

The Cambridge University Hare and Hounds' next fixture will be the Freshers' Fun Run, on Sunday 9th October at 2pm, with registration from 1pm. Men run 5km, and women 3km, starting at Wilberforce Road Athletics track. All runners are very welcome.

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“Not the best in the world... yet.”

Joe Speight meets former England Cricket Captain, David Gower

For someone who has been immersed in cricket for over thirty years, David Gower has been there and done it in the game which he lives and breathes. But following one of the most remarkable sporting events in recent years, even such a cricketing legend was taken aback by the scenes of euphoria which greeted England's 2-1 Ashes victory over Australia, the first English victory for 18 years. Gower was on presenting duty in Trafalgar Square almost three weeks ago, when over 25,000 people gathered to celebrate England's success. "It was a mark of how amazing the summer was and it was fantastic to be a part of it".

Gower's own cricket career was centred around the period in the 1980s, when England were last edging towards the best team in the world – when Ian Botham was ripping through the Australian batting order in 1981 and the Ashes were won three times in under a decade. Having been born into a sporting family in Kent, he had an illustrious 18-year First Class cricket career, playing and captaining Leicestershire and finishing his career with Hampshire. He went on to play 117 tests for England as a left-handed batsman, with an average of 44.25, and he captained his country on 31 occasions.

"If we can go through the next two years winning we'll be on top of the world."

Despite the current 'cricket fever', Gower is quick to point out that England have yet to reach the summit of world cricket and much work remains to be done. "Over the next two years they've got the potential to stay together as a team and there aren't really any places up for grabs. They need to be working on those that might come in if there are injuries or losses in form. In the bowling department James Anderson doesn't fill me with much confidence, Chris Tremlett is young and very unproven, and likewise the batting with Robert Key and Owais Shah and supposedly Ed Joyce is a man in waiting. As Australia have shown, you need not just to have the best 11 in the world, but also the best 15 and that's where the work has to carry on. If we can go through the next 2 years winning, culminating in the next Ashes tour down under, then we'll be on top of the world".

Gower is full of praise for Michael Vaughan's role as captain, and acknowledges how styles have changed since he was leading England in the 1980s. "I was always very reluctant to use sweepers on the boundary, but

fact file

Name: David Gower OBE
Born: 1957, Kent
First Class Career: Leicestershire (1975-89, Hampshire (1990-93)
Test Career: Debut – 1978 vs Pakistan at Edgbaston 117 tests (31 as captain), 8231 runs, average of 44.25.
- Wisden Cricketer of the Year 1979
- England's 2nd highest ever run scorer
Post-cricket:
- *They Think It's All Over* team captain
- Extensive cricket writer for numerous publications and broadcaster with BBC
Currently: Sky Sports cricket presenter
Other interests: wildlife photography, skiing and tennis



Photo: Action Images

"The innings Flintoff played with one and a half arms at Edgbaston was vital"

now it has become more accepted and really has worked to combine attack and defence with the field placings. You can see how it has affected players such as Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist in particular who like to hit boundaries, but if you cut those off you start hitting singles rather than fours it doesn't feel too good. It's a psychological effect and it is very clever". The role of coach Duncan Fletcher is also singled out for praise by Gower. "He has been a sort of "Svengali" figure in the background. The players speak very highly of him and that's the crux of it – they all respect him. He doesn't give a lot away in public but he has his own way of getting the best out of



people, and in a nutshell that's the art of coaching".

"The innings Flintoff played with one and a half arms at Edgbaston was vital."

As for his most memorable moment of the series, Gower is quick to pay tribute to the man-of-the-series. "The

innings Andrew Flintoff played at Edgbaston with one and a half arms was vital. If that shoulder injury had occurred to a lesser character, then we would have lost the initiative, and probably lost the game and the series". With the Lancashire all-rounder so key to England's success, would the former captain have preferred Flintoff or the great Ian Botham in his first choice eleven? "It's a great question, and it's hard to separate them. Flintoff has taken longer to get to this stage than Botham did, who was a success and an integral part of the England team from the start of his career. But this summer he's been spectacular and it is the first time he has matched Botham or perhaps bettered him. I don't think they even need to vote for Sport Personality of the Year."

