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V **RSITY**

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The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

DEMANDING THAT CUSU DOES ITS JOB

At the beginning of this term, *Varsity* criticised CUSU for failing to adequately address issues that affect students. As the term ends, college MCRs and JCRs are seriously questioning their relationship with a student union that is ignoring the law and wasting our money. Here are just some of their officers:



Matt Clifford, Union of Clare Students



Tristan Collins, Magdalene MCR



Guy Willis, Jesus JCR



Chris Kellaway, Homerton Union of Students



Tom Larsen, Downing MCR



James Cameron, Selwyn JCR



Joe Powell, St. Catharine's JCR



Will Barrett, Peterhouse JCR



Emile Axelrad, Downing JCR



Darshan Brahmabhatt, Gonville & Caius MCR

LEADER

This week, representatives of student bodies from a third of all Cambridge colleges have expressed serious concerns over the current direction of CUSU. Their primary concern is that the attempts by some to politicise CUSU is preventing it from adequately fulfilling its role of providing for Cambridge students. Many fear that their respective college JCRs and MCRs will be unable to remain a part of CUSU if this continues. Today, *Varsity* joins them in urging CUSU to aggressively focus their energies on supplying students with services and

support rather than allowing their time to be wasted debating motions unrelated to Cambridge students' concerns as students.

The Charity Commission provides operational guidance for students' unions, stating: "a charity cannot campaign on an issue which is unrelated to its purposes, even if trustees may regard the issue as interesting or important." This term alone, motions have been brought to CUSU Council calling for the boycott of Coca-Cola because of alleged human rights violations in Colombia, and seeking to promote a national campaign on climate change. Last week a motion was brought to a CUSU Open Meeting by CUSU HE Funding Officer Dan Swain, calling for the with-



Helen Marks, Downing Access officer

drawal of troops from Iraq. Yet a glance at the HE funding section of the CUSU website reveals coverage of two year old campaigns and no updates since the introduction of top-

up fees. This despite the fact that the CUSU website is likely to be the first port of call for prospective Cambridge applicants seeking information on financial matters such as the bursaries available to students. Whilst we recognise that the website is newly operational and that a vast transfer of information has been required, *Varsity* would suggest that the HE Funding Officer make this his absolute priority, over and above the use of his position to further his personal political concerns. A motion of "No Confidence" in the abilities of Swain as HE Funding Officer is being brought to the next CUSU Council.

Graham Virgo, University Reader in English Law and expert in charity law, told *Var-*

sity that motions such as Swain's are ultra-vires and that if CUSU were to implement them, it would be in breach of the Education Act of 1994 because the issues "do not affect the welfare of students as students". He also raised the interesting and generally unrecognized fact that the same Act demands that JCRs annually re-endorse their affiliation to CUSU via referendum. This threatens to throw any existent doubts over CUSU's direction into sharper relief. Whereas previously those students agitated enough to urge disaffiliation were dismissed as awkward malcontents, now mutterings over the possibility may be given a yearly loudspeaker.

Lizzie Sharples, Pembroke

JP's External Officer, told CUSU Council on November 16 that "it [is] not practical for CUSU to debate legality. If the NUS could discuss war, then CUSU should also be able to have an opinion". Yet this is incorrect. According to the Charity Commission "the NUS is not a students' union within the meaning of the act" and does not possess charitable status. Conversely, the role of the NUS is to represent the political views of the student unions precisely because they themselves cannot. Despite such clear guidelines, CUSU Student Action Officer, Dave Smith (who has no legal training), described this...

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news in brief

Fry praises ARU
Stephen Fry spoke of a "ridiculous sense of elitism" at Cambridge when he accepted an honorary doctorate degree at Anglia Ruskin University last week. He said it was an honour to receive the award. He denounced the "ineffably stupid" people he had been at Cambridge with and said that the best thing about ARU was that they got to enjoy the architecture and facilities without being "surrounded by idiots who think they are in Brideshead Revisited". The actor and comedian, 48, graduated in English from Queens' College before rising to fame.

Misplaced identity
An ARU student has become a victim of identity theft. He first realised when his bank sent him a statement showing he had spent hundreds of pounds on a credit card he knew he didn't own. Lloyd Mann, 25, has now been summoned to court for failing to pay a £150 fine which he claims he knows nothing about. The Internet Technology student thinks some tenants of his parents stole a letter with his details from his old house. The magistrates dropped the case when the circumstances were explained in court.

Burrell's Flasher strikes again
Another college has reported an incident of indecent exposure that occurred on Burrell's Walk near the University Library on November 22. Two female students were the target. The police have been informed and advise that any such incidents occurring in the recent past should be reported. Cambridgeshire police urge victims of this type of incident to come forward "even if it might seem funny at the time".

Cambridge sounds better
Local Cambridge technology firm 'I' have created a Digital Sound Projector TM that will allow couples watching split-screen television to each experience independent soundtracks without headphones. An array of 22 small-loudspeakers produce sound beams, which - like light from a torch - are bounced off walls and ceiling to recreate surround sound. The innovation could also be used to send different volumes to areas of the room for the hard of hearing.



listen

You can hear Varsity on the radio on Mondays at 7pm. CUR 1350

our policy

Varsity is dedicated to bringing you the most relevant and intriguing news as and when it happens.

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Tragic death

Rachel Dival
A Cambridge student was killed in a road accident on the morning of November 18. Thomas Mansfield, a 19 year old Natural Scientist from Girton, suffered fatal injuries as a result of a collision with a lorry just yards from the college entrance. Andrew Jefferies, the college's Senior Tutor, told Varsity the whole college had been "extremely shocked by the tragic events". The emergency services were called at around 8.45 on Friday morning and told of a collision at the junction of Girton Road and Huntingdon Road between a cyclist and a lorry. The driver, a 41 year old man from Grantham, Lincolnshire, was uninjured. The accident is currently the subject of an inquest and police have asked for anyone in the area at the time of the collision to contact them.

IP debate continues
Sir John Sulston, Nobel Prize winner and honorary fellow of Pembroke, is the latest figure to join the intellectual property debate. He has attacked Cambridge for what he terms their "misguided" plan to reform IP rights. As Varsity reported 3 weeks ago, proposed reforms have angered many academics because they would automatically give the university ownership of all IP. Sir John, who was awarded the a Nobel prize in 2003, said: "This is the wrong way to go. [Reforms] may even prohibit some academics from doing research because they won't want interference from the university."

Last week's editorial showed a significant number of Cambridge students to be pessimistic about the state of the Cambridge Union. Defiant, Jenni Scott (Union President) and Sarah Pobereskin (President Elect) defend their territory

The Cambridge Union is renowned for its prestigious history, famous debating chamber and international reputation; for nearly two centuries it has been a celebrity amongst student societies. Contrary to popular opinion that the society is slipping, the Union has recently made some huge improvements. Why do 2 in every 5 students starting in Cambridge join the Union? Because it still gets the attention of national newspapers, brings in top debate speakers, and attracts international stars. We've included no quotes here - because it's just too easy to find a person to support whatever you would like believed. Instead, the facts of what the Union does really speak for themselves. Whilst we don't claim that our reputation is pristine, the reality is that the Union still provides a crucial platform for free speech, high-profile speakers and highly popular entertainment. The foundations of the Cambridge Union lie in debating. Alongside Oxford, we have one of the most famous debating chambers in the world. The popularity of debates was evident this term with the annual Footlights v Union debate, which saw the chamber packed out at full capacity. We make room for comedy these days, but the Union still takes very seriously its responsibility to debate significant and challenging world issues. Conflict in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Third World Aid

and the EU are just some of the issues regularly and passionately disputed. Union Presidents fight to justify debating truly controversial issues, receiving abuse, petitions and pressure from exterior organisations - how better to prove that such debates are still critically important? Is the Union utterly failing to draw high-profile speakers? It seems not, given that last term Sex and the City's Kim Cattrall attracted so many members that we had to turn away fans. This term, Sir Richard Dearlove and Robert Fisk saw packed chambers. The Union is clearly not marginal. Attracting Sven-Goran Eriksson, Hans Blix, and the Secretary-General of NATO, the Union remains a very successful and popular organization for impressive speakers. Pessimism about the Union's future is unfounded. We provide a range of debates, speaker meetings, events and entertainments that are unique in Cambridge. Perhaps the Union is not "withering" after all? In reality, it is gaining strength. The Union election last week saw the highest election turnout in recent history. Serious about member opinions, we have constant on-line feedback and questionnaires. In a move to make the Union open to the entire student population, we now welcome an increasing number of plays, sporting events and art displays. We organise joint events with other

Ten arrested in drugs swoop

Steve Elliott
Ten people were in police custody last weekend after Cambridge Police's biggest-ever anti-drugs sting, code-named Operation Arkwright. This breakthrough comes two weeks after Varsity exposed Cambridge's thriving drugs industry. Five properties were raided at 8am on Sunday morning, with eight further raids soon after. The raids and subsequent arrests were the culmination of 12 months of planning and involved the co-operation of 300 police officers, including 40 detectives. Operation Arkwright sought to target those "thought to be at the head of Cambridge's drug scene, including suppliers of heroin, cocaine and ecstasy, as well as those who benefit from the proceeds of drug crime." Battering rams and body armour had to be used to gain access to some properties although the level of force required varied. The raids included armed police support units, officers from Essex Police and specialist search dogs from Suffolk and Lincolnshire. Despite the three vans and a seven-and-a-half tonne

truck already lined up to remove property recovered in the raids, it was felt that more vehicles were needed. Three men and one woman appeared before Cambridge



Cambridge Police in action in Cherry Hinton
magistrates on Monday. A 27-year old man who lives at the YMCA in Gonville Place

admitted four charges of supplying cocaine, having on each occasion sold about six grams to undercover police officers. A 38-year old mother of three from Pearmain Court pleaded guilty to five charges of supplying cocaine, cannabis and amphetamines, and a 30-year old man of Leete Road was charged with supplying a Class C drug and possession of cannabis resin. He has not yet entered a plea. Also arrested on Sunday were one man from Cherry Hinton, and three men from Willingham, two of whom were released with no further action. Further arrests are expected in December as the police will interview these initial suspects and gather more intelligence. The investigation is being led by Detective Inspector Tony Ixer, who has described drug dealers and handlers as "parasites at the top of the chain". The police have warned that this is not the end of the operation and other drug dealers and handlers in the area should be aware of ongoing investigation.



testosterone breakthrough

Experts at the University's Autism Research Centre have discovered a link between high testosterone levels in pregnant mothers and difficulties which their children might experience in human relationships and learning. In extreme cases, there might even be a link to autism. Director Dr Baron-Cohen

Medics Emigrate
An increasing number of UK students are applying abroad to study medicine. Fierce competition over here, comparatively low living costs abroad and the bureaucratic ease conferred by the admission of a number of East European countries into the EU have made it more attractive than ever for prospective medical students to gain their qualifications elsewhere. Medicine is one of the most oversubscribed courses in the UK. At Cambridge alone only 262 of the 1,390 applicants were successful last year. The prospect of cheaper living expenses also lures students abroad. One student who was offered a place at King's College described to Varsity how she turned it down in favour of a place at Charles University in Prague, where costs are as little as 30 per cent of those in the UK. The introduction of top-up fees looks likely to accelerate the trend.

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Simon Calder

The Varsity cartoonist speaks at last



The Week In Weather



FRI



SAT



SUN



MON



TUE



WED



THUR

A BIT OF DUTCH COURAGE

Miriam Foster reviews Rembrandt's Christmas at the Fitzwilliam Museum

Rembrandt's Christmas is the latest in a series of thematic exhibitions that the Fitzwilliam has mounted, allied to a conservation programme of their impressive collection of Rembrandt prints. Previous exhibitions have dealt with Rembrandt's prints of landscapes, nudes, and the Passion of Christ. The prints in this exhibition illustrate Christ's Nativity and childhood, from the Annunciation to the Shepherds, to the twelve year old Christ's meeting with the Elders in the Temple. These themes have been constantly reworked by Western artists, yet despite the accessibility of their subject matter, these images do not seem familiar, but strange. It often takes a while before the mass of lively, etched lines reveal their narrative charge. The prints are hung alongside relevant extracts from the Gospels, which seems appropriate; Rembrandt has almost completely ignored the mass of inherited imagery, the thousands of Renaissance and Baroque Nativities with which he would have been familiar, and taken the Biblical text as his starting point.

This exhibition serves well as an accessible introduction to old master prints for newcomers, yet offers enough detail to satisfy an enthusiast. A nice touch was the display of a list of technical terms

at the beginning of the exhibition, although an excessive emphasis on the technical aspects of print-making was also its major weakness. The etchings need explanation but the captions accompanying the images would have benefitted from a more contextual approach. Rather than concentrating so exclusively on the processes involved in creating each image it would benefit from more comment on Rembrandt's career and perhaps between the relationship of his printed and painted work. The exhibition suffered from a narrowness of focus.

The biggest treat was hidden beneath a dust sheet in one of several free standing cabinets. *The Holy Family Sleeping with Angels*, of c.1645, is a stunningly understated and natural drawing of the holy family. Drawn in brown ink on parchment, the intimacy of the scene is breath taking. Joseph lies on the floor as an exhausted Mary leans over her sleeping baby in the cot beneath her. There is no overt religious symbolism nor opulent decoration. The viewer is struck by the immediacy and seeming artlessness of the image, the almost discomfiting domesticity of the scene. What is particularly arresting is the apparent effortlessness of Rembrandt's line. The inclusion of drawings in this exhibition shows how close Rembrandt's prints are to his sketches, the viewer is unusu-

ally unaware of the complex mechanical process intervening between the artist's idea and the finished image. Many of his etchings have the loose, incomplete appearance of working sketches, and all appear extraordinarily spontaneous.

In his etched work Rembrandt was particularly interested in exploring the power of dramatic light effects, and, unusually, in images that were almost completely dark except for passages of brilliant light. Themes from the nativity offered Rembrandt the opportunity to indulge in a series of dramatic night scenes; the angel appearing to the shepherds, the shepherds visiting the stable and the Holy Family fleeing etchings are certainly the most atmospheric in the exhibition. As an artist he was increasingly keen on organising his compositions in terms of light and dark. Rembrandt constantly revisits the theme of light illuminating darkness, as a visual metaphor for the coming of Christ.

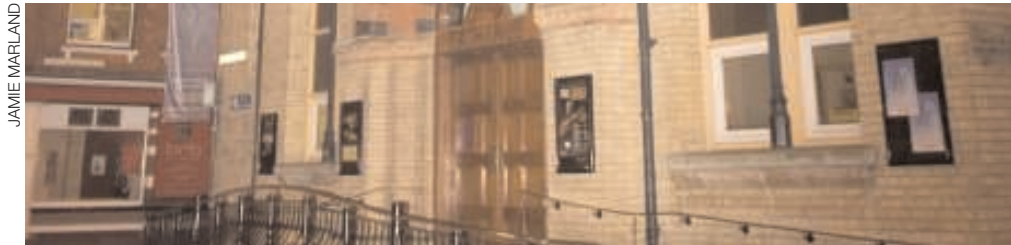
This exhibition packs just as subtle a punch as the delicacies of Rembrandt's prints. It will definitely get you into the festive spirit in a cultured and informative way.

Rembrandt's Christmas is on until 19th February. Entrance is free.



The Holy Family Sleeping with Angels of c.1645

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM



JAMIE MARLAND

Corn Exchange touts

Adi Dasgupta

Managers at the Cambridge Corn Exchange this week expressed concern at the high levels of ticket touting for events held at the venue.

This comes a few days after Arts Minister Tessa Jowell and representatives from the live performance industry attended a summit devoted to tackling touting. Corn Exchange General Manager Graham Saxby told *Varsity* "We support fully efforts to crack down on ticket touting."

Ticket touts in Cambridge have been buying Corn Exchange event tickets and reselling them at exorbitant rates. Tickets for the December 5

"League of Gentlemen", which are sold by the Corn Exchange for £22.50, are advertised on ticket touting websites at more than double the price.

Although touting musical and theatre event tickets is legal, Corn Exchange managers fear that customers may be sold stolen or forged tickets. Saxby stated "The danger is there's no way of knowing how a ticket has been obtained". In a few cases, event-goers at the Corn Exchange have actually been stopped at the door because they had purchased stolen tickets from touts.

Managers also fear that high ticket touting prices will prevent potential event-goers from being able to afford tickets. This, they say, will significantly affect public

access to music, theatre and performance arts.

In recent years ticket touting has moved from the streets to the world wide web. Saxby told *Varsity* "There are all sorts of websites. It's completely even [between street and internet touting]". The sudden explosion of ticket touting websites such as www.getmetickets.net has resulted in an increase in the total number of tickets being resold in Cambridge.

Saxby says that if the touting of Corn Exchange tickets continues to increase, he will consider banning tickets purchased from touters altogether: "We certainly may look to declare tickets invalid that have been sold by ticket touts."

DoS accused of assault

News Reporter

A fellow of Trinity Hall has been charged with indecent assault. Dr Hutchinson, Deputy Head of the University's German Department and Director of Studies of Modern and Medieval Languages at Trinity Hall, is accused of touching a woman in a sexual way without consent. He appeared in court this week but did not enter a plea. The case has been adjourned until December 6.

Trinity Hall has issued a statement: "The College is extremely concerned over the charge which has been made against one of its academics and is in discussion with the relevant people for academic matters and student welfare." The college confirmed that the other person involved in the alleged incident was not a University student nor a member of staff.

They said "the academic in question is an excellent and highly respected teacher. His students, who are taught in pairs, never alone, are being given the

option to be supervised by another academic for the time being if they so wish." The College have said they do not feel it is appropriate to comment further until a later date when the case returns to court. The University have declined to comment, saying it is a matter for the relevant college and department to deal with.

Dr Hutchinson teaches German literature from 1700 to the present day. His particular interest is literature since 1945, especially living writers. One of his specialist subjects is the history of the former East Germany, the 'German Democratic Republic'. He has edited a number of modern texts which have regularly been used at A level and in first-year university courses. He has been the literary editor of the teachers' journal *Deutsch: Lehren und Lernen*, and Editor of the *Bristol Classical Texts German Series* for many years.

Michelle Nuttall, CUSU Women's Officer, said; "We need to remember that Dr Hutchinson has not yet been convicted, but I am working with the Women's Officer and members of the



Dr Peter Hutchinson

Women's Executive from Trinity Hall to ensure that we're happy with the provisions made by the college." She added, "The college has said that students will be given the option of being offered an alternative supervisor, and we need to ensure that the responsibility for making new arrangements rests with the college and not with the student. In general I'm satisfied by the colleges response, but we'll have to wait and see how things go."



Charlotte Hudson writes the fourth installment, and the last one of term. Next term, you can write the next bit. Email your 400 words to literature@varsity.co.uk and if we think your continuation is the best then we'll print it here.

"Oh, sorry!" she muttered, flustered, under her breath as she leant forward, flashing cleavage, to retrieve it from my hand as I gallantly pretended it had not hit me.

"What's the matter?" I probed, as her eyes darted back and forth between me and a point somewhere over my shoulder in the near distance. I heard the clang of the door opening behind me, felt the chill of the draught on my back, and twisted my head around to follow her gaze to where it rested upon a young man whose good looks were diminished by the dour expression he wore on his face.

Immediately, she grabbed a menu and held it to her face. I noticed with amusement that it was upside down but decided not to say anything, too intrigued by the drama that was unfolding

around me, as though I had been transported into the fictional world of a favourite soap opera, to ruin the moment by drawing attention to my incongruous presence.



I was aware of the man being ushered to a nearby table by a waiter and sitting down. I watched Sophie observe him from out of the corner of her eye, completely oblivious of anyone else in the restaurant for a second. I began to feel the familiar lurch of jealousy in my stomach for, somewhat unreasonably, I expected her only to have eyes for me.

At last curiosity got the better of me. "Who is that?" I whispered, caught up in her distress.

My words made her eyes flicker back to me, with a hint of irritation at being pulled away from the object of her present thoughts, and she re-focused them on me as though trying to remember what I was doing there, when it had been her who had interrupted me in the first place!

Suddenly, her features relaxed and she shrugged her shoulders dismissively. "Oh, no-one," she replied, replacing the menu and once again raising the cigarette to her lips, only this time managing to set it alight. She took a deep drag before exhaling a thin arrow of smoke from out of the side of her mouth, while I tried my best to stifle a cough.

Suddenly, she seemed to snap alert and fixed me intensely with her uncompromising eyes. "But if he comes over, then you're my boyfriend" she told me.

My eyes widened...

to be continued...by you?

On Campus

Mobile phone to detect illness
Scientists at Cambridge have been awarded nearly £1 million to develop a cheap, portable device which has been likened to a mobile phone, that could detect diseases in humans. The project is a collaboration between the University's Department of Engineering and scientists at the Medical Research Council. It works by reading the tiny electrical signals which are given off when DNA strands interact and is the first time that a low-cost method has been developed for detecting these signals. Researchers hope the device could eventually be used to detect cancer as well as infectious diseases like avian flu.

ID cards paper published
Dr Jon Agar, of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, has published a paper this week on the use of identity cards in Britain. He examined the experiences with identity cards during the First and Second World Wars, in particular looking for lessons that the government can take to ease future implementation. Their first attempt at ID cards was a failure, but the second a partial success. However, Dr Agar has said "the latest government proposals seem to resemble the first national register more than the second." The article is available online at the History & Policy website - www.historyandpolicy.org

Homerton hoaxer
Notices went up in Homerton JCR this week announcing the that the college had begun "extensive archaeological digs in a search for tradition". The report claims that following the discovery of a letter using "derogatory" terms to describe Homerton's architecture and "soulless features" the college asked its students to "purloin any item that appears to be antique" from "real colleges like King's or Trinity." The items could then be buried and then "discovered" in front of the local press. Students were told items could be exchanged for meal vouchers and were reminded "it is worth mentioning that tapestries can be rolled up". Varsity is eagerly awaiting its invitation to the dig.

Mill Road Christmas Fair
Saturday December 3 will see a celebration of all the good things Mill Road has on offer. A Christmas fair will provide live music, dancing, beer tasting, roast chestnut sellers, Father Christmas, mulled wine and mince pies. Visit www.localsecrets.com for details.

Update on Blag
Xander Bird of Caius College has blagged a car for a pen in the Big RAG Blag. The cheeky freeloader has wrangled a Citroen AX to be collected today. Cambridge students are competing to swap their RAG biros for items worth as much as possible.

Cross Campus

Extra fibre?
Students at Vanbrugh College, York, were somewhat surprised last week to witness pieces of the canteen roof falling down whilst they were having lunch. A subsequent investigation found that heavy rains in recent weeks had caused a build up of water on the flat roof above the canteen, resulting in a leak that had loosened pieces of the interior. Although the Vanbrugh canteen roof had been identified as unsuitable when the building was refurbished last year, no effort had been made to repair it. Despite the commotion Vanbrugh JCR chair Sarah Jones denied any knowledge of the problem.