When asked about the decision of the ECB to sell the broadcasting rights for all England test matches to satellite television until 2009, the Sky Sports presenter was understandably coy to reveal his own feelings. "We will continue to provide a high quality service and we will strive to continue improving what we do. Those who haven't seen us in action yet won't realise that we've been using all the toys such as

"If we go on winning, we'll be on top of the world"

the red zone long before Channel 4. We've got a great team of commentators and I can reveal that Michael Atherton will be joining us which is great news".

Following a varied post-cricketing career which has included captaining TV quiz teams, what are his own plans for the future? "I really enjoy what I am doing now with Sky Sports. It's the right level of involvement for me and it's a great way to earn a living". And to be on hand to witness one of our greatest sports teams soaring to the summit of world cricket, you tend to agree.

sport in brief

Ice Hockey
The Men's 2nds (Eskies) ended last year national Division 2 champions and will defend their title this year. This year for the first time there is also a British University Ice Hockey League and the 1sts will compete with 9 other teams in Division One.

Football
Football: This season marks CUAFC's 150th year and look out for special ways in which this anniversary will be marked throughout the year.

Rugby League
On Saturday 1st October the Blues Rugby League team will be playing French University champions Nanterre University live on French TV at Stade Gabriel Peri in Paris. The squad is comprised mainly of last year's Varsity winning side.

Rugby Union
Following their summer tour of Japan the Blues Rugby Union team continue their preparation for the 2005 Varsity campaign with a home match against Cambridge on Tuesday night on Grange Road. Kick-off 7.15pm.

THE LOW-DOWN

Small Bore

>>Name: Cambridge University Small Bore Club
>>Where: The range is underneath the Queen Elizabeth Way bridge, near the boat houses.
>>When: Shoots are every Monday and Friday between 2pm and 6pm
>Who: Anyone can shoot, there is no need to be fit or big.
>Aim: You have 10 shots, and fire at 10 separate targets at a range of 25 yards. The bullseye has a score of ten, and is about the same size as the inside of a

Polo mint. The aim is for as high a score as possible using only .22 calibre rifles.
>>National: Britain have always had a very strong shooting squad in all disciplines, so it is hard to pick out any particular individual.
>>Cambridge: We have performed well in the BUSA postal competitions, but unfortunately did not win the Varsity match last year, coming very close despite having a large novice intake.
>>Contact: Captain: Mike Spencer (ms546), Secretary: Gus Logan (awjl3)



Volleyball: dig, set, spike

Helen McIntyre

In a tournament regularly drawing over 300 teams, the Cambridge Beach Squad finished 17th in this 3 on 3 competition. With this placement, the Men's Blues continue a strong history of success on their European appearances.

Arriving in Bibione, Italy, three days ahead of the first day of competition, the squad used every free moment to hone their volleyball skills on the sand. Immediately finding the game vastly different from the indoor contest they were used to, the Blues nonetheless adapted quickly, learning to jump well on sand, as well as modulate their timing in blocking and attacking.

On Saturday came the qualification rounds, with teams being drawn into pools of five. After an initially slow start and two dropped matches, a surprising rain delay gave the Blues time to regroup. Facing possible elimination, the team went on a tear, Jacquet and Escott hammering down kills on consistent setting by John Lin. Throughout the tournament, Sarkozy was dominant on the block and Willis excelled in defense. Afternoon success meant qualification for Sunday's final 128 teams with a 2-2 record.

Sunday began well, with Cambridge breezing through the round of 128 without a second thought before facing more serious opposition. A new lineup would see a strong start by the Blues, though mental lapses and perhaps some fatigue from the previous day allowed the opposition to get back into the game. Nonetheless, a disciplined side out game let Cambridge find the dig-set-spike pattern they were looking for, and we won the match in style.

Unfortunate seeding saw us face the #2 seed in the round of 32, and the Blues never elevated their game. Service errors and ridiculous passing saw a very winnable game slowly slip away, causing a rather disappointing elimination.