Perfect Paper Aeroplane
Three students at Leeds University have designed the "perfect paper aeroplane". The plane Avenger is considered by academics to combine aerodynamics and ease of manufacture. Most paper planes follow a basic "school playground" template starting with a central fold down the length of an A4 sheet of paper, with two more inward folds creating a "delta-wing" shape (similar to Concorde) and it is this triangular frame which reduces drag. The new design introduces tiny folded winglets on each side of the plane and at the back, as well as cambered wings, which gives it the killer "air-time" edge over standard designs. Directions for making it can be found at www.guardian.co.uk/education

Welfare Officer attacks staff
The Durham Student Union (DSU) Welfare Officer physically and verbally assaulted staff at Hatfield College bar last week. At the end of a DSU barcrawl the Women's Officer was thrown out of Hatfield College bar for "totally unacceptable" behaviour but refused to leave. The Welfare Officer came to her rescue by attacking the bar staff involved in her removal. The Womens' Officer, Hannah Al-Othman has since resigned. The Welfare Officer remains in position saying "I think people would rather have someone in welfare who makes mistakes, but learns from them, than having someone who tried to portray this perfect image".

Student accused of equine homophobia
Ex-Balliol College, Oxford, student Sam Brown was detained in custody and now faces court for calling a police horse "gay". He has been charged with using "threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour within the sight or hearing of a person likely to be caused distress". On the evening of the incident he had left Balliol's Cellar Bar and come across two mounted policemen, one of whom he asked "how do you feel about your horse being gay?" He was arrested after making further comments on the sexuality of the animal and didn't pay his fine because he was "skint" finishing his exams. He plans to plead not guilty.

No sex please, we're escorts

As more students turn to escort agency work, Varsity investigates whether the abstaining Cambridge student is welcome

Jude Townend

After one relaunch earlier this year, Oxbridge Escorts, the "no-sex escort agency", has this week undergone a further facelift in a bid to attract more business. Varsity's investigation into the world of student escorting revealed a thriving industry, but one for those prepared to have more than just dinner. Researching under the Varsity pseudonym, "Kirsty" joined Take Me To Dinner (formerly Oxbridge Escorts) and found that members seemed willing to flout the company's strict no sex policy. Considering the number of students tempted to enter, or already engaged in, the sex industry, Varsity asks whether Take Me to Dinner actually has anything different to offer.

One London based escort owner told Varsity: "in my experience most students leave university hideously in debt by thousands and thousands of pounds. For many women leaving university with that kind of debt is daunting. One of the women on my books has just this year graduated from Oxford with a Geography degree but she cannot get a job other than working in a department store or a bar. You can work in a bar and work for £40 a night or go out and earn £200 or £250 an hour escorting."

There are 80,000 prostitutes working in the UK and three out of four women in prostitution become involved aged 21 or younger.

Praed Street Project, a clinic for prostitutes in London says a "growing number" of the 2000 workers they treat annually are students. Researchers at Westminster University estimate that three to four percent of indebted students turn to the sex industry to earn extra money.

Prostitution is not illegal, but many of the activities that surround it are, such as controlling prostitution for gain. Escort agencies providing "social escort services" rather than sexual services are legal but these are in very small minority (if they exist at all) and the vast majority of escort agencies involve the owners operating illegally. What stops them being raided and closed down is that

agencies tend to be much lower down the list of police priorities than streetwork or brothels.

When Oxbridge Escorts, recently re-branded Take Me to Dinner, first launched in April 2005, it promised to be the "no sex" option in escorting. It is the only escort agency Varsity could find in the whole of the UK to actively promote a "no sex" policy. Yet it is undergoing yet another makeover - the site does not seem to have attracted the interest or custom it hoped for. On November 22 founder Nick Dekker announced a sister site: Quontentio, which will be officially launched in December. The original Oxbridge Escorts service was launched to widespread hype and media attention, culminating in an appearance on the Channel 4 Richard and Judy show. The service was to provide articulate, bright and entertaining escorts for wealthy clients prepared to pay up to hundreds of pounds for the privilege. The oddity of the whole

Varsity the aim of the Take Me To Dinner new site is to "allow people from all universities to sign up, not just Oxbridge, with the aim of changing the way we view online dating - no chatting, no waiting, immediate dating." Clients and escorts both fill in the same form and students from all different universities are now encouraged to join, but very little appears to have changed: Oxford and Cambridge students are still given "Elite Date" status, not available to other members. In order to take out an Elite Date members have to upgrade to Premium membership which costs £59 per six months. The site states: "Following on from the idea which began with Oxbridge Escorts, here at Take Me To Dinner we also seek to provide a service whereby bright and charming young people can get paid to show off their skills." Dekker admits that it is "unashamedly elitist". He is adamant that the "no-sex" policy is necessary to "allow people to be

bid on jobs, services and dates. Dekker said, "We hope that the Date Auctions will prove very very popular with our Take Me To Dinner Members."

Yet the future of the enterprise does not seem safe. Beyond initial hype the potential for a "no sex" escort agency is limited. When Cambridge students on the site were contacted by Varsity most admitted they had only "been on one date" or not at all. One claimed to have "completely" forgotten she had registered; another said: "I signed up during finals, out of boredom and lack of money, but as soon as they were over I was too drunk to follow up the requests which popped up in my inbox. I did check out one guy's profile, but he was not exactly my type. I did on second thoughts begin to think the whole thing was slightly, well, sad actually - the one group pimping themselves (i.e. me!) seemed exploitative, and the poor bastards we wanted to take advantage of were just pathetic!" Another said he had heard there had only been about 50 dates. Dekker tentatively countered that: "the number of dates is approaching four figures."

Gareth*, reading English at Oxford, notorious among fellow students for his escort activity, would only admit to three dates. "There's not really any potential with this site - there are only four women members other than female students. Two of the dates I had were with journalists. The other one, I don't think she was a journalist, but she didn't want sex. It's all a lot of hype really. My career certainly isn't in Oxbridge escorting."

Kay Good, author of *In Good Company: An Escort's Guide* and owner of Good Grrls Agency said, "It's not realistic [a "no-sex" agency]. I'm not in this industry to provide dinner dates. Occasionally clients ring up, and they do want to take the girl out for dinner, they do want a dinner companion but that is not the primary need and it never has been." Lottie* a high-earning student escort working in Brighton said, "I've heard that there is some market for social only escorting in London, but apart from one woman who did it a while ago, I've never heard anyone claiming to have done it or to

THREE OUT OF FOUR WOMEN IN PROSTITUTION BECOME INVOLVED UNDER 21

endeavour lay in the agency's insistence that there would be a strict "no sex" policy. Despite widespread interest, the site had relaunched itself as Takemetodinner.co.uk by May 2005. The £45 student escort sign-up and the £100 clients' fee (plus cost of the escort) were abolished.

Dekker, a Classics graduate from Balliol College, Oxford, told

proud of their Take Me To Dinner membership."

One Elite Date admitted, "it's pretty much the same as before. Clients pay to take the Oxbridge escorts, whether you re-name them Elite dates or whatever, out to dinner."

Now Dekker is launching sister-site Quontentio, (pronounced kon-TEN-tee-oh) a concept based on online auctions where people can

Advice for a new escort from the online chatrooms

"If you really want to do that [escorting] then fine, ALL the clients will expect you to be a prostitute and the opportunity of actually escorting someone anywhere other than a hotel room will be quite rare. I suggest that you think about working for a brothel instead - in those situations you are in a more secure / safe environment as the brothel will have security measures and you will be better protected than if you are alone with men."

"The sex industry is a tricky one - you can either work in it and be able to separate the sex from the rest of your life - or you can't and it can really damage you, e.g. you become a victim rather than a girl making good money. As a suggestion why don't you dip your toe into the industry a bit and try out for lapdancing club or similar - this will give you an idea how you feel about selling yourself without having to go so far as actually sleeping with the men."

"Dare I say it was I that suggested becoming an escort, working for a reputable agency will offer good steady money as and when you want it and security in the form of a male minder whilst working. Don't take my word for it, ask other escorts."

"I personally don't know of any straight escorting agencies and not sure there is a big market for it but I guess there must be one somewhere."

For sex worker support and advice:

In Good Company: An Escorts Guide by Kay Good, published on November 28 Fusion Press

United Kingdom Networks of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)
0161 953 4107

Support and Advice for Escorts
www.saafe.co.uk





HANNAH FLETCHER

Browsing the escorts on offer at Take Me to Dinner. Each member submits a full profile and is encouraged to supply a photograph

know anyone who has. I do get the odd social only date, but it wouldn't even pay my gas bills."

Good says there is "undoubtedly a student market and there always has been. I have always worked with students of one form or another. At the moment I have more recent graduates than students. The market is there: youth and beauty will always be marketable." She estimated that out of the thousands of sex workers in London, the figure for students must be very high. "I wouldn't want to make a guess but since I've worked in the industry 90% fall into either students or single mothers. They are people who are driven by economic necessity, particularly if you're a foreign student when you're not getting any help from the government."

Sarah*, 22, a drama student in London, told *Varsity* she escorts because "the money's so good I don't have to do too much in order to live very comfortably - plus I enjoy it. Half my time is spent being wined and dined, taken out to the best clubs, and the other half is having sex, which I enjoy. I don't have the same "sexual morals" as most people. The way I see it, I'd be sleeping with loads of people anyway, why not get paid for it? I've never had anyone too hideous. Most of them are just really rich and a bit weird. I know that if it got really hairy I could just leave."

When *Varsity's* "Kirsty" joined the Take Me To Dinner to find out what the members expected, one Premium member described his ideal first date: "drinks, dinner at a nice restaurant, followed by a play... and ending in lots of petting and some heavy-duty boy/girl action." Another interested member, told her he had a wife and two children and in further emails revealed, after apologising for his English, "to be frank with you and excuse me, I want make

love with you (if possible and after seeing me) Making love doesn't means sex. It is ok just french kissing or petting in the bed. I need have enjoy in the bed. Of course, at that time, I must show you the exceed thanks from my personal budget. Having a dinner may means a introducing time for each other. And to say more, if you become to like me, I want you to become a private business angel after a couple of months."

"Kirsty" also contacted escort agencies in Cambridge and around the country to find out what they expected from a student wanting to join an agency. At one well-known local agency

but, "having said that last night a girl earned £180 for wanking a bloke off for 40 minutes, at a posh hotel too."

Cambridge has a thriving sex trade with independent sex workers working from home, in parlours, and at clients' homes but it is not known whether any students are working as escorts in Cambridge. Anne*, an escort agency owner working in the Midlands said, "it's such a small place, I don't think students would risk their anonymity. I suspect that they would travel to London to earn better money and in better conditions." When a male member of *Varsity* rang

support group or information held about sex workers. With funding from the Cambridge Action for Sexual Health group, Diverse, along with other local organisations will try to move forward in a consultation exercise which will look at what has been done in other parts of the country, and evaluate the sexual health needs for sex workers in Cambridge and surrounding areas." Their findings will be published in March 2006.

This week escorts from Cambridgeshire and other neighbouring counties were targeted as part of police raids on what was believed to be the South East's largest escort agency. Four addresses in Hatfield were searched in connection with the agency. In an online chatroom one escort from Kent described how a supposed punter, suspected to be a policeman in disguise, rang her to ask her to go to Hatfield and pressed her for details of other agencies in the area. The agency in question is alleged to have women working in Herts, Bucks, Beds, Essex, Cambs, Kent, London, Berks and Surrey. As a result of the operation three men and one woman are being held at police stations in Herts.

There is certainly a lot of money to be made in escorting and related sex industry work for students. Take Me to Dinner does not provide a "no-sex" alternative - at least not one which would bring in similar amounts of money. Many of the dates on the site are clearly using it to sell sex and increase their prices accordingly. But they would make more money and have their clients properly vetted if they went through one of the established and realistic agencies, rather than being part of one deluded ex-Oxford student's dream.

**Names have been changed to protect escorts' and agency owners' identities*

I THINK YOU KNOW FULL WELL WHAT A FULL PERSONAL SERVICE IS, DARLING

”

she was told, "the client pays by the hour [£120; £50 goes to the escort], and during this time you are required to give them good company, a full body massage and a full personal service." When "Kirsty" asked what exactly that entailed she was told "I think you know full well what that is, darling." An escort agency owner in the North-East told her that he didn't know of any no-sex agency

one popular Cambridge escort agency to ask specifically for a student escort he was met with suspicion, the agency owner asking "why exactly would you want a student?"

As of yet there has been no official study conducted into the sex trade in Cambridge. A spokesperson for Diverse, Cambridgeshire Sexual Health charity said "as far as we are aware there is no specific

Varsity asks: Would you be an Oxbridge escort?

> *Varsity* asked students if they would consider escorting and how far they would be prepared to go. Below, two very different kinds of escorts tell all

The students: Would you be an escort?

"Damn right. I've definitely thought about it - it's a lot of money for looking good and being desirable. And everyone plays on sex as a way of getting what they want all the time pretending that they're not. At least this way you're honest about it."
1st year female, Homerton

"I would definitely consider working as an escort, apparently there are Oxbridge services where you don't even have to have sex with them. You just hang off their arm and make polite conversation all night. I used to be a feminist but then I started living on a student loan."
2nd year female, New Hall

"I have to fund studying at Cambridge all on loan, so if some sad old man wanted to pay me to go to a party with him, I wouldn't say no. Sounds like easy money."
2nd year female, Clare

"Would I be an escort, as in have sex for money? Well, yes. But my upper age limit would be about 45, no older than my mum."
3rd Year male, Sidney Sussex

"Not right now, but if I was really pressed for cash and there was an opportunity then I can imagine that I would."
3rd Year male, Trinity

The Oxbridge escort on her first date: Rebecca Heselton, Newnham

"I guess I wasn't quite sure what kind of people would respond to these ads, especially as I'd put down my main selling feature (!) as 'having the most fabulous legs in Cambridge'. James* contacted me through the site and asked me out on a date. His online profile seemed quite normal. Once I'd agreed to the date, for a sum of £75 plus expenses, my contact details were made available to him which I was a bit reluctant about. On the night I'd told my friends and family (not my mum though...) where I was going to be and when.

I knew it would be busy and light. I wore a short black dress, he was, after all, paying for my legs and ensured I looked presentable.

My first thought was 'omigod you're greying and old and what on earth am I doing here? Is this really worth £100?'. In the bar quite a few people were looking at us, probably trying to work out if I was his daughter/ latest wife/ or actually an escort. Before we'd even gotten a drink, he handed me an envelope which had the money for the date in it. I hastily shoved it into my bag, feeling that if I did start counting twenty pound notes in the middle of the Smiths at Smithson restaurant it would confirm to everyone that I actually was being paid to sit and talk to him. We spent the evening smiling, holding eye contact and flirting (but not excessively) and we chatted about lots of highly intellectual things(!). I did ask him why he came on the date.



What do you think you'd be expected to do?

"I'd expect it to be a bit like a date, but with no prospect of sex at the end of it."
2nd year female, Clare

"If it was with a firm I'd heard of like Oxbridge escorts then I would think it was just dinner or something. Definitely no funny business."
3rd year female, New Hall

"I think that depends on the type of the agency, but there must be a few agencies where it's more just an evening out. I'd like to think that it would just involve being the perfect gentleman for a few hours."
3rd year male, Trinity

He explained that he had a wife, spending his bonus on shoes, three young children, and that he hadn't sat opposite an attractive girl who gave him her undivided attention for two decades. He was also intrigued as to what kind of girl would actually turn up. I think he was quite surprised.

At the end, I thanked him for the meal, and explained I had to leave. He didn't try and take anything further, and the evening ended with a handshake and a taxi (he, naturally, paid for the latter.) I actually nearly missed the train, and texted him saying 'Nearly missed the train, I've caused an uproar in first class' to which he replied 'My dear woman, any uproar you cause will be first class'. In a way I felt quite sorry for him.

Lottie*, a student escort working in Brighton gives us an insight:

I see one to three people a week, usually for two hours plus some time for preparation and travel. If I'm too busy I refuse work. I'm finding study difficult because this is my first term back after withdrawing in summer 2003, and I was a hopeless student then. Work isn't a problem, and the benefits to my sanity of being self-sufficient are well worth it. Having a real job would be difficult.

My mum worries. My dad still thinks I'm stripping. I've never had a really negative response from telling people, it interests them. It's far easier to say I'm a stripper or a whore than to tell someone I'm vegan!



JAMIE MARLAND

Client visits a popular "massage parlour" on Mill Road

Prostitution: the law

Soliciting: The actual act of prostitution isn't illegal. However to solicit in a public place is. Soliciting can be any action by the prostitute to gain attention of another with intention of obtaining money for sex. Importuning: It is an offence for a man to persistently solicit or importune in a public place for immoral purposes [some kind of sexual activity].

Brothels and Parlours: A prostitute who works in one cannot actually be held liable for any-

thing. The people that are targeted by UK law are the persons that run the establishments.

Escort Agencies: It is legal to work from escort agencies.

Pimping and Procuring: It is illegal for anybody to control the movements of working girls. It is also against the law to live off the earnings of a prostitute.

www.tinyurl.com/8egm5





FITZ THE BILL

Fitzbillies: Restaurant Review by Anthony Marlowe and Joe Schutzer-Weissmann

E-bay is like a box of chocolates- that is, not at all like life. Within those yellow frames of dreamy purchasing potential prices flutter aimlessly about, cut loose from the ties of worth and wealth.

Restaurants are a similar oddity of economics: the cost-demand relationship slides slightly askew and, with it, the concept of value. In real terms no restaurant in the First World is "good value": most run on a three-hundred percent mark-up. Then again you probably buy your ready washed and cut 100 gram bag of rocket for £1.50 and don't give it, or its real value (about 40p) a second thought. There is the famous E-bay example of a man who spent £8 on a five pound note. A lesson to us all there. Seriously, though, we all know couples who religiously chew the fat over a sinewy Chez Gerard steak- they are just as culpable , perhaps more so at eighteen quid a go.

The question then is When is an £18 steak worth £18? When you go to Fitzbillies it is. And this is because the normal rules of cost and product do not apply in this restaurant. Your £18 pays for a chef's expertise, the finest fresh produce locally available, the lack of canned music, the relaxed and attentive staff and the soothing ambience in which to escape.

Most of us can spend thousands on cheap Ikea home furnishings without ever creating such a haven and, to be honest, most of the couples there seem to be paying for the opportunity of a good Sunday afternoon argument. In both the cases our Mastercard pays for the quality experience, not the product, and that is priceless.

“ LIKE MOST BOOKS, A GOOD STEAK CAN BE JUDGED BY ITS COVER AND THESE SAUCES PROMISED A GREAT EAT

”

In Fitzbillies you will likely find both. Fine food and excellent portions. Scallops as they should be: five seconds frying on each side and little else. Pigeon as preferred: dead and covered with a fantastic boozy winter sauce. Two steaks were tried, venison and beef; both were perfectly cooked, tender and more than ample. Like most books, a good steak can

be judged by its cover and these sauces promised a great eat. They exemplified the most important aspects of a sauce being freshly made of good quality stock. If you've got space for a pudding have one - like most good things they come with a health warning.

Wines are expertly chosen and provided by Bachanalia which often throws up some quirky odd-bins- in this case a glass of the rich 18.5 per cent Muscat is like eating a basket of fresh figs. There are few things better on a Ural-bitter winter's night than a robust Rioja. In England these wines are rarely worth the hangover but here, however, we enjoyed an Hispanic classic. The staff are friendly and efficient without being intrusive. Go to Fitzbillies: you're worth it.

In a nutshell

Where: Trumpington Street.
When: Restaurant stops serving at 9.30pm.
Prices: £5 - £19.
Food Highlights: Venison steak and scallops.
Wine: Warming Winter Rioja and thick sweet Chambers Rutherman Muscat.

Ratings
Food 8/10
Value 8/10
Atmosphere 8/10

incidentally...

by zoe organ

a final instalment from Cambridge's very own Bridget Jones...

There was a young girl who had a wild affair with a boy who walked her along the South Bank from Westminster Bridge to London Bridge. Once. When the relationship went haywire, she continued to make this walk every night after school, (flinging her hair against the wind, red-eyed and red-nosed, probably beating her breast inadvertently) before hopping on the tube back to Tooting. The whole thing took about two and half hours. I don't think this is as extreme a case as it might sound. When she told me, my own mind latched onto the neglected Tooting, at which point she would have ceased her act of ritual devotion, lamenting her unmoorful, unmeaningful surroundings. That's only because the eastern veg markets, and the lethal traffic systems that ended another set of romantic memories in St George's hospital, happened to ring more pertinent bells in my separate head.

Stories like this seem to invite confession. London is a rich place to trace the pattern of interlinking amorous journeys. Probably everyone has their own landmark on that stretch of the South Bank which they have burdened with all the weight of intense love or grief or celebration. That particular place is so full of beautifully positioned lamp posts, against which to set picture card gestures of romance.

The strange thing is that the icons still survive even when the love has gone. That girl still cannot do that walk without the ritual wailing around the book stores under the bridges; the intense sense of emotion simply wafts up of the pavement: the relationship is between her feet and the stone. It would be horrific if one's lover began to wail every time they ate a carrot, say, because they had once eaten a carrot with a lover long ago and the vegetable was now ineradicably laden with emotion. Worse, they might even seem to enjoy it- to Relish The

Carrot. These things do happen. Perhaps they happen because love is untenable, and yet all we can do is grasp. Our arms are simply not long, or metaphorical, or quenchable enough not to cling to the real thing. So we settle for this absurdity. How exacerbated this seems to be here, where the tiny size of the place necessitates a re-patterning of previously trod journeys with ever changing faces, but the same old stimuli of ancient hysteria. If we were all to retread our sacred journeys with such emotional pomp, our college scarves the vehicles of an itchy flagellation, the place would look like a monastery on Ash Wednesday, (and the Tourist Trade would flourish.) But, conversely, there is a tendency here for objects to become stale, for people to be first pretentious and then nonchalant about relationships. There is no Relishing, of no Carrot, and so no attempt to accommodate our young collage of memories. The recycling of journeys means that the objects of devotion become part of less ritualistic events, like trips to Sainsbury's or to supervisions, and so we grow old. And dumb. Objects renew themselves every seven seconds or so, as if we were goldfish, as if this really was the Cambridge Goldfish Bowl it is claimed to be. This must be prevented: remember, and pay attention.



Make Headlines.

Communicate with over 18,000 readers.

Established in 1947, Varsity is one of only two independent student newspapers in the country. It has a great heritage of quality and intelligent journalism, attracting the best talent in Cambridge and ARU.


We're looking for passionate, dedicated individuals to edit the sections of the newspaper in Lent Term 2006. If you have a passion for writing, photography, production or design and have enjoyed reading Varsity this term - or have ideas about how you can make it better - then we want to hear from you. No prior experience is necessary, just a genuine interest in journalism and the subject of the section you want to work in. You can edit any of the existing sections listed below, or even suggest an idea for a new one.

Associate/Deputy Editor	Investigations Editor	Visual Arts Editor
Chief News Editor	Science Editor	Screen Editor
News Editor	Comment & Opinion Editor	Classical Music Editor
Features Editor	Satire Editor	Travel Editor
Arts Editor	Restaurant Review/Food & Drink	Photo Editor
Sports Editor	Fashion Editor	Photojournalists
Production Manager	Literature Editor	Graphic Designers
Sub-Editors & Page Checkers	Music Editor	Cartoonists & Illustrators
Interviews Editor	Theatre Editor	Columnists

To apply, download an application form from www.varsity.co.uk and return it by Sunday 27th November, at 5pm. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Business Manager, Chris Adams, at business@varsity.co.uk, or you can email any of the current team using the addresses on the website and in the team list in this issue. **Be a part of it!**

Launch Party

MAYSfourteen




this year's anthology of new writing by Cambridge & Oxford students

at

The Vaults, Trinity Street

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Free copy of last year's Mays for the first 50 to arrive!



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THE CAMBRIDGE EVENING NEWS RECENTLY REPORTED THAT PETER CAVANNA WAS FAITH HEALING AT LIVING WATERS IN CAMBRIDGE. NED BEAUMAN WENT TO SEE, AND DISCOVERED A DARK SIDE TO THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

Today at Living Waters only one woman comes up to be healed. Sue, 49, has had carpal tunnel syndrome for more than twenty years. She gets "dreadful pain" at night and wears splints. During the day her arms often go numb. Her recent "flare-up" was brought on by wrapping shoeboxes that local children had filled with Christmas presents for Romanian orphans.

Sue goes up to the front, along with three or four people who want spiritual (not physical) healing, and Peter Cavanna, the pastor of Living Waters, speaks to her quietly. "Holy spirit come and heal these people," he says. "Freedom come into you. Be healed now." He touches her arm. "Be free in the name of Jesus." His eyelids are flickering in a slightly eerie way, as if he's dreaming. "Are you feeling healthy?" he asks her. She says something I can't hear, and he carries on. A bit later he asks her again, "Can you still feel the pain?" But again it doesn't seem to have worked. "Pain, go!" he says louder. "Kingdom of God come!" People in the audience say "Yes!" and "Amen!" A bit later everyone sits down, and the service ends.

Sue was "beginning to feel despondent," she tells me afterwards, when the healing didn't seem to be working. It was the first time she'd been healed, and she was "sceptical". But by the end "the pain had lessened." (Cavanna will later admit that he "didn't have any sense that Sue received a cure.") She would certainly recommend it to others.

The healing comes at the end of Sunday morning service at Living Waters, a Pentecostal Church off Mill Road, which lasts two and a half hours. There are over seventy people, including children, in the congregation, about half of them black, many with the thick accents of recent immigrants. The inside of the church looks like a community centre, with its comfy blue seats and potted plants. Before the service, Christian rock plays softly and the projector screen at the back says "Please make sure your mobile phones are switched off," like in a cinema.

The service begins with three or four cheerful pop songs about God. A woman called Iris sings and plays acoustic guitar, and there's also a drummer, a backing singer, an electric guitarist, a technician, and someone to sit at a computer and make sure the right lyrics are projected up on the screen. Everyone stands up to sing along, and a few people in the audience slap tambourines;

there's even a kid with maracas.

Peter Cavanah, the pastor, gives a sermon entitled "The Fear Factor", about Jesus helping us to face our fears. "Why don't we have revivalism in this country?" he asks. "People say 'It's not God's time.' I don't believe that. The reason that more people haven't come to Christ is that believers are afraid to show their faith." At the end of the sermon, those who have a specific fear to conquer stand up, and then others stand up to pray with them. There are lots of hugs and a few tears.

Cavanah is a warm and articulate speaker. When I first spoke to him on the phone it felt like he was there in person, pumping my hand. But he's not like one of those American televangelists who shout about "JA-EEE-ZUS" and sweat profusely and make Christianity look like a circus act. He doesn't feel fake or over-rehearsed or melodramatic. He tells little jokes about failing his driving test and his phobia of cats. He wears a shirt and jumper, no dog-collar or tie. When I interview him the next day, he will say things like "I don't want to do atheists too much of a disservice," and "It's not our job to convince anybody, we just preach the good news about how nice God is." Not "how mighty," or "how wrathful". "How nice". In other words, he's very English. Mild and modest. Which is why it's so strange to hear him, also during the interview, talk about the extraordinary things he's seen in his career: "scores" of crippled people who got out of their wheelchairs after Jesus healed them; cases of demonic possession where the subject gained "incredible strength" and "slithered around the room like a snake".

After the sermon there's the healing, and now everyone is going home. But before the church empties, I speak to Katie, 26, who says she was healed at a previous service at Living Waters, just by sitting in the audience. She tells me she used to struggle with hepatitis, drug addiction, and hormone imbalance caused by an underactive thyroid. She thinks she was probably possessed by demons. (I find out later that, although Cavanna does believe in demons, he doesn't believe they cause hepatitis.) "I was told I'd be on medicine for the rest of my life. But it wasn't helping." During her healing she felt a lump rising in her stomach, which she thinks had something to do with the hepatitis, and afterwards all her health problems were gone. The healing "drove the demons out of

me. It changed me totally. The progress is incredible." Now she's off her medicine, and she would never go back to it. "Medicine doesn't give healing. Jesus gives healing." She speaks with enormous conviction.

The next day I go back to the church to talk to Peter Cavanna. He's thirty-six and comes from Devon. "I was an atheist in my teenage years. I had converted to Christianity when I was eighteen years old. Some Christians shared their faith with me when I was at college, doing English at a polytechnic. I was absolutely gripped by what they said to me." He start to help out at his local church, and ended up training for three years at Bible College. Then in 2000 he moved to Cambridge and became pastor of Living Waters.

At the time of his conversion, he had been epileptic since he was twelve. He had seizures about once a week, sometimes lasting as long as a day, and medical treatment wasn't helping. Later on, after Bible College, he would sometimes fall down while giving a sermon. "Then at a meeting in Leicestershire on the 26th November, 1991, fourteen years this week - praise God - I was cured." He hasn't had a seizure since, and is now allowed to drive a car.

Then, in 1995, "I was praying with a girl who had been in a road accident seven or eight years before, and since the accident she had no feeling in her face. I prayed with her, and immediately the feeling came back into her face and she burst into tears and crashed on the floor, amazed." That was the first time he participated in a healing.

This year, Cavanna explains, some local ministers paid for a world-famous faith healer called John Mellor to fly over from Copenhagen for some services. Mellor brought a "power" with him, and since then healing has gone on at Living Waters. "No one is more amazed than me at the things that occur. I don't like to think of myself as being gifted. Jesus does all the healing." What does it feel like? "I don't feel anything different to how I'm feeling sitting and talking to you now. I don't feel a thing."

What does he think about the relationship between faith healing and conventional medicine? "The Bible does not speak against medicine at all. In Acts, Luke is called 'the beloved physician'. If someone was reliant on medicine, and otherwise they'd have terrible problems, we would always - and any reputable healing ministry would do this - we always recom-

mend that they see the doctor after they've been healed. Then they can go off their medicine if the doctor says it's all right."

I tell him about Katie, who has rejected medicine completely. "I don't know really Katie, she's brand new. I've had one telephone conversation with her. None of our team prayed with her. I would not endorse anyone to come off medicines before they see the doctor." He says he will follow it up.

But if people come to Living Waters and see him promote faith healing as an easy way of getting well, then, inevitably, some of them will end up endangering their health. He's in a position of great responsibility. Does he accept that there will be more cases like Katie where people take the message the wrong way? "We don't want to play games with anybody's life. So all I can do is try to ensure that it doesn't happen."

Does he not worry that sometimes he is just soothing the symptoms of illness, without curing the disease itself? "I've not really thought about that. I am young in this whole area, and I probably will need to consider these things as they arise. People should, if in doubt, go back to their doctor."

Is he doing all he can to get that message across? "There's always room for improvement." A leaflet is available in the church that warns "until you have been checked by your doctor, you should never stop taking any essential medicines," but there's no way to know who's reading it. He doesn't say anything on that subject during the service.

So does he think the benefits of faith healing outweigh the risks to people like Katie? "I'm doomed if I say yes or no, because if I say yes, then - well, Jesus says the good shepherd cares more about the one lost sheep than the hundred in the flock, so that one person is important. But if we do not pray for anyone in our services ever again, there will be no more divine healing. Yes, there are some people who are vulnerable, who are more impressionable, people who suffer mental challenges, and we need to be especially careful to take care of them. But I'm not a doctor seeing a patient for fifteen minutes. We attract crowds of people, so it will always be difficult to follow anybody up. People are adults, and we have to treat them like adults."

If it were possible to prove scientifically that faith healing works, would he be interested? "We're not trying to prove any-

thing. It's the work of the Holy Spirit to open people's eyes to Jesus Christ."

The next day I speak to Tamsin Brown, a local GP. I ask her about Sue and Katie and Peter Cavanna himself. She tells that the placebo effect can reduce pain by up to 35% in conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome, which would account for Sue's "lessening" of the pain, and many other "successful" cases of faith healing. (Cavanna himself told me that at Living Waters "we have not seen anything particularly dramatic so far, just relief from pain.")

Tamsin also says it's not uncommon for people to grow out of epilepsy in their early twenties. Of course, it would be an unbelievable coincidence if Cavanna had just happened to attend a healing service and come off his medication in the very same week his fits naturally stopped. But it wasn't a one-off. Cavanna told me he had tried to come off his medication many times before, without success, and that his epilepsy had also been prayed for many times before, without success. At the service where he was "cured", he told me that he had no "great experience"; he "felt nothing". In other words, there was nothing to distinguish it from the failed attempts, except that this time, when he'd given it chance after chance, it finally worked - or he finally got lucky.

But that's hardly the point. We can try to explain or debunk as many cases as we like - faith healers will always come up with something new. The point is people like Katie. I ask Tamsin what the consequences would be if someone suddenly stopped taking their medicine for an underactive thyroid. "Well, you wouldn't notice anything for a few months. You could easily believe that you'd been cured. But eventually your hair starts to thin. You lose your eyebrows. Your skin becomes dry and coarse. Your voice gets lower. Your whole metabolism slows down, and so does your brain. You become forgetful, depressed, unstable. Your heart starts to feel the strain. After a year or two, if you're not treated, your heart will fail."

Cavanna said he was going to speak to Katie. But he only heard about her case from me, by chance, and there will be more people like her. There probably already have been. Of course, maybe her health problems really were caused by demons, and the healing prayers really did get the demons out of her. Then we don't have to worry.

“

HE TELLS ME HE'S SEEN 'SCORES' OF CRIPPLED PEOPLE WHO GOT UP OUT OF THEIR WHEELCHAIRS AFTER JESUS HEALED THEM; CASES OF DEMONIC POSSESSION WHERE THE SUBJECT GAINED 'INCREDIBLE STRENGTH' AND 'SLITHERED AROUND THE ROOM LIKE A SNAKE'

”

HIV & AIDS: The Facts

GLOBAL

• At present, there are more than 39 million people living with HIV worldwide

• There are currently roughly five million new cases reported each year

• More than 70 per cent of new cases reported have been transmitted through heterosexual sex

• AIDS has claimed more than 20 million lives

• Over 8,000 more deaths are caused every day by AIDS

• Five people die every minute because of AIDS

UK

• There were over 7,000 people in the UK newly affected by AIDS in 2004

• The biggest increase in cases of HIV are amongst heterosexual people, the diagnoses having risen by fifteen per cent since 2002-03

• Since 1999, the number of new HIV diagnoses acquired heterosexually has been higher than those diagnosed through homosexual sex

• But there is a continuing epidemic among homosexuals, representing 1,908 of the 7,136 cases diagnosed in 2003

• 2005 statistics will be released by the Health Promotion Agency on December 1.

CAMBRIDGE

• No published statistics on cases of HIV and AIDS in Cambridge are available

• Clinic 1A at Addenbrooke's Hospital provides confidential testing and advice. Tel: 01223 217 774. Open Mondays: 1200 to 1800 hrs, Tuesday to Friday: 0900 to 1630 hrs

• Ed Williams is CUSU HIV & Sexual Health Officer. Email him on hiv-sexualhealth@cusu.cam.ac.uk

• DHIVERSE, local HIV and sexual health charity has grown since 1986 to include health promotion, support, advocacy and campaigning. For general enquiries, email info@dhiverse.org.uk, or call 01223 508805. People living with and affected by HIV should email posoptions@dhiverse.org.uk or call 01223 508806



LIVING, POSITIVE

Next Thursday, the world will observe **WORLD AIDS DAY**. Every 90 seconds, someone in the UK is diagnosed as HIV positive. Last year, 137 people in the Eastern region were diagnosed. **JUDE TOWNEND** speaks to three people living with HIV in Cambridge, discusses the alarming rise of HIV among heterosexual women and explains her own reasons for becoming involved in Dhiverse, Cambridgeshire sexual health charity

"There is no safe sex unless you wear a condom, and even that is not 100%." Even unwittingly, our instinct is to wish they'd change the record. We've all been hearing this type of warning since primary school sex education. Fortunately, my own contraceptive knowledge has improved since the age seven, when, having been told by a friend that her brother had found a condom in the street, I told her: "that's for your periods, my mum's got loads in our bathroom."

Luckily, I realised before it was too late that Tampax wasn't much of a contraceptive - I hope she did as well, and that I didn't indirectly contribute to Maidstone's teenage pregnancy figures.

But the same opening warning is wholly more sobering when it comes from someone living with HIV. And, despite having had endless hours of sex education, played STD team building games, put condoms on bananas, and worn our red ribbon on December 1 for many years, the fact remains that a lot of us continue to practice unsafe sex.

Some of us in long term relationships find it difficult to equate unsafe sex with what we do with our partners, whom we trust and love. But as an interviewee told me, "you're not just trusting them, you're trusting everyone they've ever slept with". At a recent sexual health training session the group was divided as to what constituted unsafe sex. Surely unprotected sex with your long-term partner couldn't fall into that category?

Of course it would be a sad state of affairs if partners didn't ever bin the condom: the UK population rate might suffer somewhat.

But what about all of us at University, in today's world of serial monogamous relationships, with a significant proportion of women quite happily popping the pill every morning? The fact is, even among educated Cambridge students, we don't practice safe sex. Often, the number one concern if a condom splits, or we drunkenly forget to put one on, is a trip down to Boots for emergency contraception. My most embarrassing moment ever must be crouching down behind the local chemist counter, aged 17, praying my best friend's Dad didn't see me and which form I was filling in.

Women might leave the chemist £25 poorer, but relieved to be without the patter of little one night stand feet. Sorted. But how many of these women then make the effort to go and have an HIV and STI test?

58% people newly diagnosed with HIV are heterosexual, that has increased threefold since 1996. Two thirds of heterosexuals diagnosed with HIV are women. More than one quarter of people living with HIV in the UK do not know they are infected. For many, this is a conscious choice, as one HIV positive interviewee told me. "Many people, I know prefer to live in ignorance, even when they know it is extremely likely they are infected."

Others simply haven't got round to the test, or for other reasons, haven't visited a clinic.

“THERE IS NO MORNING AFTER PILL FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS”

It is estimated that 13,250 individuals in the UK are not aware they are HIV positive.

A 20 year-old female student at Birmingham University told me "I went to the doctors and asked about contraceptives and an HIV test, and she sat back and said 'well, they're both big topics - I can give you an HIV test but I'd advise you not to - it would affect your insurance so much'."

The student insisted on the test, telling her doctor that she'd just returned from an African country with the highest rate of HIV in the world, and please could she go ahead with it. The GP still refused, though gave her some clinic contacts.

Whilst obviously it is important to give patients the access to confidential testing at a sexual health clinic, surely it cannot be right to turn someone away from their own GP surgery on the grounds their insurance premium might go up. The student concerned has not got round to visiting one of the clinics yet.

A cursory look at the Facebook reveals that 622 people are in the 'I've pulled someone in this group' group.

A quick explanation for Facebook virgins - how I wish I was you - this strangely addictive, networking website allows profiled Cambridge students to join different groups in which they have something in common with other members.

And whilst I am not suggesting all these people in said group have had unprotected sex with the person they pulled, it highlights how small our Cambridge world is, and that we really don't know where our latest pull has been. And, that group

certainly isn't a comprehensive list - I know at least one person who, ahem, should be in there, but has refrained from joining in sheer disgust. As I say, I wish I'd never used the Facebook, at least then I wouldn't know that I share so many people's saliva.

Hannah Ford, the outgoing CUSU Sexual Health officer, told me she didn't know whether there were any students in Cambridge living with HIV. Statistically, it would be very surprising if there weren't. They might be living in ignorance, or hopefully seeking support elsewhere.

Crucially, not everyone is aware that UK infection rates for HIV are still rising, and no sector of society should consider themselves immune. It might rightly seem outdated to only associate HIV with homosexual men or African countries, but it was clear when talking to people in research for this feature, that many still subconsciously do.

Yet the number of people living with HIV in the UK has doubled since 1998, and this trend looks set to continue. I was shocked last year watching *Positive Women*, a BBC documentary which followed the story of three heterosexual women diagnosed HIV positive.

Thinking I was fairly well educated when it came to sexual health, I felt little could surprise me. A very ordinary woman told her story - a condom splitting after she had slept with a guy she'd met through her orchestra, and it suddenly struck me simply how easily this could happen to me. There's no Morning After pill for sexually transmitted infection.

WORLD AIDS DAY: CAMBRIDGE

• Cambridge students supporting Dhiverse in their Red and Alive Campaign will be wearing red and proudly sporting their ribbons, all week. Visit www.redandalive.com

• CUSU Urbanite at the Soul Tree, 9pm-2am. As ever, the freshest urban music styles - on December 1, part of the proceeds go to Dhiverse.

• Cambridge Stop Aids Campaign will be campaigning outside King's College all day on December 1. Their Awareness ParAID is at 2pm and candlelight vigil at 4.30 pm, both also outside King's.

• The Cambridge African Film Festival and the Starfish Greathearts Foundation present a charity screening of *State of Denial* (2002) at 5:30pm at the Arts Picturehouse Cinema. Directed by Elaine Epstein, this South African film was enormously popular when it screened at the Cambridge African Film Festival in 2004 and the Sundance Film Festival in 2003. The documentary puts a 'human face' on the devastating AIDS crisis in South Africa, while also interrogating the overarching structural issues hindering the fight against the disease, including the patent laws which prevented all but the richest South Africans' access to medicine.

• **Sidney Sussex:** Karaoke night (1/12)

• **Churchill:** will be wrapping the Hepworth statue in red ribbons (1/12)

• **St Catharine's:** Bop (2/12), welfare talks and games

• **Robinson:** Quiz Night, Red themed meal (1/12)

• **Clare Hall, Magdalene, St John's, Pembroke, Trinity, Queens', Newnham and others tbc.** Wearing Red / Raffle tickets / Ribbon selling / Bops and more, all week.



ANNA, AGED 23, DIAGNOSED 2003

It was that one night. We'd been getting on well, and had sex about four times, twice with a condom. We'd had a bit to drink, and I'm sorry to say alcohol got in the way. Afterwards I thought 'I shouldn't have done that. I'm not the sort of person who does that.' It did occur to me I could be pregnant - my first concern. HIV wasn't something on my mind - I didn't know about it. I went back to university and soon I didn't feel very well. I got tonsillitis, but, when you go back to university, you tend to. Then, in November 2002, a guy that I knew died. I started to worry: why had I slept with someone I didn't even know that well? I

thought about getting a test. I was constantly putting it off, and then I thought 'I really should do it now.' Something told me it was going to be positive. Some might err on the side of caution, but something inside me told me that it wasn't going to be good news. The day I found out was a release. I was crying and I felt numb, but in a way it was better to find out and get on with it. I'd been so worried for so long that I'd actually started losing my hair at Christmas. It was like an out of body thing, like this wasn't happening to me. You're going to university, doing your work, and all the while, there's something inside

you that you can't see. It's the strangest feeling to think something inside you is destroying your immune system as you're walking about. It's so hard to deal with because you really can't do anything. You just want to stop and start over, but there is really no possibility of that. It's the sort of thing any girl can do. For a long time, I felt guilty. It suddenly occurred to me that so many girls sleep with men they barely know. You make a mistake and you do something stupid. All my friends have done that, but they are not the ones with HIV. That's all it is - the luck of the draw. It's still quite hard to find someone who is like me, my age, and has got HIV.

I went home after the diagnosis, and my Dad was watching the snooker. I got straight back from university on the train and I got in there and I said, "I've got HIV Dad - I've had that test, and it's come back positive". He said "oh, all right" and just carried on watching the TV. That was pretty much it, and it wasn't what I was expecting. Then, my mum came home and just completely went daft. She was utterly distraught. I tried to calm her down, and sit her down and explain it through, but obviously that didn't really stop her. My sister was angry, and I think she is still angry now. We're close-ish but we don't talk about my illness. She just said

"if he wasn't already dead, I'd kill him" that kind of thing, she was really really angry about it. I don't know why I wasn't angry. Perhaps because it happened to me. I didn't feel that same anger. My fiancé's been completely accepting of everything. - I met him last year. He's always been there. It can be tough and I'm sure I can be quite a pain to deal with, sometimes because I worry or the medication keeps me awake at night. It's nice to have someone who is patient with you because they love you, and it's that simple. When I told him he didn't want to over react. Later, he said he didn't know

how to react about it. He didn't want to ask too much, or assume anything. Which is quite nice: for someone to say "Yeah, okay" rather than the "Ohmygod!" kind of reaction. I've had a range of reactions: people crying, saying "oh, what a tragedy!" I never saw it as a tragedy: I saw it as a bloody stupid girl. I don't think about HIV every day. My fiancé and I are getting married next year, and we're still going to have children. Although it's going to be hard, we're still going on. Before, HIV was my enemy; now it's something much easier to control when you've got someone to help you with it.