Watching the mixed and men's finals really showed Cambridge that they would need to be consistent to progress in future tournaments. The stuff blocks, power kills and jump serves were all in place, but sadly were marred by errors through inexperience.

rotations

Win a pair of tickets to the ADC's spooky lateshow 'Blithe Spirit', Noel Coward's classic after-life comedy. Tickets from www.adctheatre.co.uk

Re-arrange the letters by rotating the discs to create six separate six-letter words leading in to the centre.
Email your answer to: competitions@varsity.co.uk

Grimster promises knockout year

Cambridge looking for fifth Varsity win in a row to complete Oxford dominance

Chris Spurgis

As everyone involved in sport in Cambridge knows, the Varsity match is the yardstick by which a season is judged. But how do you maintain such success when you have won for four years in a row? This pleasant dilemma has faced Cambridge University Amateur Boxing Club since 2002 when it spectacularly defeated Oxford after their 16 year winning run 8-1 in Oxford Town Hall. Decisive wins in 2003 (7-2) and 2004 (6-3) followed and, in what was surely one of the university sporting moments of last year, CUABC won the 2005 Varsity Match 9-0, a success undoubtedly due to coach David Byrne and his legendary strict training regimes.

When Huw Williams' devastating straight right left his Oxford opponent sprawling on the canvas, the cheers of the packed Guildhall crowd celebrated and lauded an achievement few that were present will ever forget. This capped off a season where Cambridge won two BUSA gold medals. Not content at merely whitewashing the old foe, the Club stated its intention to become a force in women's boxing too, with last year witnessing the first women's Varsity bout. The new Club President, Cat Tubb, was the first female boxer in a Varsity match, and despite her close majority defeat, the Blues aim to keep female boxing on the up.

It could be said that CUABC has a harder task than most maintaining its success, with Boxing being a sport few students have trained in before reaching Cambridge, as well as the punishing training schedule demanded of the team and the negative image boxing carries. When asked about the task ahead, Tubb said "having been involved

with the club now for four years I have seen Coach Dave mould many new boxers. In addition we have a great depth to our squad and with our most experienced boxer Neil Grimster as the new captain and several returning squad members, I think we have a great team in the making."

When asked about her role in the club, a woman in a sport perceived to be so male dominated and dangerous, she replies, "boxing, especially in the

university league is not as male dominated as people would think. Edinburgh's captain is a woman and there is a thriving women's team at Oxford. I have never been treated any differently when it comes to training, and that is what appeals to me. The achievement of stepping into the ring is one I will never forget and far surpasses any perceived danger."

The gears rumble into action from the off this term with a series of early

matches, the first one being on the 19th of November at The Guildhall. From then right through until March the bouts will always provide a superb, buzzing atmosphere with venues consistently packed to marvel at the barages of shots, the tactical battles, and the thudding big hit which silences the arena in a way no other sport can match.

See more boxing photos at:

www.cam.ac.uk/societies/cuabc

"The achievement of stepping into the ring far surpasses any perceived danger."



Photo: Michael Derringer



Channel Hopper

What neater birthday present could you ask for", someone asks halfway through this week's edition of UK Living's highly successful American import **Extreme Makeover**, "than a new face?" For most of us, this is a hypothetical question. But when the person asking it is Autumn Goodman, a 29 year old grade school teacher from California, and she is asking it lying on a gurney, and her cheeks and forehead are covered in dotted lines which may as well be accompanied by the legend CUT HERE, it may seem rather more urgent. Autumn is about to turn 30, and she definitely hasn't asked for a PSP. She's asked for a new face.

When Autumn comes round, she's a bit groggy, but she's pleased. You look great, her surgeon Jon Perlman pronounces, grinning beatifically: this is the masterpiece of his brilliant career, the gloopy voiceover bumbles. *Extreme Makeover*, a show whose weirdness and compulsive appeal I can't even begin to describe, translates the appeal of *Changing Rooms* from front rooms to faces. It's forever drawing *Pygmalion*-esque comparisons: so a dentist filing down teeth to little points (so false identikit white ones can be put in their place) is "an artist looking at his canvas"; when an operation concludes, the "sculptor-surgeon applies the final touches to his creation". At the beginning of the show we are told that "a plastic surgeon and an English teacher have begun to collaborate on a living work of art", but as the process continues, it is increasingly clear that the English teacher is taking somewhat of a back seat. "What do you think about your eyes?" surgeon Perlman asks, sizing up his new project; Autumn, whose main source of anguish had been her slightly bulbous nose, confesses she has never given them much critical thought. Perlman swiftly demonstrates the room for improvement with his magic marker, and Autumn enthusiastically concurs.