CHRIS, AGED 40, DIAGNOSED 2003

My partner David, is HIV negative. Sometimes when we make love, it stops me in my tracks; I can see fear in his eyes. I'm his first gay relationship; telling him was the hardest thing I've faced in my life. But he sat there, and said "How do you know it wasn't me who gave it to you?" I will admire that man for the rest of my life. He could have told me to sod off, but he's stuck around. We face it together as a couple, he lives with HIV and shares every aspect of the disease bar in the disease itself. David has a child also, making this even more special to me. The day after I'd told David we went to Addenbrooke's and

they were dreadful. They didn't give David any support - no reassurance. The results came after a week of hell, thinking about it and dreading it. I will be eternally grateful that my HIV has stopped with me and that no-one else has to carry the burden of my risk that night in October 2002. I've met men who deliberately don't tell partners, and don't practice safe sex. I've come across one man who pierces holes in his condom before having sex with the partner - who is completely unaware and thinking they've had safe sex. But he is a bloody nutcase. My feeling is that I have a responsibility to protect others

from my HIV. If someone were to ask, I would discuss it, but if not, as long as each of us intended to practice safe sex, there is no need to disclose my status. The more people who know about my status, the better. If it stops someone in that split second of love and lust from taking the risk, that makes living with my HIV bearable. I caught HIV from a partner I was with for a year whilst living in Spain. When I told him, I was more floored by the implication of having HIV than angry. It was my body and I took the risk, and sometimes there are consequences. But, if I ever did see him again, I'll punch him! He knew his ex was HIV positive

but just didn't want to go for the test. I have heard from him once since; he went for the test, then rang me to ask if I could pay the 150 euros for it! I said no way. David has said in the past that he'd rather not know. Whether that has changed now, I am not sure. He is not routinely checked, as we are always very careful. Ian, my ex-partner of eleven years before David, would never have tests. I routinely had check-ups because we had an 'open' relationship, but he said he'd rather continue in ignorance. I am certain he was careful, but that didn't stop him catching several STIs whilst we were together. I never caught anything, then got the double

whammy instead. After diagnosis, David and I went away and stayed with his family. While sitting at the dining table, drinking a glass of wine, I thought "Will they guess? Are they seeing anything different about me? Oh my God, they know I've got HIV," irrational as that is. Life goes on. We worry about the mortgage and panic about holes in school uniform and polishing little school shoes - normal, routine things don't go away. I no longer look in the mirror in the morning when shaving and feel absolutely gutted, or cut my finger doing the gardening and go into panic. You develop a realistic sense of

the nature of HIV, and eventually it is just there and managed. It becomes like wearing a pair of glasses, you get used to it. Not that me and my family and friends will escape the consequence of taking that one risk that night back in Spain. I am painfully aware that my life expectancy is distinctly shorter than if I'd kept safe. I will be sorry for this for the rest of my life. HIV changes everything, but a lot just stays the same. In the split-second of diagnosis it seemed 'oh my God, my life's over, the world is going to come crashing down around my ears.' But everything carries on as normal.

KEN, AGED 57, DIAGNOSED 1993

My initial reaction was "you're joking!" you never think you have been in activity where it is possible, but underneath you know you have. You think it's never going to happen to you. Having got the initial diagnosis, my reaction was: well, I was going to change jobs, now I won't. I was going to get a new car, now I won't. My consultant said, "why not?!" You think, "well, there's no point, I'm going to die." It's getting out of that perspective which is the hardest. It's not dissimilar to getting a cancer diagnosis - you think you're going to die straight away. You think you've been given a

death sentence, if you like. But here I am, 12 years later, touch MDF! I'm working and carrying on a normal life. None of my family know to this day. I haven't told my friends. They would have a different perspective on me and I would become the virus I have, rather than the person I am. I haven't wanted to. My attitude is to tell on a need to know basis and most people don't need to know. It can make me feel isolated. I started medication quite quickly. The hardest thing to deal with has been the change in my appearance. I don't want to make anyone fearful of outcomes

because the medication has advanced so much. Scenarios are nowhere near as severe as they were 10 years ago. I just explain it to people by saying: "Oh, you know me, I'm always dashing about, I don't have time to eat!" If anyone still asks, all I tell them is I've got a blood imbalance which needs to be balanced by medication which means regular visits to the blood clinic and the hospital. I think the average individual doesn't always understand - it relates to the stigma thing. I don't want to risk people treating me differently by telling them." I have this capacity to separate me from different situations - almost Jekyll and Hyde. When I

lock my front door, I also lock my status in the house. Before my diagnosis, HIV wasn't something that figured high in my mind. I was playing a part in a play or a film, it was almost like I was watching someone else, it wasn't me. It sank in through the progression of time and my taking the medication. There were a lot of things going on over the next few years [Ken's father, mother and grandmother died. On the day of his grandmother's funeral Ken received his HIV diagnosis] I look back now and think how did I deal with it? All that time I wasn't thinking about me. I suppose my one guide was

my mum, who had a long-term illness which had no cure or medication, but she had a long life. She's my inspiration. On a down day I think of her. From somewhere I have to find the same determination. I've revealed my status on two occasions to people I was supporting, that I am HIV positive. I want them to know it's a question of turning it around. You control it, rather than let it control you. To one guy, I said, "let's look at today and let's look at yesterday. Now, today you know something that you didn't know yesterday, but other than that your life isn't any different." At the time, they say "well, no, not

really." Gradually, they do see it. Some tend to focus on where you contracted the disease. I say "what difference will it make - how will it help you now?" When I have disclosed my status it's given them a light at the end of the tunnel. That is a reward to me too. What I've gone through hasn't all been in vain. When I look back it's like a dream. It's only time that gives you perspective. A lot of it is your state of mind. It's not like that every day - there are days when you think "oh dear, why me?" My philosophy was to make it a part of my life but not the major part of my life.



It's coming up to Christmas and as always I'm skint and I need to find a way to save money on my presents. I thought I'd give eBay a try but it seems that everything there is still too expensive. There are a number of techniques people use to try and grab a bargain whilst using eBay. Many product listings get misspelled on eBay, which means that they attract less traffic than other items in the same category. Because they attract less traffic they also generally attract fewer bids and therefore are sold cheaply. For instance if you wanted to buy a Sony Playstation you could try searching for "palystation" and "playsation".

It seems like that would involve quite a lot of effort if you wanted to go through and check all the different combinations. I'm not sure I've got that kind of patience.

Luckily for you there is a website called fatfingers.com that will automate your search for misspelled items. If you enter the term "playstation" and select eBay.co.uk in the drop down box the website will generate a search term that incorporates all the potential misspellings of "playstation" and then takes you to that search on the eBay website. Currently one hundred and twenty-two items are returned in the search results, all with very few bids and low prices.

Ok so I've found the item I'm going to bid on. But I want to know what the best way to bid is. Should I place a large bid on first and hope that no one matches it, should I bid whenever anyone else does, or should I wait for the very last minute?

It has generally been found that bidding at the last minute, or sniping as it is known online, will help you get an item for as low a price as possible. This is for a number of reasons but the main one is simply that it prevents you and other bidders becoming emotionally involved with an auction. When emotion enters the bidding process all reason can be lost and people end up paying far more than they should for an item just so they can be the winner.

That's all well and good but the auction I've picked out ends at 5 in the morning. This is where a piece of software called JBidWatcher comes in. It is a software program released under the GPL which means that it is free to download and use. You enter your eBay details on first start up and the program then retrieves from your account the details of all the items you are currently bidding on. You can then select an auction and enter your maximum bid. JBidWatcher will then wait and make a bid at a predefined time before the auction ends (default thirty seconds) as long as it is running at the time. This will of course only work if no one else has already placed a higher bid.

www.ebay.co.uk
www.jbidwatcher.com
www.fatfingers.com

Doug McMahon

SUPERHUMAN RACE

SELF-IMPROVEMENT AT WHAT COST? ZOE SMEATON EXAMINES WHAT DRIVES SOCIETY'S PILL-POPPING QUEST FOR PERFECTION

Our grandparents had Valium, our parents Prozac. Now it seems our generation is searching for its wonderdrug. Over ninety per cent of Cambridge students surveyed by *Varsity* said they wished they could 'concentrate longer' or 'have better memory' approaching exams, and, assuming it were legal sixty per cent said they would consider taking drugs to do this.

Currently, the most well-known cognitive enhancement drug is Ritalin (methylphenidate), which improves users' abilities to respond appropriately to a task, and to ignore other competing inputs which would act as distractions. Improvements are seen in working memory, attention and inhibitory control. Ritalin is marketed primarily for children suffering from ADHD, but a survey of an American college reported in the *Journal of American College Health* found that more than 16 per cent of students had tried the drug recreationally.

And therein lies the controversy regarding these drugs - should normally healthy people also be allowed to use them, given that they do seem to offer advantages in certain areas of life?

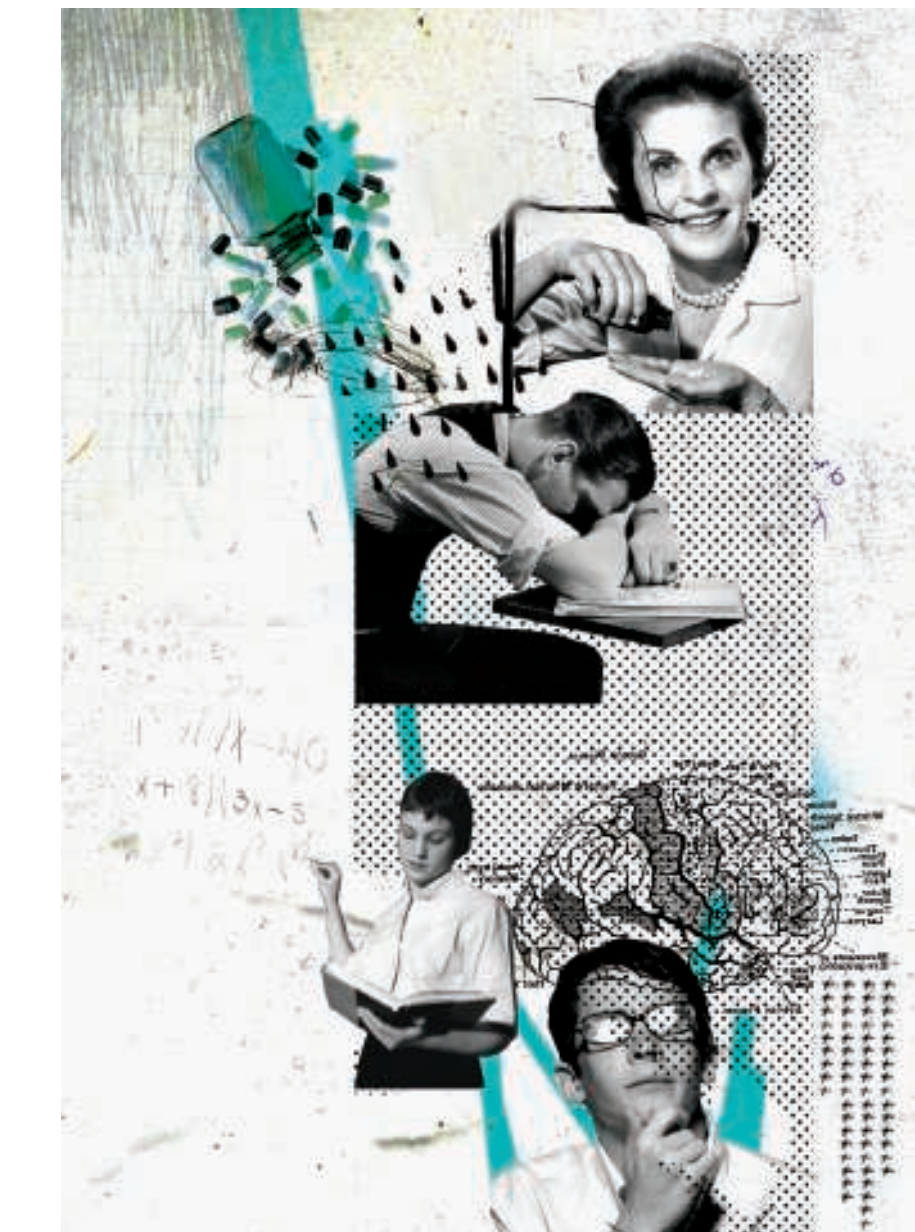
In an article published in *Nature* last year, Barbara Sahakian, Professor of Clinical Neuropsychology at Cambridge's Department of Psychiatry, began: "Our growing ability to alter brain function can be used to enhance the mental processes of normal individuals as well as to treat mental dysfunction in people who are ill. The prospect of neurocognitive enhancement raises many issues about what is safe, fair and otherwise morally acceptable."

But Dr Ilina Singh, Senior Researcher at the London School of Economic's BIOS Research Centre, and Managing Editor of the journal *BioSocieties*, remarked that whilst the question of whether or not people should take such drugs should be discussed, "as long as the safety profile is relatively good and the side-effect profile tolerable, it's not really an important question whether it's morally right (for people to use these drugs), because people will take these drugs if they're offered them, just like they take alcohol, or anything else."

One student agreed: "If you could take a pill to make you perform better in an exam, who wouldn't?"

However, other students do have concerns about these drugs, particularly with regards to them giving users an 'unfair advantage' - almost 40 per cent thought that it would. One explained that "exams should test, as much as possible, your performance throughout the year and under pressure. Drugs relieve some of that pressure and don't reflect how you really would cope with deadlines and processing vast amounts of information."

But another student felt that taking drugs is "in a way just like managing your time better or just being more focused. If you want to take a drug and it's



JON LOPEZ

legal, then I think it's fine." Just six per cent of students thought that using caffeine, itself a mild cognitive enhancer, would give people the same 'unfair advantage.'

But Professor Sahakian commented that "people don't realise the potency of the things they are already taking, and that even things like changes in diet can have a profound effect on the brain, too."

But for our students, it seemed simply the availability and regulation of the drugs that defined whether or not they gave an 'unfair' advantage or not. Many felt caffeine did not give an unfair advantage because "everyone could take it." One said "Caffeine, sugary foods and the like are all easily available in common foodstuffs and anyone wishing to use them would be able to in small quantities. Taking a named pharmaceutical, however, brings with it ethical issues, and I know certain religions would frown upon drug use. Not everyone would be able to use these substances."

This was another issue raised by many students - if these drugs were made widely available, people may feel coerced into taking them. One psychology student said "if everyone else was taking drugs to improve their memory, how would someone feel able to compete if they weren't?"

Professor Sahakian is similarly concerned. "Are we

moving towards a homogeneous society where everyone is like a clone?" she asks. "Would it ruin the diversity in society if we all took drugs to function so well?" And if many of us do resort to drug-taking to improve our performances, she wonders what will happen to our values of "motivation and hard work?"

Dr Singh said that questioning motives for taking enhancement drugs is hugely important in trying to understand any moral difficulties arising from taking them. For example, there are fears that any unusually large demand for them might be being cultivated by the advertising campaigns of pharmaceutical companies.

In the recently published *Selling Sickness - How the World's Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients*, Roy Moynihan and Alan Cassels show us the extent of this problem. The book begins:

"Thirty years ago... Merck's aggressive chief executive Henry Gadsden told *Fortune* magazine of his distress that the company's potential markets had been limited to sick people. Suggesting he'd rather Merck be more like chewing gum maker Wrigley's, Gadsden said it had long been his dream to make drugs for healthy people. Then, Merck would be able to "sell to everyone." Three decades on, the late Henry Gadsden's dream has come true."

The authors describe how disease has been normalised by these companies so that "more and more ordinary people are turned into patients."

In a *British Medical Journal* article Moynihan discusses Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD), a condition which supporters claim affects forty-three per cent of American women. Moynihan describes a Procter and Gamble campaign to raise awareness of the disease, in order to promote their new testosterone patch for its treatment. "Long before its testosterone patch had even been assessed for approval, the company's global marketing had been strategically targeting health professionals, reporters, and the general public, seeking to shape their perceptions of female sexual problems and how to treat them."

The market for such treatments by 2008 is projected at around \$1 billion, yet there is still much scientific disagreement even over the definition of FSD. But can anything 'affecting' almost half of the population of women really be worthy of the term 'disorder,' and need treatment? Indeed, Moynihan and Cassels suggest that the pharmaceutical industry really is "telling healthy people they're sick" and "changing what it means to be human."

Dr Singh said: "It's a very good marketing technique, and normalising psychiatric drugs and psychiatric diagnoses is very much what the agenda of some of these companies is. I wouldn't want to say that the pharmaceutical industry is not an important mechanism for real therapy, because it is, it's given us fantastic drugs and we wouldn't be able to live the lives that we live without them."

"But if the pharmaceutical industry creates the desire to be a certain kind of person, that's a form of oppression."

Clearly, these issues will need to be discussed and some consensus reached if there is demand for enhancement drugs to be deregulated in the future. American consumers are already directly exposed to high-profile advertising campaigns for pharmaceutical drugs, and it may be only a matter of time before they hit our screens, too.

Dr Singh said: "It's important that we talk about drug taking in these terms so that people can make good, informed decisions rather than gravitating towards enhancement technologies and cosmetic surgery because they feel that somehow it makes them better."

It seems that discussion and raising awareness of these issues is vital if the drugs are to be used in a morally acceptable manner.

"Cognitive enhancing drugs are a good thing, as there are lots of people in the world with brain disorders," said Professor Sahakian. "But we do need to consider the implications for normal healthy people too. As scientists we must work together with others including ethicists, social scientists and even the general public to ensure that our technological advances are used to benefit people."

“IF YOU COULD TAKE A PILL TO MAKE YOU PERFORM BETTER IN AN EXAM, WHO WOULDN'T?”

FROM CAMBRIDGE TO COUTURE



In 1966 she was *Varsity's* first female editor. Now **SUZY MENKES** tells **BENJ OHAD SEIDLER** about being the most respected reporter in fashion

On a late January day in 1966, a letter arrived at *Varsity*. Editor Suzy Menkes sauntered to the letterbox in white mod Courreges boots and ripped open the envelope, skimming the text: "any society which allows a woman to emerge from domesticity – her natural pastures... will eventually become mediocre... It was never intended that she should organise or take responsibility... Women who do this either become extremely unlikeable or buckle up in tears... Yours faithfully, Peter..." She published the letter.

Now fashion editor of the *International Herald Tribune* and unarguably one of the industry's most powerful women, Menkes hardly remembers that first letter she received after being appointed the first ever female editor of *Varsity* nearly forty years ago. Upon hearing of it, she muses.

"I'd love to find him now. I can't imagine how anybody of that age could be so pompous and have such closed mind. It stuns me." She cracks a smile, adding, "I think he's wrong, by the way."

This year, Menkes has been made a chevalier of the Legion of Honour in France, received an OBE and was awarded the V&A Award for Outstanding Achievement in Fashion at the 2005 British Fashion Awards.

Sitting in a special corner booth at the Wolsley, her ostrich skin purple Prada bag resting next to her, Menkes reminisces about her time at Cambridge after leaving Brighton and Hove High School in the 1960s. "The main reason that I applied to Cambridge was that my sister had applied to Oxford, and there was sibling rivalry there. My mother was an exceptional person – our father was killed during the war (he was a pilot). She always believed in giving us an education."

Between bites of her tarte au citron, she continues to unravel her memories with delight; "I was fascinated by fashion and, in what you could now call a gap year, I went to Paris. I went to the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture.

They were very strict and very pompous – just as the sixties were breaking out and in Paris there was that aura of grandeur and couture. When I got to Cambridge [in 1963] it was really starting to jump. I enrolled in *Varsity* on my first

day. It was the time when it was all about the first woman welder and the first woman – I don't know what – electronic engineer. I was the first woman editor of *Varsity*. Now, saying those words sounds ridiculous. It's so historic."

While at Newnham (studying History before switching to English), Menkes secured remarkable fashion scoops, "I interviewed Mary Quant. I was so nervous that I got the train about four hours early so I wouldn't be late. I still think that the point about journalism is that you've got to be there. You can't report on something after it's happened."

Cambridge proved to be a fantastic social hub, resonating through most Menkes' articles for the paper. "I came from a little town outside Brighton – my idea of excitement was lunch in a Chinese restaurant. I think it was a 'cultural melting pot' moment when I went to Cambridge. Now, what I did then seems very 'dolly girl' and silly. On one side you're writing about women dressing to please men and on the other, you're burning bras – not that anyone ever did that. I'd like to think I wrote something more meaningful, but I know I didn't."

With articles suggesting "the ultimate sign of female success is when a girl gets taken to dinner," in her *Varsity* portfolio, it is hard to contradict Menkes.

But her social know-how got her a massive scoop as editor-in-chief, as she recounts. "One time the police came tramping in because Marianne Faithful's boyfriend, John Dunbar, had produced a lump of hash. I got us on page one of the equivalent of the tabloids today with that story."

Menkes pushed boundaries in student journalism, introducing features reflecting the sexual liberation of the age, at the expense of making *Varsity's* sports section the shortest it has ever been. "I've never understood why they have to be filled," she maintains. "Does anyone really read them?"

Menkes goes on to speculate about her star-studded career in fashion journalism. In this most competitive of industries, there is no other writer more respected than Menkes. It is still her review that counts most to designers. Yet, she seems proud of her achievements in "giving personality to a newspaper – to be synonymous with it



ON ONE SIDE YOU'RE WRITING ABOUT WOMEN DRESSING TO PLEASE MEN AND ON THE OTHER YOU'RE BURNING BRAS



is a great achievement. Of the papers I have worked for, I think I was a very good fit with the pre-Murdoch *Times*." Clearly, she remembers fondly her first job after leaving Cambridge. "But," she adds, "I left the *Times* when the *Times* left me."

Menkes remembers "there was a man called Charlie Wilson, a Murdoch appointee. I had done a profile of Jean Muir and Wilson called me in and said 'What is this crap,' and then tore it up, threw it on the floor and told me to pick it up. He said, 'what I want on my fashion pages is pretty girls in short skirts smiling at the camera.' Suffice to say, it wasn't long before she had moved to the *Independent*."

Although Menkes insists that "nobody is ever indispensable anywhere, least of all in journalism," she is generally regarded as one of the most powerful women in forming what fashion is today, along with Miuccia Prada and *Vogue's* Anna Wintour, perhaps attributable to her no-nonsense approach. "A number of people have said to me, 'don't you ever want to write about something more serious than fashion?' But when you think what the industry worldwide is worth and how many people it employs, it adds up to serious business."

Menkes disagrees that she has the ability to destroy a career, or that she ever has any desire to do so. "There's never anything personal. I've given Armani some bad reviews, but I've also given them some of the best I've ever written, even when the clothing didn't respond to my personal aesthetic. I aim to be fair. I would never apologise. I would always explain."

The fashion Doyenne stresses that she feels her power to destroy far less keenly than her power to help 'make' a label. "I've always felt that one of the great things you can do as a fashion writer is talk about somebody who otherwise people might not know about; open doors for them."

Epitomised by her unconventional pompadour hairstyle that seems to challenge 'Go on then – ask! I dare you!' one can detect a mischievous side to Suzy Menkes. She seems to enjoy jostling in fashion politics. When reminded that, as harmless as she thinks they may be, her less-than-favourable critiques have seen her banned

from IVMH shows, she laughs, "Oh yes, and not just them, either!"

"There are so few real designers in the world," Menkes laments. "The ones who have both the showmanship and design skills are very rare indeed. The really frustrating thing is the whole idea of celebrity, and fashion shows as a spectator sport. Fashion is now more orchestrated and managed and slightly more sinister."

But doesn't celebrity spotting take up much of the column space of Menkes' runway reviews? "You can't ignore the cultural patchwork of your age," she rationalises; "it's stupid to be too high and mighty to mention that Sharon Stone is sitting in the front row, showing off her diamonds or her legs."

Menkes' views on what she does are cultivated and clarified. It is her elevation of fashion as both a major business and a challenging art form that will endure as her legacy. Menkes flawlessly summarises what today's consumer-driven fashion might mean. "To me, the question is not 'what is high fashion' or 'low fashion', but what is pure fashion?: meaning that it actually comes from somewhere, and is not just copycat stuff. The truth is that these things only happen when something is happening in society. People feel an anger and desire to either ignore or kick against the status quo. In England now, ordinary dressing is incredibly boring. It's just people going into H&M trying to find clothes that make them look like an It Girl. Fashion is about the way you dress and the way you put yourself together; something that money can buy up to a point, but not entirely."

The Wolsley gets more crowded as dinnertime approaches. But Menkes remains fully audible over the loud clatter of cutlery and gossip, booming with excitement for her subject.

Suzy Menkes proudly stresses that her greatest achievement is her family. With three grown-up sons (all involved in media) and 310,000 words published every year, she has always been a woman who has surpassed the norm.

We owe our first female editor sincerest congratulations for her recent prestigious commendations, but also for her life as a pioneer in such a competitive field of journalism.

SUZY Speaks

ON THE LAST MARC JACOBS LOUIS VUITTON VERSACE-ESQUE MADLY COLOURFUL, BRASH SHOW:

It's back to the good old Marc leaping through old Bruce Weber pictures and the team going to the vintage stores and I thought, "you can only play this trick on us once, Marc." I got a seven page letter from him and thought, "you can't do that to people and say, 'this collection has come from my soul and I've changed,' and then go back to making jolly handbags the next season."

ON THE FASHION SHOWS SHE MOST LOOKS FORWARD TO:

Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel is extraordinary. He very rarely misses a trick. In terms of showmanship, he's very acute. I once wrote a piece that prompted the longest letter I've ever had from Karl, saying that in the history of fashion Karl Lagerfeld would play Salieri to Yves Saint Laurent's Mozart, and I still believe that. I do believe that, but that doesn't mean that I don't think he's still making a wonderful contribution.

ON LONDON'S STATUS AS A FASHION CAPITAL:

London is in a down stage at the moment. You've only got to look around here and see what people are wearing and how they want to look like Tara Palmer Tompkinson and that's fine, I'm not arguing with it, but it doesn't make fabulous shows.

ON REFERRING TO FACHINETTI'S DESIGNS FOR GUCCI WITH THE WORD 'EUROTRASH':

It sounds like I was incredibly kind to her, really. After all it's wonderful to appeal to eurotrash. They're the ones that spend the money. Tom Ford's Gucci show was glamorous but not trashy and it may have indeed been the eurotrash who bought the clothes but I don't think I would ever describe a Tom Ford Gucci show as something that looked like it was for the eurotrash 'look.'

ON THE LATEST PRESS FASCINATION WITH STELLA MCCARTNEY:

I think she has something to offer at H&M and I like a lot her sports line for Adidas. I think she really does it well. I actually think that she might be better placed to make clothes that have got a real feminine soul at accessible prices at the lower end of the market than she has the creative well of inspiration to do a high fashion collection. That's what I really think.



Suzy Menkes posing for *Varsity* fashion in the 1960s

SO WHERE'S THE HITCH?

JACK SOMMERS can take you to Morocco or Prague and back for free



Arriving at the Freshers' Fair met by a wild sea of heaving stalls and over-keen leafleters, it's very understandable that a daunted fresher wouldn't be sure what to sign up to, or even who to approach first. This was me last year, like many others every year, and it may have been you this year.

I spied a school friend manning one of the stalls. I decided to go over and after a lengthy series of How are yous, how's Natsci treating yous and yeah I took a gap year but I'm here nows, I got round to asking about his project.

It was plastered with photos of students standing by roadsides, thumbs extended, holding pieces of cardboard with illegible black marker pen scribbled on them. "So..." I asked, "what's this about then?"

"You get sponsored to hitchhike to Morocco or Prague for charity" he said. Obviously my reaction was to presume that a year at Cambridge had sent him completely to the fairies - he'd gone totally mad. Hitchhike? Who hitchhikes? I thought. Hardly anyone these days, it turns out. Perhaps that is what made it stand out from everything else on offer at the Fair.

Fast forward to March this year. My hitch partner and I were standing on the Franco-Spanish border. For hours, trucks had been ignoring our pleas for a lift. We switched between the truck and car lanes with no luck. Finally, someone pulled over to use the toilets, and the sight of us standing forlorn and looking stranded broke

their hearts.

And I spent most of the rest of that day stuffed into the back of a hatchback, chatting in German to two Portuguese priests on their way to Lisbon for the imminent Easter weekend. Another subsequent lift was so appalled at the idea of our hitchhiking on Good Friday that he gave us seventy Euros to take a bus to complete the rest of the journey. We pocketed the money and kept hitching anyway.

We arrived in Morocco.

“WE POCKETED THE MONEY AND KEPT HITCHING ANYWAY”

Obviously it was amazing; entering cities like Marrakech and Fez felt like stepping into another world of snake charmers, crowd gathering storytellers and everything in between. Camping out in the Sahara, complete with sand dunes that look like they were poached from Disney's *Aladdin* and the starriest sky known to man, was incredible.

With such an amazing experience to offer, I wonder why more people don't do the hitch. On average around fifty students from Cambridge do it each year, which out of around

25,000 is a pretty small number, really. The only prerequisites are that you raise £300 for Link Community Development (for which the organisers will give you all the support you need) and that you are over 18. Then you can hitch, in a pair or as a group of three, across Europe to Prague or Morocco.

Not that charity can't often be controversial. On my many fundraising tours of Cambridge pubs, I encountered more than one punter who thought economic charity ineffective at combating poverty. I'm afraid I can't agree. Last year, proceeds from the Hitch were given to (among others) schools in the remote northern parts of Ghana to fund some of their most pressing needs - schools, classrooms, teachers and even wells.

Fulfilling a need as vital and basic as a water supply is not ineffective, nor is it without tangible results. The Masindi district of Uganda, an area Link has worked with, has risen from one of the worst performing in the country to ranking 8th out of more than 50 districts. At an induction weekend for prospective Hitch reps, I talked to people who had visited the schools, and witnessed the changes there. The fervour they talked about it with was heart-warming. I can only imagine how much more so it is to see the communities the charity has helped first hand.

When discussing hitchhiking 1,600 miles with someone, the most immediate issue is safety. Clambering into a succession of strangers' cars may not conjure the most secure thoughts but in fourteen years, no harm has

ever befallen a hitcher. While on the road, hitchers must ring their nominated, UK-based contact and the charity itself on alternate days. The former (usually your parents) confirm to people at home that you're all right. The latter allows your progress to be tracked and checked online.

And it's important we keep up the good work: the hitch was born here. In 1990, two Cambridge students decided to hitchhike to Africa to raise awareness about educational issues there and LCD's attempts to solve them. Now in its fifteenth year, nearly 3,000 people have taken part since, and not one has had any serious difficulty, or suffered any setback getting there.

I already know that the hitch will prove the best thing I'll do in my time here. Talking like a gap year bore in the College bar is fun, but it doesn't compare to actually living the 'Backpack revolution' Kerouac envisaged fifty years ago in his classic novel *On The Road*.

So I'm going again; this time to Prague. I've heard it's a fantastic city, but it won't matter if it's not. Because - honestly - reliving the hitching experience is what I'm looking forward to.

www.lcd.org.uk - Find out more about The Hitch's charity

www.cambridgehitch.co.uk - The Cambridge hitch website

Hitch socials are held every Thursday night at the Bath Ale House, from 7:30pm onwards. Drop by to find out more.

a winter warmer



Mulled Wine

It's cold outside, it's week seven, you're probably overworked and have likely drunk more tea than you can stand. With the festive season approaching (in Cambridge, at least) and the chill of an East Anglian winter, mulled wine (or grog as it's sometimes known) seems to be the answer. Even better, it takes almost no time to make. Mulled wines date back to medieval times, where they were named after the physician Hippocrates, and called Ypocras or Hipocris. Thought to be very healthy, considering wine at the time was considerably more sanitary than much drinking water, these heated drinks probably did more than sustain their drinkers' health through the cold winter months.

Ingredients

- 1 bottle dry red wine (Bordeaux is traditional)
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- 1 orange
- 1 lemon
- 5 cloves
- 1/2 tsp. grated nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. powdered ginger
- 1 star anise
- 75g sugar

You will need

- Large saucepan
- 6 mugs
- Knife
- Chopping Board



Instructions

- 0 - 2 mins** - Cut the orange and lemon into slices
- 3 mins** - Pour the red wine into large saucepan and place over a low heat
- 4mins - 17 mins** - Put all ingredients into the saucepan. Heat until warmed to just about simmering, stirring occasionally
- 17 mins** - Pour into mugs, and garnish with cinnamon sticks
- 20 mins - a few hours** - drink and forget the dark days of winter.

Lionel Nierop

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Don't Go Chasing Waterfalls

Find the Cambridge that's right for you

Simon Calder

Too often we think of Cambridge as 'unreal,' and for many of us it too easily becomes so. Whether this happens through immersing oneself too exclusively in any one of its myriad cliques, or whether through devoting oneself obsessively to academic study, we too often acquire distorted and distorting perspectives of Cambridge and - as Cambridge students - of ourselves. With half of your friends telling you that you won't get 'The Full Cambridge Experience' if you don't participate in the college pantomime, and another clique exclaiming that what you really ought to do is join the Union, it's worth remembering that even a stopped clock tells the right time twice daily (in the words of Withnail's 'I').

If something pushes a button for somebody else, it doesn't mean that thing is for you: knowing who we are and what we want to get from life ought to precede the process of choosing how to spend one's time at Cambridge.

The abstract of this article is that we ought to be less abstract, an underlying concern of many of the *Varsity* Comments page features this Michaelmas. Mary and Olaf got there first with their features on Su Doko and 'Inverse Identity Theft'. Then Mungo followed suit in exploring the link between industriousness and deprivation. In all three features, the facts that Cambridge moulds exist and that it would (occasionally) be fruitful to break free from them were pivotal. Lamenting the lack of a pivot in my own piece, I thought I might attempt to track down that selfsame Blank Canvas who complied so well with Olaf. Imagine my surprise then, when I happened to come



SI CALDER / LAURA DIXON

“If something pushes a button for someone else it doesn't necessarily mean that that thing is for you.”

across an uncannily similar figure - a Miss T. Rasa - when drunk in the Pembroke computer room at 3.00 a.m. a fortnight ago.

Bags the size of John's beneath her eyes, caffeine being pumped into her bloodstream, Miss Teresa Rasa was

essay-bingeing her way into the Arena of the Unwell. But what could I (a graduate student rampaging round other people's colleges) do to help her? Tripping over my Withnail jacket and almost covering a number of keyboards with the wine I was guzzling from its

bottle, I lumbered towards a workspace near Teresa's with the (once again) abstract intention of rescuing her (I had a superhero-complex: an explanation follows.) Eventually, Teresa broke the ice between us, the two equally loony inhabitants of the lunar-lit

computer room. "What are you doing?" she asked me.

By her smile, it was clear that she'd already noticed. "Surfing for Spidermen", I replied reluctantly (a more embarrassing ice-break than I'd hoped for). After having graduated, I found myself trying to explain to her, I'd returned to Cambridge on three conditions: (i) a band would be formed, (ii) sleeping patterns would be reformed and (iii) *Varsity* would be deformed [I gestured at the Spidermen] by my unusual illustrations. "Well, better luck in the future with meeting the second condition" she laughed at me.

Actually, I just wanted to ask you whether you know of any clubs that might play anything like The Pixies?" As soon as she'd appropriated my knowledge of the Kambar, she bounced back to her essay, leaving me to search for my superheroes and consider my comparative inadequacy. On weekends, so I hear, she now calls herself S. Rosa.

Perhaps we should reflect more about what we believe to be 'good', not just in Cambridge but in life, not just in Life but for individuals, and not just for that indigestion brought on by the Van of Life but for Christmas: having a dissertation is no excuse for not stocking up on stocking fillers. Then, looking at things ultra-rationally (which, roaming around alien colleges at three in the morning, isn't always what I do), it should be possible to work from nine to five, to play from five to one, to sleep from one to nine, and not (a la The Rakes) to miss out on anything. Still, encounters in computer rooms wouldn't be anywhere nearly as interesting under such a regime.

TAKE ME
TO DINNER

PROUD
STUDENT
ESCORT

Hannah
Fletcher



My foray into escorting began as a joke. Honestly.

The joke didn't last long, though. Three days after registering with Oxbridge Escorts, I received a call from Richard and Judy asking me to tell the nation about my new day job.

It was excruciating. Richard asked me what Oxbridge students could offer as escorts. I mumbled something about good chat. Richard thought I said shag. I grinned like an imbecile.

And I may as well have said shag. Oxbridge Escorts, now Take Me to Dinner, is not about sex, yet the only argument people can seem to find against it is all about sex. When I emailed my dad to tell him about my first date, he replied, "That's nice, dear. NO SEX."

I have no morals. Which is a problem when trying to argue that escorting is not the same as prostitution. Because ultimately, I don't care. I am a cold, unfeeling bitch and I would sleep with anyone for enough money.

The thing is, no one's asked. My first date started off as sor-did as my wildest fantasies. I picked him up on a London street corner - a young girl looking to make some cash. He was 40-something, balding, paunch spilling over his waistband.

Unfortunately, the London street corner was the corner of Cavendish Square, W1 and this ugly man in the bad leather jacket turned out to be the ultimate gentleman. He whisked me from champagne and strawberries at Claridge's to sushi and paparazzi at Nobu. He introduced me to the delights of Ronnie Scott's Jazz House, where I sat, wreathed in smoke, feeling self-consciously, pretentiously, wonderfully cool. Then, with a peck on the cheek, he put me in a taxi home.

He finished the evening at least five hundred pounds poorer than he began. I, on the other hand, left notably richer - in experience, in confidence and in cold, hard cash.

But not all men are like that, I hear you whine. Some are younger, some are slimmer, some wear nice clothes and some are psychopaths. Not all men are gentlemen.

Equally, not all women, and even fewer Oxbridge women, are idiots. We know to meet in public places; we clutch our drinks to our (tastefully covered) cleavage; we have concerned friends and parents waiting at home for our hourly toilet cubicle texts. Unless we actively want to have sex with a date, it would be very difficult for it to be forced upon us.

We are big girls, more than capable of looking after ourselves. We are smart, lively and interesting. Is it really so strange for a man to pay for our company? Does he really have to be harboring some sick sexual perversion to want to spend a night on the town with a bright young thing?

The fact is, if a man is looking for sex, he won't be looking at Take Me to Dinner. There are many easier and cheaper ways of getting it. Unless, that is, he strikes lucky and chooses me.

Do We Know Its Christmas Time At All?

Why we should all say goodbye to our humbug

Zoe Smeaton

Less than a month to go, and most students are still wondering what all the festive fuss is about. And that's putting it mildly. In truth, a large proportion of my fellow undergraduates (at least the ones of you I have spoken to) seem to be actively playing down the yuletide season.

They'll talk for hours about the fact that everything to do with Christmas is too 'gimmicky' - just a clever ploy to make money out of all those families with young children. And sure, it might mark the birth of probably the single most influential person ever, but, unless you're a Christian, maybe there really isn't anything that special about Christmas.

So perhaps we should all follow Scrooge's lead again this year? I did it myself for a long time, but one glorious December something happened. Having spent nearly ten years refusing to enjoy the festivities, avoiding party spirit like the plague and most definitely not being merry, I finally snapped; I saw the light, if you will,

and things haven't been the same between me and Christmas since.

But I'm not going to try and spread the good news, or the joy, or even The Word. All I will tell you is that I've discovered some advantages to celebrating Christmas. And I don't mean the satisfaction of giving presents, or even the comfort of having faith: I'm talking about far simpler pleasures than that, far more selfish, and yet somehow far more fulfilling.

And you too can experience these pleasures. Simply stick to a few Blue Peter-style guidelines, apply them to all aspects of Christmas jollity, and prepare yourself for your happiest Christmas yet.

The trick to success lies in rising above your smug disgust with Christmas. Embrace all things associated with the season (the tackier the better), and make yourself the life and soul of the occasion when everyone around you is faltering.

In short, love Christmas, and, in time, everyone will love you, and that

has some serious benefits at this time of year.

I'll illustrate by means of an example. Advent calendars; you definitely need to do them, and make sure you do them properly. Buy two, one for yourself and one for another suitable recipient - I picked my boyfriend but a close friend/sibling/parent/kindly godparent would work equally well. The advantage of this move is two-fold, firstly you can have chocolate for breakfast every day for the next month, and secondly, someone else, thinking what a lovely gesture you have made, subconsciously pledges to get you an extra good present this year.

Speaking from a purely business perspective, I estimate your average £2 advent calendar will get at least a five hundred per cent return, and go for one of those special Thorntons 'ice a name on' jobs and you're really in the money.

And the economic benefits don't stop with buying advent calendars. Ensure that every potential present source receives a card as early as possi-

ble, and send them small presents (again early) that look pretty from the outside; M&S gold-foil-wrapped toffees stuck on the paper never fail to impress. Don't neglect other areas either; manufacture some interest in what you mum is cooking up, for example, and the result will be effortless control over your noel nosh.

Follow these pretty simple rules, and you're well on the way to a very merry Christmas indeed.

Now obviously, despite whatever Adam Smith might say, there are clear downsides to such enlightened self-interest. For one thing the overt commodification of your life can leave you with a big, gaping, soul-shaped hole, and, what's more, maintaining your cheer for a whole month can be quite tiring. But tell yourself that in the end people will be more grateful for your jollification than resentful of the presents you have guilt-tripped them into buying. And anyway, keeping busy with all this merriness makes the whole bloody thing go faster.





I'm sick of cartographers. It was fine when map-making was just a hobby, but now suddenly we're meant to take it seriously as a career. And all it amounts to is taking simple directions and kicking up an unnecessary air of mystique around them.

They say women want a man with a good sense of humour. This is not true. Women want a man with a good sense of direction: and more importantly a man with a good sense of his own fallibility. Which, incidentally, is why the Pope has never been lucky with the ladies.

I don't think anyone would really have a problem with organised religion if it simply involved alphabetising beliefs. A is for I believe in one Apostolic church, B is for I believe in one Biblical truth, C is for I believe in Cats. The advantages of such a system are easy to make out. For one, if the organisation system was properly signposted, there'd never be any difficulty finding God.

As it is, major religions seem to be organised in order of importance. Christianity is organised something like this. The basic order of importance (with '1' being most important, '3' the least):

1. Charity
 2. Faith
 3. Hope
- Of course, nowadays things are more complex and more things have to be factored in. The current order is:
1. Not allowing homosexual priests into the church
 2. Not allowing homosexuals
 3. Robes
 4. Coffee mornings
 5. Charity Coffee mornings
 6. Charity
 7. Faith
 8. It'll do fine as it is, thank you

The church I went to when I was younger was an example of disorganised religion. The priest would often forget to enact the transubstantiation until after the communion, leading to an uncomfortable little wobble in the stomachs throughout the congregation as the wafers turn to flesh.

When it came to Confession, he'd also get a bit confused and start telling you his sins. Unfortunately, they were surprisingly dull. In fact, some of them weren't sins at all. They were just memories. Turns out he got me confused with his ghostwriter and was dictating his memoirs. But it's all right, I've jazzed them up a bit.

But now that Christmas is coming, perhaps it's time to turn back to religion. Worshipping Santa does not, I think, equate to worshipping false idols, only to the lesser charge of idly worshipping falsehoods. Not idly worshipping falsehoods comes at number 19 in the Good News edition of the 'Order of Importance.' So it's not that bad.



CUSU asks: why bother standing up for student concerns when you could be controlling foreign policy in the Middle East or something...

Why There's Value In A Shambles

Only a precious few are truly deserving of their decadence

Okay, here goes. Anyone attempting to write anything in defence of Pete Doherty is in danger of sounding like an excited teenage rebel or, worse, a been-there-done-that rock roué. Hoping to have grown out of being the former and only half-heartedly aspiring to become the latter, I want to defend the bloke only tangentially, not to excuse the substance of the man but to endorse his symbolic worth.

Pete Doherty, to my mind, is of immense social value as a monument of human decay. The man fits the bill as a sort of pop culture role model that is too often overlooked in favour of His Supreme Virtuousness, Chris Martin; or downright bad boys bent on shame, offence and semi-automatic weapons. Our Peter is a generation's rotten-role model.

But what obstructs this view are those poor imitators of that rotten spirit, who get all giddy about decadence and self-destruction. Well, more about them later, but first a consideration of what it takes to get to Denmark (a horrendous, but absolutely essential, rotten state pun).

It is a commonly accepted fact that to let oneself rot takes considerable endeavour. I shall tell you forwhy. It is fair to say that the vast majority of us would be happy, over the course of our lives, to feel as though we had fulfilled our potential, whatever that may be. So spare a thought for the select and laudable few who overreach themselves to the extent that they begin to go off.

Of course, this is not principally a physical phenomenon, though the old "sickly pallor" is a good clue. It is a putrefaction of the spirit. I reckon that halitosis might be a symptom, because every breath must be an exhalation of that decaying soul. Other bodily signs are less discernible. That said, there is a guy I know who keeps his room heated like a sauna and still sits there shivering. But as soon as you get him in the least

bit excited his hands become clammy and his temples start to glisten. It is amazing, and ever so slightly menacing. I suspect he might be rotting inside.

Gosh, well doesn't this all sound like a pretty terrifying ordeal? Surely it makes you into a nasty little person inside? Well, yes and no. It is important to remember that what has gone off might be nauseating but not necessarily poisonous. Rotten souls are not to be confused with evil ones. It is just that their springs of vitality have dried up and become fetid. This is the fate of those characters, who, in striving too far, have left themselves without a viable return or a satisfactory repose. Think of Icarus as the daddy of this family of over-achievers. If the sun had not melted him, which is admittedly a pretty enormous 'if', I bet he would have gone on to lead a deplorably decadent life of comparable disappointment. Comparable, that is, to his near-divine flying exploits.

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" wrote Browning - enough said.

But what is the point of all this, and why should you care? Well, I think there

is a problem with the term "decadence" as it is applied to eating rich foods, enjoying lie-ins and getting extravagantly drunk.

Getting your kicks out of luxury while you can is a pretty obvious thing to do, and university, to some extent, offers a chance to do it. Call it opportunistic or declare it hedonistic, but to make claims for decadence is simply missing the point. Nobody really wants to rot inside, because it has got to be a miserable state of affairs: just look at poor old Pete desperately riding the drugs wave.

Being at university makes those of us with a greedy disposition become susceptible to excess and surfeit: we can drink, think and do too much. Decadence looks so good in the shop window, but if you've not achieved anything then you can't really call yourself decadent. To exploit the fruit analogy (finally), how can you possibly be rotten if you were never really ripe?

Well, we're going round in circles here. On the one hand, to become truly decadent is the result of a premature existential ejaculation, after which you are left limp in limbo. Indeed, those that are the rancid hardcore serve to remind us of the painful reality that is living out the postscript to your ambitions.

Alternatively, if you haven't reached a climax yet then you are just being plain self-indulgent. What to settle on then? Well, that decay is obviously secondary to achievement, and must always be judged as such. Let's not cloud our appreciation of achievement by having a preponderant obsession with the ensuing demise. And let's not all try to get in on the putrefaction just because we might not be able to emulate the genius; there is no reflected glory in trying to imitate decadence. So go produce immortal works of art, music and literature and then decadence will be your desert and not your desire. There's no such thing as a free bender: you have to earn the right to be rotten.