Eight weeks and a haircut later, Autumn emerges in front of her family and friends. They applaud and cheer and weep, and, it's true, Autumn, her edges chiselled off, is now significantly harder to tell apart from a *Melrose Place* background artiste than she was before. "I'm at least as beautiful as my sisters now", she exults, in a tone which makes it clear that she now regards her siblings as basically dog-ugly in comparison.

The next day, it's back to school: the kids raise a rehearsed whoop of approval. Her own childhood miseries, Autumn has said, have made her determined to make sure her class understand that it's what's on the inside that counts; how her transformation will colour that lesson is anyone's guess. Earlier, one slightly tubby and eminently sensible eight year old said that "Miss Goodman is really pretty and she doesn't need to be on *Extreme Makeover*"; but, she wistfully added, "if that's what she wants she can do it." It was; she did; you can watch it on the telly. *Extreme Makeover* is above all a morality play in praise of the American dream, where Good Things, like nose jobs, happen to Good People. Autumn Goodman, Gloopy Voiceover Man concludes, is a teacher with a lesson: that, if you want them enough, your dreams just might come true.

Extreme Makeover, UK Living, 6.05 pm weekdays

abc.go.com/primetime/extrememakeover

For answers to Pot Black, contact:

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Fenced off

Robert Shaw

Last season was nothing short of ideal for CUFC. Both the men's and women's blues had undefeated seasons resulting in both teams winning their respective overall BUSA premier leagues, the men for their 5th consecutive year and the women winning their trophy for the second time in three years.

Both men and women defeated Oxford in the Varsity Match the women for the 4th consecutive year and the men for a 6th, winning in all three weapons and by the largest margin of victory ever since the current scoring system (Italian relay) had been introduced to the Varsity Match. To add to this, the men's team were nominated and then short listed for BUSA team of the year, being pipped at the post by a team of Olympian swimmers from Loughborough.

Over the past two years,

the standard of university fencing has risen sharply. The upcoming season holds much greater challenges for CUFC than before with the top three junior foil fencers going to rival uni's. The new season also sees the introduction of new timings to the university competition. Although the change in electronic timings in the scoring equipment is only of the order of 1/100's of seconds, this has had a profound effect on the sport and extensive training on the new timings will be essential to maintaining the club's success.

This season holds more secrets than the previous two and the outcome is less certain given the greater challenges from stronger opponents and a change in the sport that will affect all fencers. It would be naive to expect a repeat of last year's relentless dominance, but it is not too optimistic to hope for both teams to continue to bring home the silverware this season.

POT BLACK

Instructions:

Complete the questions in order from red to black. The answer to each ball is integral to the following question.

- Who is England's longest running rugby union captain?
- Which cup is sponsored by the "redball"
- What team won the "yellowball" cup in 2005?
- Which president has a daughter called "greenball"?
- Which war was the president preceding "brownball" famous for?
- Which country in the "blueball" war invaded a neighbour?
- What is the FIFA world ranking for "pinkball"?

BOXING



Going for 5 out of 5

CUABC seeking to extend domination over Oxford

VOLLEYBALL



Blues beach tour

Cambridge comes 17th out of 300 in Italian tournament

CROSS COUNTRY



Chariots of Fire race

Blues win charity race, setting tone for rest of season

ROWING



Henley victory

Cambridge win Ladies Plate at Royal Regatta

Captain's Corner:

ED CARTER

Blues Rugby



There has been much debate in recent times regarding the future status of the annual Varsity Match within the modern game, however with a crowd of over 42,000 attending last year, there are many that still recognise the importance of such an occasion. This year CURUFC enter a period of transition and has been through a number of significant changes as a club. The Blues have assembled one of its youngest squads in recent times and a number of undergraduates are challenging hard for selection in the main side.

Off the field, Ian Minto has commenced a new role as General Manager and Ed Hallam takes on the position of full time fitness trainer. Both have already made significant impacts in their short tenure and will continue to make a positive contribution in shaping the future direction of the club and its members. The expectations within the Blues Squad

"The results playing wise could only be described as disappointing"



are always extremely high and the build up to the Varsity Match is a very intense period in all the players' lives. Part of this preparation includes the annual pre-season tour, which has become a long standing tradition at the club.