Mungo Woodfield



Don't miss the deadline to apply to be a Varsity section editor: the details are on page 8. Varsity will be back on January 20th

Varsity

Continued from the front page...

and Graham Virgo's interpretation of the Charity Commission guidance, as "a load of bullshit", perhaps indicative of the determination of some within CUSU's ranks to ride roughshod over the rules binding the positions to which they were elected by fellow students.

Some ordinary members of CUSU seem equally determined; in the next CUSU Council a motion will be brought by Josh Robinson of Queens' College resolving that "CUSU work with the trade unions and Labour MPs to oppose New Labour's assault on public services and the welfare state". This would again be in clear contravention of the Charity Commission guidelines on CUSU's role. However, when asked by *Varsity* in this term's first issue "what CUSU is, and what it does", many Cambridge students were unable to answer. The same poll revealed that a majority of Cambridge students wanted CUSU to focus on small-scale issues, such as the campaign for better lighting on Parker's Piece. This campaign has so far been running for three years without any discernible success. Students felt that wider political issues should be left to autonomous organisations such as Roots and Shoots, CU Amnesty International, People and Planet and the Education not for Sale network. Laura Walsh campaigned in her own election manifesto to "bring CUSU back to Cambridge." At present she appears curtailed in her efforts to do so. We implore that she redouble her efforts to this end.

At the beginning of term, Walsh admitted that CUSU had been "crap at letting people know what they're doing." This seems still to be the case. All eyes on CUSU seem focused on attempts by a minority to harness CUSU's structures for personal ends, giving an inaccurate image of time-wasting bureaucracy. Attention to the good work done by some members of the Executive threatens to be overshadowed. Three important awareness campaigns that CUSU have been running this year, concerning mental health, educational equality and women in sport have received very little promotion, even from CUSU-funded student newspaper *TCS*.

Last week a motion called "Policy and the Law", brought to CUSU Council by Adam Colligan of Selwyn, requested that CUSU reaffirm its commitment to preventing illegal motions being passed. The motion sought CUSU's reaffirmation of its own Standing Orders; that the illegality of a motion should be reason for its being struck down. This motion was rejected by CUSU Council. As Matt Clifford, President of the Union of Clare Students asked, "what does it say about CUSU Council that it feels threatened enough by its own standing orders to reject a motion that merely draws attention to them?"

The attempted politicisation and resulting ineffectiveness of CUSU has already led to threats of disaffiliation from a handful of JCRs and MCRs. Downing MCR are voting on affiliation next week and Downing JCR intend to vote in the New Year with the hope of "sending a message to CUSU that something needs to change." Magdalene MCR disaffiliated three years ago.

Other JCRs are determined to try to work within CUSU's existing framework to rectify the situation. Three Selwyn students are bringing motions to CUSU Council next week in direct response to recent perceived CUSU failings. Emmanuel JCR President Peter Parkes told *Varsity* "CUSU performs an incredibly useful job, but its focus needs to be brought back to issues that affect students as students". Emile Axelrad, Downing JCR Treasurer, called for a complete reformation of CUSU and the cutting back of the "vast number of unnecessary things that CUSU do". These sentiments were echoed by JCR representatives at Gonville and Caius, Jesus, Clare, St Catharine's, Peterhouse and Magdalene. One Caius student told *Varsity* "it's just not the job of CUSU to be trying to deal with national political issues. It's clearly not in its remit, and trying to do so is a complete waste of time. No-one is going to take CUSU seriously again until this is stopped".

The possibility of a streamlined CUSU and a separate Graduate Union was welcomed by Downing MCR Vice President Tom Larsen. He told *Varsity* "there is nothing that CUSU provides that the Graduate Union can't, and it often provides better". He said "although in an ideal world there would be one all-encompassing Union, it just isn't working. It's going to take JCRs and MCRs pulling out to actually make CUSU sit up and take notice."

CUSU President Laura Walsh told *Varsity* "CUSU hasn't been politicised; it's CUSU Council that has been politicised." She said "CUSU is like the NHS - you might not always use it, but you'd miss it if it was gone".

However, *Varsity* agrees with students' accusations of serious failings in the areas of HE Funding and Access. Helen Marks, Downing College Access Officer, told *Varsity* of the frustration that she felt over CUSU's inability to adequately engage with the issue of access. She was critical of the "inefficient Target Schools scheme, which has been running with a disappointing level of success" and said that "something needs to drastically change" to make it effective again. Currently only 10 percent of mail sent to schools by CUSU regarding Access issues ever receives a reply. At the moment there is insufficient co-ordination between the different branches of Access work that go on across the University. "The CUSU Access Officer was invited to attend one of our meetings. At the moment there is little cross-over between the two...it's been made clear to him that if he wants to work with us then we think it's a very good idea." She went on "there just has to be more co-ordination between the colleges and the CUSU Access Officer".

To the passive observer, CUSU have allowed themselves to be seen to be pouring time, energy and money into the access problem whilst apparently achieving little more than stasis. Our "Three weeks, Three threats: No Warnings" article, issue 625, highlighted the total lack of communication between colleges with regards to student safety and CUSU's inability to inspire confidence in the student population regarding matters of student safety. Vicki Mann, CUSU Welfare and Graduate Affairs Officer, responded that whilst is a system in place, she "doesn't know what's gone wrong this term." Following three years' effort and three high-profile campaigns, CUSU are still unable to bring lights to Parker's Piece. They still remain without a building despite contravening disability laws and former CUSU President Wes Streeting's admission that "We know our building is crap, students know our building is crap, the University know our building is crap". CUSU student cards reached students almost a month late this year, having been sent to Hong Kong.

Given this range of issues on which they seem in serious danger of falling behind, *Varsity* strongly suggests that members of the CUSU executive devote their time and energy to saving its students rather than saving the world, and determinedly sideline any attempts - from inside or out - to achieve the contrary.



Correspondence
email us: letters@varsity.co.uk

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

The Union Library: No tea in sight

Dear Sir,

I read your article on the current state of the Union Society with considerable interest as I was employed by the Society in 2001-2 to attend to the day-to-day running of the Library.

Although the Library is "well-stocked" and, indeed, has fine collections of, inter alia, biography, travel and history, much of the fiction stock in particular has been in a very poor state for many years and it was largely this old and decrepit material that was put into a recent book sale.

It is very unfair to the present Senior Librarian, who works hard for the Union Library without any remuneration, to imply otherwise. When I worked at the Union, the Library was ignored and neglected by virtually the entire membership, so it is ironic to see it now held up as an asset that is being unreasonably milked.

I frequently worked a five-

hour session without seeing anyone else at all and, as a matter of interest, it was not even possible to get a cup of tea. I, for one, would be very interested to know how £16,000 per annum is reckoned to be spent on the Union Library.

Ann Keith
Deputy College Librarian
Christ's College

Oxford's Union has its own problems

Dear Sir,

Your leader about the Union last week (*Varsity News*, 18 November) had some good points and some bad points.

However, in its comparison with the Oxford Union, your article omitted relevant facts: the Cambridge Union is often criticised for the significant cost of its membership fee (£85) and the proliferation of Tory-boy, public school types but the Oxford Union membership fee is almost twice as expensive and, if you visit the Oxford

gratuitousness; scandal does not necessarily make good art and I reserve the right to be offended. But nevertheless, I am not for closing myself off to the darker side of human nature and the universe that the Bible so clearly illustrates in its stories. Divine and mortal tyranny is shown to us a mirror image of infanticide - God does his part in Exodus, and Herod returns the favour in the gospels.

Every day the world seems a little bit closer to the catastrophic telos of Revelation when humanity finds it necessary to fall back on the easy dualisms of wicked and righteous, drowned and saved. And let's not forget the concubines, stonings and unexpected smittings.

So, if self-censorship is so important, then why didn't the Divine Author lead by example? But then, I expect that Mark and would differ in our interpretations and applications of scripture; as William Blake so astutely put it: "Both read the Bible day and night, But thou readst

Union, you are rather battered over the head with the reality that the Tory-boy stereotype is far truer of it than of the Union here.

I found the Union to be a welcoming place which didn't conform to the stereotypes; I wouldn't have said the same in Oxford. Also, the Oxford Union suffers less competition as a central venue for students from the smaller Oxford colleges than is true in Cambridge with its much more lively college environment.

As a competitive debating society Cambridge more than holds its own against Oxford; we were the best in Britain and arguably the world last year. And in the variety and quality of other entertainments and facilities, the Union truly has lots to offer.

Long term planning is certainly most necessary but I have every confidence in the present Officers that they are good people, who know what needs to be done and will do everything they can to effect it. It is nice to know that they can now also rely on *Varsity's* support and

black where I read white."

Andy Wimbush
Jesus College

Insensitive remarks

Dear Sir,

Adam McNestrie (*Varsity Comment*, November 18) speculates flippantly that college authorities may be happier if students without scholarships "were forced to display a symbol of their relative tripos ineptitude: a Star of David perhaps or, less controversially, a dunce's hat."

Such frivolous reference to the history of Jewish persecution is demeaning to the memory of those who suffered that persecution. It is insulting to those yet living, who lost family and were forced to flee occupied Europe. It is insulting to their grandchildren, one of whom is writing this letter.

I do not write this because I see the persecution of the Jews,

Letters

goodwill in pursuing this.

Joe Devanny
Cambridge Union President
Lent 2002

Totally Platonic

Dear Sir,

Breaking news! Philosophy fails to provide "Meaning of Life"; branded "irrelevant" to non-philosophers! Ethics abolished! (*Varsity Features*, 18 November)

I appreciate that there is an interesting debate about the interplay between the philosophy of science and general scientific practice, but "philosophy postulates problem of induction; fails to solve it; science works anyway; entire field irrelevant" isn't it.

Matt Woodward
Pembroke College

Letters may be edited for
space and style

or any other minority, as a taboo subject. It can be spoken of with a sense of humour, but that must be coupled with a proper respect and sensitivity. (I would be writing the same letter if the author was a Jew.)

Mr McNestrie's words are not excused by the hyperbolic context of the rest of his article. He appropriates the fascist persecution of Jews for one moment of throw-away rhetoric; this is both cheap and cheapening.

The history of educational practice has its dark patches, but they are rarely as dark as the history of the Jews in fascist Europe, nor are they lamented so deeply and by so many. This historical reality does not cease to matter just because one is writing for *Varsity's* comment pages. Mr McNestrie, an historian (and, lest we forget, a scholar), should know this as well.

Tom Secretan
Sidney Sussex College

The scandalous Bible: a worthy read

Dear Sir,

If we were to follow the advice of Mark Hopkins (*Varsity Arts*, 18th November) and realise that the more notorious works of English literature (*Coriolanus*, *Lolita*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* perhaps) are not fit topics for weekly essays, then we would also have to cast out one of the most important texts of all. The Bible is not just concerned with the "lovely" but also the abominable, the horrific and the downright disturbing - and I'm not just talking about the sins of human beings. It certainly has its fair share of "sweat, blood and tears" (to say nothing of the unfair tears).

It is because of these things, as well as the pure, the good and the lovely, that the Bible still matters, just as much as Shakespeare.

Now I've never been one for



Letter of the Week

CENSORED
(not really)

Dear Sir,

I read with interest your feature on the "pearls and perils of artistic freedom", and in particular its relation to the controversial *Jerry Springer*:

The Opera. However, it seems your contributors had not sufficiently thought through the complex network of issues.

Firstly, attitudes towards censorship are a mirror for changing social attitudes - attitudes which taken together are contradictory rather than coherent. Those who clamour for freedom of speech actually tend to mean freedom of speech on certain issues, but not others - eg for such an avowedly liberal body, CUSU is remarkably quick to censor those it deems as holding "unacceptable" opinions (ie racist, sexist or homophobic).

Similarly, it is notable that the play *Behzti*, which angered the Sikh community, was cancelled, but *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, which angered many Christians, survived triumphantly. We must be wary of consecrating the transient opinions of our own age as eternal truths, for what is now judged "unacceptable" may come to be seen as fair game, and vice versa.

It is therefore wrong to state, as Ms Paterson does, that the "hazard of censorship

lies in its power to moralise" - since any viewpoint on censorship, including that which advocates total free speech, is essentially a moral one - it is about judging what is acceptable in our society, and what should be done with those who choose to say unacceptable things.

Thirdly, since society has a role to protect as well as empower its members (eg prisons for criminals), censorship is not in itself an illogical (or "bad") thing - it is simply part of this duty to protect. The problem comes, of course, in deciding what to censor. It seems logical that anything which seeks to gratuitously and perniciously subvert what our society stands for should be treated with appropriate disdain, and censored.

It follows from this that blasphemy (ie gratuitous and scurrilous assault of the Christian God) should similarly be censored - for it seeks to destroy the foundations of our nation as a Christian country, ruled over by a Christian monarch, in the embrace of an established Christian Church, where blasphemy

remains a common law offence. *Jerry Springer* is a blasphemous piece of controversy-baiting drivel that is offensive to those principles on which our country is founded - it is perfectly reasonable to have it censored.

What surprises me is that such an argument, which would have been taken for granted by most educated people 50 years ago, is now so little aired. Well now it has been.

Mark S Smith
Peterhouse College

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





SHE IS A PROLIFIC, BEST-SELLING NOVELIST, A CONSERVATIVE BARONESS... AND A SERIAL MURDERER. JONATHAN YARKER CATCHES AN EXHIBITION AT THE FITZWILLIAM WITH PD JAMES, AND ALSO JOINS HER FOR LUNCH

PD James looks like any other white-haired, bespectacled pensioner, but behind the smile and glasses lurks a serial killer. Her victims might be fictional, but her relish at their demise is tangible. Baroness James of Holland Park is one of the countries most respected novelists, and at eighty-five she has just published her nineteenth book, *The Lighthouse*.

"A crime fiction writer in her eighties!" I hear you cry. "Why is this article in *Varsity* and not *Good Housekeeping*?" Well, for the simple reason that James is a truly great writer. Her books are intelligent, beautifully crafted and refreshing. Because she's no Agatha Christie: her plots aren't 'Colonel Mustard in the Drawing room with the lead-piping': they're full of an insight and humanity that is missing in much modern literature.

It is too easy to point out the trite dichotomy between the fastidious Anglican grandmother and her plots. It is easy and lazy, because, to write PD James off as an eccentric, modern Christie, misses the point. In *Devices and Desires*, the killer whistles hymns while strangling his victims, then stuffs their mouths with pubic hair: hardly the stuff of Miss Marple.

Lady James, is not, as her title would suggest, grand. She insists I call her Phill. Small but not delicate, her face and hands are warm and worked, her features are mobile and her whole figure moves with excitement as she talks. "I never doubted that it is what I could do and wanted to do and psychologically needed to do" she begins, enthusing about writing.

Her novels are murder mysteries, but she is in no way constricted by the formula of her genre. James takes the classic crime plot and turns it

on its head. She usually makes you wait a good hundred pages before the first body is discovered. "I nearly always let the reader know far more than the detective: this makes the final deduction much more satisfying."

The observations of the crime fighting hero are replaced by a complex matrix of connections, evocative landscapes and fragments of conversation, motifs are left half explored, and facts semi-exposed. Thus, when the murder suddenly shakes the orderly world James has carefully built, it becomes all the more shocking. "I get great pleasure from placing a crime in a strongly institutional setting, and contrasting the discipline of the institution with the undisciplined – anarchic, if you like – nature of murder, and showing how it affects a cast of intelligent people." Her neat hands echo this sentiment, as she smooths out the creases in her skirt only to fold her legs and crumple them again suddenly.

Her piercing eyes survey the shabby grandeur of the Fitzwilliam gallery and she observes "I almost always begin with a location. It helps to create atmosphere: the necessary aura of suspense, menace and mystery."

Like Brontë's moor, location appears as an extra character in James's books. It is possible to chart her autobiography through these locations. The Cambridge of her youth in *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*, the inter-war decades of her teenage years and early marriage in the Dupayne museum of the *Murder Room*, the hospital in *Shroud for a Nightingale* (mirroring her own time working as an administrator for the NHS), her literary success in the publishing house of *Original Sin* and her cottage in Southwold in *Death in Holy Orders*.

“I DON'T THINK WE COME INTO THE WORLD AS KIND AND LOVING. I THINK WE COME IN AS SELFISH LITTLE ANIMALS”

A physiological need to write and a relish of control – even of controlled destruction – would indicate a domineering personality, but her books are devoid of any overbearing voice. "Well, my dear, voice is difficult; I'm certainly not a didactic writer," she smiles. "When I'm writing a character I become that character, even if, like in *The Lighthouse*, he turns out to be a homosexual rock climber in his twenties."

This sounds improbable looking at the diminutive figure in an Alice Band, and we both laugh. But she adds: "of course all literature is to some extent autobiographical – so I bring my personal experience to each character. Every woman knows the fear of being followed at night, and I use this everyday emotion to describe the terror of being raped." But a gay rock climber in his twenties? "Well I can imagine his sexual drive, the awful prejudices and the hopes and fears of someone young and confused." Perhaps I look young and confused, because she smiles at me.

James has empathy with all her characters. In *A Taste for Death*, she even makes the psychopathic killer the object of sympathy: "if you remember, it is the murderer who discovers the little boy is ill, it is the murderer who saves the child's life."

These are the moments at which James's writing is so electrifying. None of her crimes or criminals are clearly defined in traditional moral terms; she forces us to question good and evil constantly. James adds more seriously: "I don't think we come into the world as unselfish, kind and loving. I think we come in as selfish little animals."

Emboldened by Phill's constant and endearing smile and her assertion that we are born selfish, I tentatively begin to

"be brutal" – she encourages, and I suggest that her work is a form of egotism. She laughs, "Oh of course, I am an egotist, but then so are you." Touché.

My justification lies not merely in the universal writer's belief that people will want to read what she writes, but in her constant attempt to place her writing in the English canon through references to countless authors and texts – and her relentless public appearances and performances. "I am a failed actress," she laughs. "I love performance, but I only do things I know I can do and do well."

My bruised pride demands her justification for labelling me? "Dear, interviews are nearly always more about the interviewer than the interviewee. In any case all the best people have an ego."

Phill James is more than a novelist. She is a mother and grandmother, a successful politician, retired civil servant, member of countless committees and an extremely active broadcaster.

Our discussion turns to politics over coffee. Since 1991, she has sat as Baroness James of Holland Park in the Lords, a duty she relishes and takes very seriously.

Only the night before, she had voted against the government's proposal for 24 hour licensing. "We are in an age where if you question the received – question change, question progression – you are branded a right-wing extremist. But it is healthy to question." It was questioning, she believes bought about the two most significant pieces of post-war legislation, "the legalisation of homosexuality and the reform of divorce laws."

James isn't a reactionary, she believes in moderation; she might be a Conservative peeress and vice-president of the Prayer book Society, but her tolerance and

understanding is far from the prescriptive stereotype of those two organisations.

Her voice is educated, not heavily patrician but clear and inviting. PD James looks like Mrs Tiggywinkle, or Margaret Rutherford playing Miss Prism in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Her approachable, domestic appearance means we end up talking about food, central heating, her cats and people we have known. James explains the loss of a pair of black trousers to a thief at M&S, "my dear, the whole thing is very annoying." But there is an elegiac quality to the story, not for the loss of the trousers, but for the loss of a common decency and decline in morality. This is not fuelled by nostalgia, but a fear for the future. Like Dalglish at the end of *The Lighthouse*, PD James admits the last few decades are "not one of our greatest successes."

Is it possible that James, like her agnostic creation Dalglish, is a liberal humanist? "Yes – I suppose I am a humanist, I believe in the utter sanctity of the individual." The question seems to interest James, and she smiles. "I believe in order over anarchy, freedom over servitude." I think that this is the voice, this is the message, that James communicates with every syllable of her work. It is the reason her novels are so popular. It is the reason they are so powerful. They offer "a small affirmation that we live in a rational and moral universe, a small celebration of order in an increasingly disorderly world." I think PD James's novels are more than a "small affirmation": they are contemporary parables. *The Lighthouse* is not merely the assertion of good triumphing over evil; it is a thundering declaration of the sanctity of the individual. Murder might exist, but so does hope.

Venue Guide: Clown's Café

Where is it? Tucked away on King Street, just down from the Bun Shop and the Cambridge Arms. The Italian theme might not be immediately evident, and the walls are covered in entries for their annual clown-drawing competition from six-year-olds with pushy parents. But it all adds to the slightly incongruous, though completely unique, place Clown's has in the hearts of all those in the third year and above.

Why Clown's? Apart from doing a good bowl of pasta for under £4 and the best Tiramisu outside the Big Boot itself, Clown's boasts an ambience to rival Ronni Scott's, and you're guaranteed to meet someone more

interesting besides, probably sporting either a giant afro or a harmonica in their back pocket.

What goes on? Sunday nights alternate between Acoustic Soul Sunday and the inimitable Songs in the Dark. Both boast the most chilled of acoustic ballads and the most ethereal of poetry to bring a tear to your eye (but don't worry – by the flicker of candlelight no one will see) and as you settle down with a £5 bottle of Clown's red(ish) wine shared between plastic tumblers you can almost convince yourself that your 9am Monday lecture doesn't exist. There's an optional entry fee, but its all about the love, maan.

book now:



Belle and Sebastian
All of you who remember when indie used to mean indie, book now to see the Glaswegian indie-pop seven-piece on a rare tour

Corn Exchange
Tuesday 2nd February 2006



O go my man
Celebrating 50 years of the Royal Court, this piece of new writing by Stella Feehily is set in contemporary Dublin and mixes raw emotion with surreal humour. Directed by Max Stafford-Clark

Cambridge Arts Theatre
14th - 18th February

Martha & Mathilda

A voyage round the dramatic main...and late shows



Allow us to escort you aboard our figurative aquatic tour bus. Breathing apparatus is required – this metaphor contains water in its hold. In true piratical fashion, Martha is swigging a parrot and wearing rum, Mathilda is coaxing tapers into her beard (each the models' own), and peering into the briny deep of the past.

Consigned to Davy Jones' archive are the theatrical treasures of the term, but if they have been buried, it is only in order to return four, five, nay, even eight weeks on and disinter their lovely bones. Time to shake off the corpses (Playroom), and walk around the little ship we call a stage, the creaking of the boards recalling to mind the fifty and one hundred years which have passed since the ADC marked the spot. The various craggy auditoriums of Cambridge add to the tawdry finery, all stuffed with bounty of the dramatic kind.

Michaelmas is a swashbuckling adventure of a term, being as it is the beginning of the piratical (read Cantab) calendar. Time has matured us all and suddenly, last summer – full of its Fringe exploits, Macbeth: the Hour, Under the Blue Blue Moon and Threepenny Opera to name a few - is a September in the rain in Cambridge. A flurry of Festival goers, a twenty-one gun salute to a talented home coming. Quick on the

heels of their elders, enter with floor polish – the cabin boys, the nautical novices in Our Town and Confusions quickly earning their salt, an exciting lookout for the coming years. Along with the Edinburgh flagships and the usual press-ganging of freshers,

“

**AMONGST OUR
PIECES OF
EIGHT LIE SOME
REAL GEMS**

”

this term was the birthday of our most illustrious buccaneer – the ADC. Ahoy celebrations for one and all – the anniversary of the corruption of the University to the life of the high seas. Sailing through nights with the honeys of the theatre world, navigating sketches and monologues of the ages, through Frayn's wilder Chekhov and some of the luminous old seadogs, including Captain Frayn himself. A week of grog for all: “I wish I'd been to Cambridge” – Dame Judi Dench.

Life is good, dear gentlemen sailors; our collective coffers are full of Tennessee cats,

gorillas, goats from Albee, Shepherd's horses – all sorts of livestock. Amongst our pieces of eight lie some real gems; from the beautiful melancholia of Tennessee Williams' Suddenly Last Summer and raw humanity of Harold Pinter's The Caretaker to the sumptuous and the erotic of Brecht's Baal and the lyrical longing of Kane's Crave. Adding to the heap of balloons, a veritable tea party in Edward Albee's tragic The Goat and the jolly rogering of Dead Funny (here, good reader, you will notice a mix of metaphor because Martha likes to make metaphors about tea and balloons and Mathilda prefers puns upon profane acts of sexuality). The sails of these old battleships were filled with a breath of fresh air as students fat and wide did justice to the classics. And we too delighted in our piratical (read Cambridge) traditions as the bi-monthly Smokers ebbed and flowed offering a constant stream of weird and wonderful sea creatures. The final nod to the past goes to The Future as Jonny Sweet and Joe Thomas took the helm into new writing and new harbours of comedy.

And so to the sea-faring among you, congratulations. It will be plain sailing from here.

Avast!...Vista looms on the horizon. Yo Ho Ho. Merry Christmas.

the essential events of the next seven days



theatre

Sweethearts

Gilbert and Sullivan Society present this bit-tersweet and poignant drama.

ADC, 11pm, until Saturday 26th November, £3-5



film & music

CU Chamber Orchestra

Nigel W Brown Concerto Prize Concert

West Road Concert Hall, 7.30pm, Sunday 26th November, £3 / £1 CUMC members



The Good Doctor

Recently graduated Cambridge comedy duo combine science with humour in their tour show.

Pembroke New Cellars, 11pm, Friday 25th until Saturday 26th November, £4



Paper Flowers

Chilean playwright Egon Wolff explores the gulf between “Los Rotos” (the broken ones) and the repetitive life of the affluent middle classes.

Corpus Christi Playroom, 7pm, Tuesday 29th November until Saturday 3rd December, £6/4



State of Denial

South African film exploring the personal and political sides of the AIDS crisis, including issues surrounding the WTO-supported patent laws. In conjunction with World AIDS Day.

Arts Picturehouse, 5.30pm, Thursday 1st December



Sin City

Another chance for comic book geeks and fans of Robert Rodriguez to see this visually stunning, ultra-violent adaptation of Frank Miller's graphic novels.

Christ's College, 8.00pm & 10.30pm, Sunday 27th November, £2

Pick of the Week

When I was 21 Antony Gormley Artist

In what year were you 21 and what were you doing? 1971, just finishing Cambridge and starting to travel seriously.

Where did you live? I lived in Pampisford near Cambridge and had a motorbike. I would travel about with my paints and paint murals for £5 a square foot.

What was your favourite outfit? White muslin shirt from India, white naval bell-bottom trousers, and a full length white afghan coat I had had made in Herat in 1969.

What were your illegal activities? The great thing was that nothing seemed impossible: legality was not an issue.

What were you afraid of? Getting old.

What made you angry? How small Cambridge was.

Who were your heroes? Rene Daumal, W. Burrows, Chomsky, Krishnamurti, Alan Watts, Evans-Wentz, Bruce Conner, Andy Warhol, Stockhausen, Bergman, Bowie, Mao, Marcuse, R.D. Laing, Bertrand Russell, Blake, Norman O. Brown, Robert Graves, Ghandi, Dostoevsky, R. Crumb, Anita Pallenberg, Fred Astaire, David Cohn-Bendit, Claude Levi-Strauss, Guy Debord etc.

Where did you spend your evenings? Sitting in fields admiring natural structures and in other people's rooms and beds admiring natural structures.

What did you eat? Brown rice.

What music did you listen to? Dylan, Jefferson Airplane, Janice Joplin, Country Joe & the Fish, King Crimson, Grateful Dead, Roy Harper, Henry Cow, Loudon Wainwright Wainwright, Mamas & Papas, Santana, The Incredible String Band, Iron Butterfly, The Cream, The



Who, Pink Floyd, Richie Havens, Jethro Tull, Crosby Stills and Nash.

What did you hope to be? Liberated.

Where had you travelled to? India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, most of Europe.

What did you believe in? That youth had found its voice and was going to change the way things worked from now on.

What made you cry? My Lai [the massacre of Vietnamese citizens by American soldiers in 1970].

What do you wish you had known then that you know now? That things work out if you keep on going, keep on looking, keep on trying things, keep on engaging with people, ideas, places, ways of living and of engaging with life. I wasted a lot of energy then worrying about whether what I was doing was worth it – it was.

Emily Stokes



Charting the distinguished history of Footlights pantomime



ROBINSON CRUSOE (1975): Griff Rhys-Jones, then President of the ADC, co-wrote this show and starred as "Gertie" Crusoe, Robinson's mother. John Stroud, director of cult series *Kiss me Kate*, played Robinson himself.



ALADDIN: A RUSSIAN PANTOMIME (1978): Emma Thompson made her Footlights debut as Aladdin, alongside Hugh Laurie as the Emperor of China.



THE SNOW QUEEN (1980): Written by a team of six, including Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie and Emma Thompson. Hugh Laurie, then President of the Footlights, directed the show and played the Magician.



RUMPELSTILTSKIN (1982): Morwenna Banks, of *The Morwenna Banks Show* and *Absolutely*, played The Witch.



ROBYN HOOD (1985): David Baddiel, of *Baddiel and Skinner Unplanned*, co-wrote this 'panto' and starred as the leading man.

"It's behind you!"

Christmas is on its way, and with it the advent of Pantomime.

Varsity takes a look at a national tradition both loved and despised

Pantomime is, indeed, a British custom, and has had little success elsewhere, except, bizarrely, in Israel and Switzerland. In both locations the annual pantomime is consistently performed to a full house.

CROSS-DRESSING HEROES, BEAUTIFUL HEROINES, EVIL VILLAINS, DANCING COWS AND SINGING GEESE

It is a genre that invites both criticism and cynicism for its clichéd storylines and seemingly crude character: relentless happy endings, commonplace farce, cross-dressing, blatant gestures to the audience and the

embarrassing infliction of audience participation rank highly amongst the sceptic's grumbles. But this, surely, is central to its appeal. It is innocent festive fun for all ages: the older generation indulge in the nostalgia of it, whilst appreciating modern references within the comedy. And, contrary to widespread opinion, it demands an extensive amount of skill, for the timing and physicality required of the actors is crucial to the success of the humour.

And this is why it is not only the Big Brother stars who partake in the merriment. This year will see the return of Cambridge alumni Ian McKellen to the Old Vic stage in his second season as Widow Twankey in *Aladdin*, while Richard Wilson, Susan Hampshire and Simon Callow all have roles elsewhere. A little closer to home, this fortnight, the Cambridge Footlights offer a satirical approach to pantomime in *Spartacus* at the ADC, while the Cambridge Arts Theatre prepares to launch a more classic approach in *Dick Whittington and his Cat*.

Laura Draper

Roman chavs and a horse called Stephen

Robyn Hill indulges in the Christmas spirit of *Spartacus: The Pantomime* at the ADC

Once again, the end of Michaelmas is in sight, signalling the arrival of the annual Footlights/ADC pantomime. This year *Spartacus: The Pantomime* takes to the stage, under the direction of Zack Simons. True to form, this again is a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Loosely based on the story of Spartacus (played by Helen Cripps), who was captured and enslaved by the Romans and then sold to become a gladiator, the panto follows his road to freedom and all the incidents that happen along the way - Egyptian night clubbing and the eruption of ver-suius to name a few. The panto bad guy is supplied by Alastair Roberts as Nero's crooked advisor. Nero's other trusted companion is the traditional pantomime horse - this time he's called Stephen.

The production is teeming with outstanding performances, particularly from the chorus who

keep up the fast pace and provide much of the comedy throughout. Particular credit should be given to Thomas Ecclesshare, Sam Kitchener and Dan Mansell, who are true chameleons throughout and don a multitude of wacky costumes, wigs, dresses, extremely short Roman centurion outfits and even dress up as first century BC chavs - who'd have thought adidas was around then? Similarly, many of the leads excel themselves. The comedy double act between the pantomime dame, this time, Cleopatra (Simon Evans) and the barking mad Nero (Simon Bird) complete with tinsel wreath, compliment each other beautifully and overshadow Spartacus and Varinia (Tammy Harvey).

There were a few minor problems - notably the set falling over during the somewhat lengthy scene changes. This can in part be explained by the fast costume changes required of the actors

and will undoubtedly speed up as the run goes on. The script overall was extremely funny and kept the audience laughing (sometimes groaning) throughout. However, it could have done with a little editing as the production seemed rather long and in places, the pace lagged. The main criticism I would make of the script is that the constant use of puns (often verging on the unacceptable even for pantomime standards and sometimes stepping outrageously over the mark) threatened to dilute the true comic value of many of the other passages.

That said, the wonderful comic timing of the cast doubled with an ambitious set, great costumes and over the top dancing ensure that this is a great production. I thoroughly recommend it.

ADC, 7.45pm, until Saturday 3rd December (except 27th), £5-9

"While Dick's away the dame will play it straight"

Jenny Lee talks to Michael Fenton Stevens and Julie Buckfield, the stars of this year's Art's Theatre pantomime, *Dick Whittington*

Pantomime is a theatrical conundrum: it is built backwards. Originally a silent performance of gesture and expression, it is now an incredibly vocal genre, inviting both audience and actors to shout, shriek and sing out loud. Men dress up as women and women dress down to play boys, whilst stock-characters and prescribed storylines are countered with endless improvisation. There is a continual hunger "to keep the formulaic elements fresh," argues Michael Fenton-Stevens who, along with Julie Buckfield of *Hollyoaks* fame, has returned to the Cambridge Arts Theatre to star in their Christmas Pantomime, *Dick Whittington*.

They are finding this year a lot easier than the last. "You have to get through a certain amount before you can really let go," explains Fenton Stevens, who has taken on the role of the dame, "We've already looked so foolish in front of each other that we're not afraid of anything." Whilst they are quick to stress the amount of hard work required of the job it is clear that they signed up because of the fun involved, both in and out of the theatre - Buckfield, who's playing Dick Whittington, has swift-

ly navigated her way round Cambridge clubbing scene along with the younger members of the company. Yet while Dick's away, the Dame will play it straight, and last year Fenton-Stevens was so busy that he failed to buy all his Christmas presents because he didn't know the Grafton centre existed until the festive season was over. Nevertheless, on stage it is Buckfield's turn to behave, carrying the plot whilst the Dame runs around throwing custard pies and stealing the show. "If anybody's going to look stupid it's going to be us," admits Fenton-Stevens. Yet it's not just the actors who need to let go: "If you're an adult and you're coming to a pantomime you have a responsibility to become a child for the day. You shouldn't be embarrassed. My advice is, if you are, sit towards the back." The only people who are allowed to take the whole thing seriously are the children in the audience: "You have to include the children," Fenton-Stevens continues, "If you're in the middle of a scene and

they want to interrupt, you have to sit up and take notice." Last year, during a performance of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, a child in the audience insisted on relaying the entire story before the show had taken off. Ever the consummate professional, Fenton-Stevens digested the interruption and built it into the fabric of the script, turning back to the boy repeatedly to exclaim: "you were right!"

In this respect, Pantomime is the vanguard of the white lie that drama is built on. Anyone who goes to the theatre for the first time in Britain as a child will probably see a pantomime. It is a tradition that perhaps inspired Buckfield's own career: as an eleven year old girl in the chorus line of *Dick Whittington* she decided, "one day I'll be up at the front. I'll be taking that curtain call." Both actors also stress that Pantomime should be respected because of the financial support it can muster for venues such as the Cambridge Arts Theatre which relies on its annual takings from the panto to fund other shows throughout the year.

Those who prefer to see Ibsen and Dorfman performed at the Arts Theatre may deride Pantomime in the same way that Pantomime can mimic and mock the gravitas of other theatrical forms, yet each is inextricably dependant upon the other.

The Cambridge Arts Theatre, Friday 9th Decmber until Sunday 15th January 2006, performance times vary, £10/£15/£20

SHOW SOME EMOTION

The Poet Laureate is the public face of poetry, but he also has a very quiet side.

EMILY STOKES visits ANDREW MOTION in his poet's pad

Andrew Motion's secondary school teacher, he tells me, showed him that "writing and caring about writing poems wasn't something you had to wear a cravat and live in an attic to do, but could be something you could do in real life".

Andrew Motion is not wearing a cravat and he lives in a basement flat in Camden town, and seems to have managed to combine 'real life' and 'poetry' rather well in his setting. It is 'bachelor pad' meets 'humble garret', with grey wool throws, dark wood surfaces and a designer whistling kettle. The Poet Laureate is pristine and beautiful, and his clothes are flawlessly tasteful and well-chosen; he balances the seriousness of an ageing academic (grey cardigan) with the understated, trendy eccentricity of a young poet (bright yellow V-neck, straight leg jeans, stripy T-shirt). His front door is tiny and green, down some stairs, connected to a leafy garden and, when he opens it and leads me into his flat, I am transported from the bustle of Camden Road into a dim, quiet setting that is as meticulously tidy and ordered as a sonnet.

There is, though, another, more flamboyant, side to Andrew Motion. He is one of those fathers who knows how to keep up with the times and, cleverly, does it without looking too try-hard. The new Bob Dylan book, a birthday present, is propped up on his bookshelf. His CD collection, which he rifles through to show me, is admirable: Wagner, Bach, Armadou and Miriam (produced by Manu Chao), Joseph Arthur. He tells me with pride that he "got onto Antony and the Johnsons very early - long before they won the Mercury Prize" and that his seventeen year old daughter copies his music.

But he's no second generation Beat Poet. Most of his recent work has been written in a formal style, and the tone of his poems is typically elegiac or lyrical. For Motion, "It's about Keats, it's always about Keats", and he slips lines of Eliot, Larkin, Frost and Auden into our conversation like anecdotes about old friends. He is a scholar, not a celeb, but believes that poetry must be made more available and attractive to young people. This is a difficult task. As good as his intentions may have been, I can't help feeling that he suffered the fate of all those grown-ups who attempt to 'get down with the kidz' in his Laureate poems celebrating Prince William's twenty-first birthday. The 'A-side' poem (it is structured like an LP) is "a kind of rap" and begins "Better stand back / Here's an age attack. / But the second in line / Is dealing with it fine". It goes on: "It's a day to celebrate, / A destiny, a fate". A quick glance confirms that there are no rap CDs in his collection.

It's part of Motion's mission to bring the role of Poet Laureate into the twenty-first century, and he is clearly practised at explaining why this isn't an anachronism. He is the first poet, he says, to conceive the Laureate as a job: he is happily a public figure, half "laureating" in schools - with writers, with government - and half writing. His new project, *The Poetry Archive*, will use 'state-of-the-art technology' to make poems available to listen to on the internet, thereby restoring their status as oral works rather than written ones. "This is a boastful thing to say," says Andrew Motion oh so gently with excited big eyes, "but I think that this has the potential to fundamentally change the way poetry is taught in schools".

This new book is about "places, the countryside, animals, killing animals, feeling frightened". He tells me about his first school which was "very frightening and I think bad" where there was "a lot of beating and horrible-ness - my brain just froze, as it does when you're frightened". He later tells me that he has always been terrified that he will stop being able to write poetry. He talks so softly that, listening back to the tape of our conversation, I find that we are both nearly whispering, as if anxious not to disturb the tranquil equilibrium of his creative space, to allow the "horribleness" of the outside world to enter. It seems that his poems, like himself, are fragile creatures: "I thought that writing my autobiography might have killed them".

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He talks about his poetic mission like a politician or an ambassador - although he does cringe when he uses the word "initiative". He wants to de-mystify poetry, un-ghettoise it, to overcome children's (mostly boys') objections that it is "girly" or "irrelevant". It is hard to fault his professed intentions or philosophy. He is, of course, a royalist, but - he repeats as if to reassure me - "a royalist at the reforming end of the spectrum". He gets around being hypocritical in writing about the royals, who he doesn't know, by writing poems that are broad in their outlook, as sympathetic and non-judgemental as he is himself. "Rightly or wrongly," he says, "I must feel that I can call whatever I write an authentic poem". I don't like all his poems, but I think that there was something impressive about his poem celebrating Camilla and Charles's wedding. It fulfils its purpose with conscientious efficiency - in the words

of Sylvia Plath - 'like a well done sum'. Nevertheless, I feel a little uneasy about all of this. He is liberal-minded, well-meaning, well-informed, *inoffensive*. Even the fact that he offended Downing Street over his poems about Iraq makes him more normal and likeable - and his poem 'Causa Belli' wasn't nearly as radical as it might have been. I wonder if I am being very snobbish in my secret anxiety that Poetry, with its public smiley faces of Simon Armitage, Carol Anne Duffy and the "P.L." (as he calls it once or twice) might be becoming a little too inoffensive and easy to swallow. I can't imagine falling in love with poetry over the Internet and I am a little attached to the Romantic poet figure who has no social agenda, or at least not such a very nice one.

He swears, however, that he has never held back in his poetry because of his public status: "Not a poem, not a line, not half a line." And then he goes on: "but it's interesting you should ask me that, because it suggests that there are some people who think that I am frantically biting my lip and holding back in my poetry, which I'm not". It seems strange to me that he should feel so calm about having to explain that his poems are heartfelt. It bothers me, largely because it does not bother him.

But I am impressed and persuaded and charmed, and this is why, of anyone who could take on the role of Poet Laureate today, he is the perfect choice: a beautiful public face of Poetry. However much I find his poems a little too agreeable, he himself is unequivocally passionate about them, and this passion is infectious. When I ask him about his work habits, he turns the question into something much more mystical: "Poems begin with a sort of woozy, swoony, musical thing - as if the world has suddenly been eroticised". This mysticism is attractive; in the shelter of his world I am persuaded. Which is why I hate to leave his flat with its woozy, swoony music (he has just put on one of his new Latin American CDs) and enter the cynicism of "real life".



↙ Millicent: I first saw her in my college bar in Freshers' Week. I knew then that she had to be mine

↙ Me: but I was too shy even to talk to her. How was I supposed to communicate my love? My only hope was...

↙ Varsity: after two long years of eleven-hour proof-reading shifts, the *Varsity* aristocracy had finally let me have a real job: writing this column

↙ The plan: I knew Millicent read *Varsity*. And through this column, I could show her that I liked just the same things that she did - I could show her that we were meant to be together

↙ the beginning: at first it was easy. I was lucky enough to run into Millicent quite often. On her way to lectures. Buying milk in Sainsbury's. Outside her room, late at night... I got an idea of her tastes. She liked sweets and music and so on. So I filled *Prescribed* accordingly

↙ The end: but the editor of *Varsity* got no lovestruck emails enquiring after the identity of the writer of this column. And I'd run out of things to include that I knew Millicent liked. I got desperate, started to pick at random. Marfa, Texas? Prince Milan Ibrovovic II of Serbia? And I got the sense that, in real life, Millicent was starting to avoid me. At least that meant she knew who I was

↙ My last chance: so now I'm just going to have to come out and say it. Millicent, will you be mine?

Varsity match '05

OXFORD VS CAMBRIDGE 06/12/05 2PM

Varsity 25.11.05

Special
Souvenir
Pullout

Cambridge bid to regain MMC Trophy

Joe Speight

In little over a week's time thousands of students from across Oxford and Cambridge will join hoards of alumni to converge on Twickenham to witness the 124th chapter of one of sport's oldest fixtures. Rather than head for home at the end of an exhausting term and an intense week of over-indulgence in Christmas festivities, up to 40,000 shivering students will brave the Siberian conditions of South-West London and turn as blue as the team they are supporting. However outdated or unfashionable the Varsity Match may appear in a national context, for the loyal supporters and the 30 players who grace the turf at the home of English rugby, it remains a prestigious and traditional occasion which provides a climactic focal point to the term. And for the light blues of Cambridge, revenge is in the air.

Long gone are the days when crowds of almost 70,000 would watch the annual battle between two of the world's finest academic institutions, and firmly in the

past are the occasions when one may witness Rob Andrew of Cambridge lining up against Stuart Barnes of Oxford. The Varsity Match remains a throwback to rugby's amateur age, and in the days of professionalism and mass media coverage its relevance in the rugby calendar has been challenged. However the despairing look on the faces of the Cambridge team when Ross Lavery's injury-time try sealed victory for Oxford last year revealed why the Varsity match is so special. It is the culmination of an intense period of bonding and preparation, and the fact that it is amateur rugby maintains the empathy in our heart. These players cannot pick up a sizeable cheque as a consolation. They are playing for pride and victory alone.

Oxford's victory in 2004, their first in three years, was ultimately deserved. The favourites on paper survived a few scares but made their overall dominance pay. Cambridge led through Fergie Gladstone's early try, but a converted score from Oxford fullback Anthony Knox before half time shifted the balance of power in the match and Cambridge

were unable to respond. The loss of Nic Alberts to injury in the first half was a pivotal moment in the match, and Cambridge will be hoping to avoid similar misfortune this time around.

"The Other Place" are looking strong once again, and after a season of indifference at Grange Road, it needs the experienced campaigners such as Jonny Ufton and Rudolph Bosche to combine with the flair of the likes of Nic Alberts and Dave Akinluyi to provide a winning formula to halt the dark blues from Oxford. The power of the forwards is a promising sign though, according to former Lions coach Ian McGeechan who, having seen both sides in action, rates the light blue pack as superior. History is also on the Cambridge side, with 57 Varsity victories as opposed to Oxford's 51 since the rivalry began in 1872.

History also tells us that it was two years ago this week when Jonny Wilkinson kicked his way into rugby folklore with the winning drop-goal in the World Cup Final in Sydney. No more than one score has separated the two sides for



ANDY SIMS

The Blues do battle at the line-out

the past seven years, so such a moment of drama cannot be ruled out to decide a Varsity match. Let us hope that there will be at least one Australian celebrating on this occasion though, with Cambridge captain and Aussie export Ed Carter wrapping his hands around an MMC Trophy adorned in the light blue ribbons once again.