The recent CURUFC trip to Japan could not have provided more for the 26 squad members chosen to represent the university. With the 2011 Rugby World Cup bid coming to a conclusion in just under 2 months, it would be hard to imagine a host nation providing greater hospitality and efficiency than the Japanese. The results playing wise could only be described as disappointing and a 0-3 record for the Blues was certainly unacceptable. However, we can take an enormous amount away from this time together and we will continue to evolve as a team over the next 10 weeks.

The 'Other Place' is yet again fielding another formidable squad and having performed very strongly in their pre-season matches, many are predicting consecutive defeats for the Light Blues on December 6 at Twickenham. There is less than 70 days until the 124th Varsity match and the challenge is in front of us all, however if our preparation is solid, we give ourselves at least a chance to be there at the end.

Boat Club back to winning ways

Russ Glenn

Wins home and abroad get season off to promising start

The Cambridge University Boat Club (CUBC) returns this fall strengthened by a busy summer season. More than half of last year's squad raced at either the Henley Royal Regatta or the World Championships and they look to carry this high-level competitive momentum into the 2006 Boat Race campaign.

The success of the summer was capped by a dominating Ladies Plate victory at Henley, the CUBC's first since 1999. With hardly a rest after the 2005 Boat Race, the oarsmen jumped into the Henley training with a number of preliminary races in Germany, the Netherlands, and England. Victories over aggressive Dutch crews in Leiden, and a bitter second-place finish in the Marlow regatta at Eton steeled the CUBC crew for stiff international competition in the Ladies.

They were not disappointed. Henley runs on a series of single elimination dual-races, with the victor advancing from one day to the next. This year the 'Ladies Plate' event held nine crews from five nations, with competitors traveling from as far as Tasmania. Cambridge drew the Harvard Lightweights on Friday, the first day of the competition. After a dominating start the CUBC won decisively over the Americans, in a race which saw a Crimson oarsman lose his seat.

A much tougher test lay in store on Saturday. In the semi-finals, Cambridge met a Brown Alumni crew containing no fewer than 5 world-medalists. The stage was set for a grudge match of sorts: five of the Brown rowers had raced for Oxford in the past. True to the hype, the race was one of the best of the regatta. Never more than two feet officially separated the boats down almost the entire 2,166 meter course, but with colossal pushes led by powerhouses Kyle Coveny (Hughes Hall) and Eamonn Joyce (Trinity Hall) the CUBC nosed into the final 500m one seat up.

Despite Brown's savage attempts get back on terms, stroke man Volker Utesch of St. Edmunds College turned the screw in the final minute of the race, striding up and away to a 3-foot victory.

Sunday's final race against England's Leander club wrapped up the regatta. The CUBC started confidently, leading by the end of the island at 200 meters down and continued to race away, crossing the line with a one-and-three-quarter-length victory. President Tom Edwards summed up the event; "Winning the Ladies' Challenge Plate at this year's Henley Royal Regatta was an

amazing result for the CUBC, and a fitting way to build momentum for the 2006 Boat Race campaign. The outstanding quality of the opponents we defeated was a clear demonstration of the strength and depth of our club's oarsmen."

Cambridge's Henley success was matched by other members' international competition. Oarsmen James Orme, Ed Sherwood, and Colin Scott all won at Henley, before representing Great Britain at the Under 23 World Championships with a sixth-place finish in the straight four. 2005 Blue-Boat coxswain Peter Rudge spent some time with the British team over the summer, coxing the GB 8+ to second place in the Grand event at Henley. The CUBC will carry the summer's success into the fall under the leadership of new head coach Duncan Holland and President Tom Edwards. With this momentum and a number of talented, highly motivated new and returning trialists,

"an amazing result for the CUBC, and a fitting way to build momentum for 2006"

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50% of students drink alcohol while on painkillers

You didn't know:

Last year, Cambridge dance club boasted 2400 members

page 5 <<

page 13<<

Coolness is new, now, tomorrow. Green-ness is yesterday's yoghurt pots"

Quick Sudoku

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

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