2000

Oxford 19-16 Cambridge

Dark Blues claim only their 2nd win in 7 matches



2001

Oxford 9-6 Cambridge

Third straight Oxford win in first try-less match for 20 years



2002

Oxford 13-15 Cambridge

MMC Trophy returns to Grange Road for first time since 1998



2003

Oxford 11-11 Cambridge

Desmond's late try means Cambridge retain the trophy



2004

Oxford 18-11 Cambridge

Dominant Oxford seal victory with clinching try from Lavery

Bodgers steal a narrow victory

Jamie Brockbank

CAMBRIDGE
STEELE-BODGERS 40
41

The Blues' traditional pre-Varsity final home fixture organised by 1946 Blues skipper and Barbarians supremo, Mickey Steele-Bodger, has been lamented by pundits in recent years as a waning fixture, but Wednesday afternoon's full house were treated to a scintillating display of exhibition rugby in which the visitors withstood a late Blues' resurgence to prevail by the narrowest of margins.

Welcomed back amongst the invita-

“

A FULL HOUSE AT GRANGE ROAD WAS TREATED TO A SCINTILLATING DISPLAY OF EXHIBITION RUGBY

”

tional XV were former Blues scrum-half Ben Dormer ('02-'04), hooker Fergie Gladstone ('02 & '04) and impressive flanker Russell Ernschaw ('95), as well as victorious 2004 Oxford captain David Lubans, whilst Pat Howard skippered the visitors again from fly-half. Howard excelled and spectators would have been forgiven for mistaking him for the great Carlos Spencer; his incisive running and deft kicking as playmaker helped pin the Blues on the back foot during a one-sided first half.

Within the opening minute, the Steele-Bodgers were 7-0 ahead after a Dormer try, and they stuck again moments later after a Blues' offensive was turned over - an all too familiar first-half failing. Taking full advantage of tentative first-time Blues tackling, Ernschaw

Thrilling Blues comeback from 31-0 down but fall just short

made a 40 yard break before offloading for Irish winger John Bell to touchdown unopposed. To compound their faltering start, the shell-shocked Blues promptly conceded their 3rd try, a quite magnificent length of the field effort combining eight visiting players and superb offloading in the tackle, to find themselves 19-0 in arrears after just the 7th minute.

In the spirit of the fixture, Steele-Bodgers delighted the crowd with flamboyant reverse passing and slick scissor manoeuvres as the Blues worryingly struggled to find any rhythm. Soon after Ernschaw notched the visitors' 4th try, Desmond took a pummelling after receiving a hospital pass from Ufton and the Steele-Bodgers pounced to extend their lead to 31-0 in the 28th minute. Much-needed Blues pride and points were only restored just before the interval as Desmond sidestepped his touchline markers with predictably lethal acceleration, but the 31-7 deficit seemed quite unassailable.

Cambridge looked far more committed after the break whilst the visitors

stamina flagged, and Ufton's quick tap-penalty sent Carter, who ran impressive lines at inside-centre all afternoon, powering through before offloading for openside Dave O'Brien to score. Blindside flanker Bartholomew soon snaffled himself an intercept try too, but Dormer's close-range effort kept the Steele-Bodger's 36-21 ahead.

A frenetic final quarter saw the Steele-Bodgers 7th and final try sandwiched by a brace from the Blues centres, the first as replacement Steffan Thomas smashed through the Bodger's defence followed by Carter's well-deserved corner-flag lunge over the line. Another exhilarating masterclass in offloading in the tackle and support running, this time by half-a-dozen Blues, sent Harfoot over for the students' 6th try, and more dependable conversions from Ufton clawed Cambridge tantalisingly within a point of the visitors in a remarkable comeback. But, with the Steele-Bodgers' hanging on 41-40 deep into injury time, Howard nonchalantly booted the ball out to end a highly entertaining encounter.



ANDY SIMS

Richard Bartholomew tries to break through a solid Steele Bodgers back line as Akinluyi watches on

listen to the
match...



Live commentary
on the 2005
Varsity Rugby
Match from
1.30pm - 4pm
CUR 1350



Captain's View
ED CARTER
Cambridge

CURUFC is certainly a very special place which embraces many long-standing traditions and unique individuals. Having been elected Captain of the club for the 2005/2006 season in late January, one of the main pieces of advice I was given was just how quickly the year will go. Now with only a few weeks until the 124th Varsity Match on December 6, it has certainly been a role that has provided many challenges, but more importantly a number of special memories.

The team arrived back to Cambridge in late September after the completion of their short pre season tour to Japan. On the field, the results, whilst disappointing, held many positives and the most pleasing aspect of the tour was certainly the progression made by a number of younger players within the squad. This has been a growing trend throughout CURUFC, which has seen a number of undergraduates pushing hard for selection in the 'Blues' side this year.

The 'Varsity Term' is always a very difficult period for the players as they attempt to balance their studies with a very busy training schedule. There was a conscious effort this year to try and reduce the number of fixtures for the club, however this is not always possible and once again huge responsibility was placed on the shoulders of a number of U21's such as LX's secretary James Taylor, Pete Archer and Ash Reddy. The attitude of these players has been outstanding and they add great experience to a very strong U21's side this year.

The side is announced on the Saturday night following the 'Blues' match against Loughborough University and the next morning as team Captain I cycle to each college to inform players of their fate. This process usually starts at 7am and takes the majority of the day. The squad appears to be coming together well this year and look physically the best prepared they have in a number of seasons, which is a testament to the work of our fitness trainer Ed Hallam. We have certainly been strengthened by the return of experienced players such as front rower Rudolph Bosche ('00, '02-'03) and outside back Ian McLuroy ('03) and these players, along with Nic Alberts ('04), no. 10 Jon Ufton ('03-'04) and winger Charlie Desmond ('03-'04) are expected to feature strongly on the day. As for my prediction as to who will win the 124th Varsity Match – I will have a much better indication at 3.30pm on December 6.



IAN MCINROY
Full back
Age - 35
Height - 6'
Weight - 14'13"
College - Hughes Hall

Returning 2003 Blue has played for both Scotland 7s and U21s sides.

DAVE AKINLUYI
Wing
Age - 21
Height - 6'1"
Weight - 15'12"
College - Christ's

Victorious U21 last year and destined to win his first full Blue in 2005.

CHARLIE DESMOND
Wing
Age - 22
Height - 5'11"
Weight - 11'6"
College - Girton

Scored match-saving try as a fresher in 2003 and warned the bench in 2004.

PAUL MAGEE
Centre
Age - 27
Height - 6'1"
Weight - 16'
College - Hughes Hall

Versatile former Irish schools and Scottish students outside centre.

GRANT CELLIER
Fly half
Age - 26
Height - 6'2"
Weight - 15'6"
College - Jesus

Former Skellenbosch fly half provides cover for Ufton at 10.

RHYS EVANS
Scrum half
Age - 21
Height - 5'8"
Weight - 12'9"
College - Hughes Hall

Loughborough graduate reading management and could win his first Blue.

CARL BRADSHAW
Scrum half
Age - 23
Height - 5'7"
Weight - 12'4"
College - Hughes Hall

Former rugby league Blue and pushing for a starting role in his first Varsity match.

JONNY UFTON
Fly half
Age - 31
Height - 6'1"
Weight - 13'8"
College - St. Edmund's

Chuffers has made over 100 appearances for Wasps and wins his third Blue.

ED CARTER
Centre
Age - 27
Height - 6'2"
Weight - 15'8"
College - St. Edmund's

CAPTAIN Former Australia 7s captain appearing in the Varsity Match for the third time.

CHRIS WORSLEY
Scrum half
Age - 25
Height - 6'1"
Weight - 13'8"
College - Hughes Hall

Represented England Students, but is yet to represent the Blues at Twickenham.

JOE ANSBRO
Centre
Age - 20
Height - 6'
Weight - 13'6"
College - Robinson

Rapid second year NatSci likely to start from the bench as cover at wing and centre.

STEFFAN THOMAS
Centre
Age - 21
Height - 6'
Weight - 16'10"
College - Trinity

Powerful centre who played a big role in the U21s Varsity win last year.

DAVE O'BRIEN
Flanker
Age - 23
Height - 6'
Weight - 15'6"
College - Jesus

Openside flanker who has played for the Ireland U21 side and Leinster Schools.

RICH BARTHLOMEW
Flanker
Age - 20
Height - 6'
Weight - 16'
College - Jesus

2nd year Engineering undergraduate aiming to win his first Blue.

JOHN BLAIKIE
Second Row
Age - 34
Height - 6'2"
Weight - 14'10"
College - Hughes Hall

Graduate from Otago University, and has played for New Zealand "A".

RUDOLPH BOSCHE
Prop
Age - 30
Height - 5'10"
Weight - 17'11"
College - Hughes Hall

Returning to the side this year the front row is set to win his fourth Blue.

ED KALMAN
Prop
Age - 22
Height - 6'1"
Weight - 18'
College - Fitz

A graduate of Durham University is studying for an MPhil in technology and policy.

JOSEPH CLARK
Hooker
Age - 22
Height - 6'1"
Weight - 16'5"
College - St. Edmund's

Former Oxford U21 is set to win his first Cambridge Blue this year.

RICH MOLLER
Hooker
Age - 21
Height - 5'9"
Weight - 15'
College - Robinson

Having played for the U20s, U21As and U21s this NatSci is looking become a Blue.

TOM KIRKMAN
Prop
Age - 23
Height - 6'1"
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ED KALMAN

From Grange Road to Twickenham

Varsity Sport meets the former Blue and England winger Tony Underwood

To understand the strength of Cambridge rugby during its 1980s to early 1990s heyday one should look at the calibre of former Blues who starred in Calcutta Cup fixtures during much of the 1990s Five Nations. Gavin Hastings, Rob Wainwright and Rob Andrew were all legends of their era, but for many neutrals, it was the breathtaking pace of the Underwood brothers' partnership on the wing for England that lit up many of these fixtures.

Both brothers learnt the game at the rugby stronghold of Barnard Castle School in County Durham before going on to represent Leicester Tigers. But whereas Rory progressed straight into the international game, Tony's route to stardom was slightly different. Born in Malaysia in 1968 and the younger sibling by six years, Tony was called-up to the England setup in 1989 whilst an undergraduate at Leicester, though his international ambitions were initially curtailed after breaking his jaw and tearing cruciate knee ligaments.

After graduating from Leicester in 1990, Underwood came to Cambridge and St. Edmunds via what he describes as the "infamous Land Economy route". Underwood candidly explained how, "there was no beating around the bush, no one trying to kid anyone: the only reason I was at Cambridge was to play rugby," but he wasn't going to "smack a gift horse in the mouth and say no thanks".

In his first term, Underwood earned himself an athletics blue in the 100m and found time for a solitary "ringer" appearance for Caius in cuppers rugby,

but it was at Grange Road where he excelled; so much so, the club members recently nominated him for their best-ever Cambridge XV.

Despite going on to represent the Lions and win numerous trophies with Leicester and England, Underwood still speaks with immense pride about a Blues team which he describes as "probably the closest and most enjoyable I've been involved in." The camaraderie of living and socialising together, and the "thrilling standard" of enterprising entertaining rugby they played against top-class amateur club sides made it such a special spell in his career.

In his 1990 Varsity debut, Cambridge, the pre-match favourites, lost 21-12 to an Oxford side including Underwood's

"The only reason I was at Cambridge was to play rugby"

future England team-mates Phil de Glanville and Victor Ubogu, but in 1991 Underwood's try helped ensure Cambridge prevailed 17-11 in another typically nail biting encounter at Twickenham.

After graduating in 1992, Underwood won his England debut in October 1992 against Canada. The next month, Rory returned to the starting line-up against the Spingboks and the Underwoods became the first brothers to play for England together for 55 years, going on to amass 102 caps and 62 tries for England.

Intriguingly, Tony argues this sibling feat, "meant more to other people than it meant for us," and is adamant that his brother was "just another guy in a Tigers or England shirt". But to the adoring British public, Rory was arguably the icon of the amateur game, as he juggled his Monday to Friday job as an RAF fast-jet fighter pilot with his record-breaking try-scoring exploits for Leicester or England at the weekends. Tony admitted Rory was a "hard act to follow as when I came into the England ranks, he was breaking records left, right and centre," but the younger Underwood certainly made his own mark, scoring an impressive 13 tries in 27 appearances for England.

However despite his achievements, Underwood remains particularly frustrated about the 1995 world cup semi-



SEX SPORTS

Underwood is one of the few Blues in recent years to represent England

final in Cape Town when Jonah Lomu's 4-try blitz saw the All Blacks annihilate 45-29 a "very naïve and loose" England. Beforehand, coach Jack Rowell asked Tony whether he was comfortable marking opposing winger Lomu. Underwood recounts, "well what do you say? I was very confident – I'd scored a try in the quarter-final and when you've been asked to play for England in the semi-final of the world cup you don't reply with, 'well honestly Jack, I don't think I'm up to this.'" But his subsequent self-deprecating Pizza Hut advert appearance with Mike Catt testifies to the humiliation suffered at Newlands.

Whilst no traditionalist, Underwood laments the passing of the "amateur days of club rugby when there'd be team-mates ranging from a carpenter, a policeman, an RAF pilot and an investment banker," compared with today's practically "one-dimensional" players who are sucked into full-time rugby before first

studying for the safety-net of a degree. Tellingly in the post-1995 professional era, "a Tuesday night fixture against the Blues isn't going to be paramount in most Premiership team's preparations," and the pressures of the modern game have meant that inevitably, Blues rugby has struggled to attract the same talent that once flocked to play for or against the University.

Underwood retired in 1999 and besides a cameo appearance on the BBC's Superstars in 2003, he has been fully occupied away from sport as an Easyjet pilot, a profession he was inspired to pursue after training under the Newcastle Airport flightpath with his final club, the Falcons. Checking his diary for the 6th December, Underwood revealed that he'll be flying that day, but fittingly, the former Blues legend promised to give a couple of tilts of the wing in support of Cambridge if he happened to be routed over Twickenham.

fact file

Name: Tony Underwood
Born: 1969
Age: 36
Education: BSc (Economics) Leicester University 1990, BA (Land Economy) Cambridge 1992
Career: Leicester RFC (1987-1995), Cambridge University (2 Blues 1990-1992), Newcastle RFC (1995-1999)
International: 27 caps, 13 tries for England; England B (1989-1999); England Students (1988-1991); England Schools (1986-1987); British and Irish Lions:1993 - New Zealand, 1997 - South Africa

A term in the life of a Blues star

Cambridge winger Dave Akinluyi looks back over a term of Varsity preparation

Tour

We had the great privilege of being invited to play three Japanese universities, though a 0-3 record was not what we had planned for. To be fair to our opposition they were very good players, but I have never played in such adverse conditions before. Our performance against Hosei was perhaps the worst to date but that has helped to move us forward. This tour also helped to reveal a lot about some of our squad members, but "what goes on tour, stays on tour".

Back to Cambridge

Sobered by Japan we returned to much contemplation for one and all, including team goal-setting sessions and individual developmental meetings with our captain and coaches. This was also when training began in earnest. We have aimed to be fitter and Ed Hallam's (Fitness & Conditioning Coach) warm-up is harder than any of us have ever seen. Our first game of the term was against Cambridge City. Considering the tour results, we needed to win and we did.

Week 1 - Leinster

Leinster were a very good team. This is to say that, like many of the teams we play, they all get paid a lot of money to play rugby well. In the time I've played for the Blues, we have never been so fit at such

an early stage in this term, only struggling deep into the second half. A 50-24 loss seemed rather misrepresentative of our performance. Later in the week we had the privilege of our first defensive session with Shaun Edwards (Rugby League legend and part of Wasps coaching staff).

Week 2 - Bedford

Our second win, this time against Bedford, helped to build further confidence in our abilities as a team. Becoming notable was the strength of our defence and the performance of our forwards. The intensity of our programme does not mix too easily with outings, but a few socials here and there were very welcome. Various guys went out with various girls but, sure enough, we all ended up in Rumboogie. Of course, the early morning session was well attended.

Week 3 - Harlequins

Our only away game so far and Harlequins put out a very strong team, including a couple of former England players. A poor start cost us dearly but a much better second half was something to hold on to. Friday's Captain's Cocktails were very eventful. This had been agreed as our last opportunity to drink heavily before cutting down alcohol consumption, so at least a couple of us decided to go down fighting.

Week 4 - London Welsh

First appearances suggested that this was the easiest fixture of the period we were now entering. However, having lost considerably last year we did not take it lightly. We ended up celebrating a 19 point victory but more so the fact that we were beginning to click.

Week 5 - London Wasps

We beat Wasps last year, and had to play very well to do so. This game was perhaps just as important in terms of taking strong steps forward towards Varsity. Another hard fought win said a lot about where we were considering the quality of the opposition we were facing. Training was light that week, with a pool recovery session thrown in to help preparation for the next game.

Week 6 - Manu Samoa and Leicester Tigers

Two rugby matches against pros in five days is pretty taxing at the best of times. Make one of them a country known for "smashing" people, who are preparing to take on England etc., and things become a little harder. A huge crowd was at Grange Road to see us take on Samoa. Once again we showed exciting signs of clicking while going down 22-9. Tigers were a young but talented side. Fatigue was expected but was not to be taken as

ANDY SIMS



Dave Akinluyi impresses against Bodgers

an excuse. Our performance was below the standard we have been setting recently, and we were punished with a loss. We hope to make best use of this rugby lesson in the final two games before we take on the "other place".

The Prelude



U21s VARSITY RUGBY

ANDREW STEVENSON

It is the most important game many of us will ever play in our lives; one match, 80 minutes, which determines everything. It is not just about the team on the pitch – with tens of thousands of spectators at Twickenham every year, many of them former Blues themselves, you realise that you are representing something far greater than just yourself. Wearing the light blue shirt with the red lion, you think about every Blue who has worn it before you, whose names are all displayed in the clubhouse at Grange Road. You are representing one of the oldest and most prestigious rugby clubs in the country in an all-or-nothing match against their bitterest rivals, at the home of England rugby. It does not get better than this.

Cambridge University U21s are determined to uphold the tradition of exciting and passionate rugby. Last year the crowd was treated to an amazing display of courage by our players when, with the game all but over, they managed one last desperate attack to score the match winning try in the dying minutes. This year, we hope to live up to the very high standards set by ourselves and our coach-

"The Varsity Match will stay with us for the rest of our lives"

es, and to emulate the success of our predecessors by coming away with a win that would round off a brilliant season.

With a good intake of freshers, and several second and third year undergraduates now regularly representing the Blues, the U21s Varsity match is looking very promising indeed. Our squad has performed outstandingly well throughout the season, losing only one game, and that by a single point to an Army team that we deserved to beat. Since then we have fought back aggressively and won all of our four games; highlights were a very solid performance against a physical navy side and a last minute victory against Bedford in a game where we had to work very hard to grind out the result.

Our team's success is built on the strength of our forwards – from tight-head through to No.8, they are physical, fast and aggressive, working themselves into the ground time after time to secure good attacking ball. Both in their set-pieces and loose play they have completely dominated all opposition they have faced, and we expect the Varsity match to be no different. The backs pride themselves on strong running and support play, and extremely solid defence. Throughout the team the absolute desire to win has shone through, each player focussed completely on the task at hand – victory at Twickenham. It will not be easy. No Varsity match ever is, but come December 6th, at 11:30am, everything that we play for will be there for the winning, and we have one chance to take it. The Varsity match will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

A LESSON IN LESSING

TESS RILEY has tea and cakes with author and activist DORIS LESSING

Although we've spoken several times over the phone, I'm not sure what to say to her when we meet. How do you address an 86-year-old woman who is termed one of the most important post-war writers in English? "Hi Doris" certainly is not right but then "Ms Lessing" is rigid, and a bit precocious? So, when we finally meet face to face at Cambridge Station I splurt out a stilted "It's so great to meet you at last Doris Lessing".

Later on, in a teashop, Lessing takes me back to her early years. By the time she was my age, 20, she was married with two children on the way. Born in Persia, now Iran, she was raised in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Remarkably she left her convent school at the age of 13 and chose to teach herself instead. She firmly believes that experiencing life is the best education possible. "I read profusely after I'd left school. What better teachers can you have?" she asks with a wry smile. I see an early hint of her distrust of New Labour policies which we discuss later. "At least Major and Thatcher read. What does Tony Blair read?"

The author left her farmer husband and their two children for Gottfried Lessing, a communist, who fathered Peter. When

she moved to London in 1949 it was Peter who she took with her. "Being a single parent didn't exist in my day. It was hard but I just got on with it. You cope when you have to."

Lessing has more than coped. She has written over 50 novels, as well as essays, poems, short stories and plays. Many know her as the author of *The Golden Notebook*, which, slightly to her dismay, was appropriated as a staple of the feminist movement in the early sixties.

"Of course I am a feminist – that does not mean I admire the way men have been damaged by the sometimes very vindictive powers of women". An admirer of the Victorian suffragettes, who "had a purpose", Lessing thinks the feminist movement of the 1960s was a lot of talk but not enough action. "There are two things that liberated women: the pill and the washing machine." Indeed, the fact that Lessing, as a single mother, felt scorned by the very people who claimed to be establishing women's rights still clearly unsettles her.

Lessing "became political" when she was 24. She always knew she wanted to be a writer and many of her novels are at least partly autobiographical. Famed for her involvement with communism – a "neurotic deci-

sion now that I look back" – her writing never ceased. Even during her first years in London she was extremely productive. "I realised I had to sacrifice something. It was not going to be my son or my writing, so in the end I gave up a social life. I don't think children realise how much their parents do for them."

When I ask her what inspires

“THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT LIBERATED WOMEN: THE PILL AND THE WASHING MACHINE”

her it is unsurprising that she responds immediately: "writing". Her family, of course, is central and I discover she is a devoted cat lover, but writing keeps her "sane". What astounds me is the fact that at 86 she is so active and remains so involved in the literary scene. Appearing at the Edinburgh Book Festival 2005, a regular event for her, Lessing took cen-

tre stage to read from one of her two books published in 2005, *Time Bites* and *The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog*.

Lessing's moral in life is to "think wrongly, if you please, but in all cases think for yourself." Her independent character fits this

phrase to a tee. Her novels and non-fiction demonstrate the fact that she has never been afraid to make her views – often strongly political – known.

Many of her novels are partly an attack on the behaviour of white people towards black people, and

indeed she was exiled in 1949 from Rhodesia because of her opposition to the minority white government.

Having given me a glimpse into just a few of her experiences, her views on life, love, literature and politics, Lessing looks at me sternly: "don't make me out to be something I'm not when you write this up. I am no wonder-woman. Talk to my son – when he was much younger he asked me just the sort of question that you should be asking – 'why can't you write as well as *The Iliad*'?"

As I start to refute her, to tell her how I loved her first novel, *The Grass Is Singing*, how much I am looking forward to reading her latest *Time Bites*, how much more that appeals to me than *The Iliad* at this point in my life, she stops me; "Wait and see once you've read them. Don't make false assumptions", she advises. Her motto comes back into my mind.

As we stand to leave, donning hats, scarves and gloves to protect us from the harsh Cambridge wind whistling around outside, she shakes my hand warmly. As I say a slightly awkward, "Thank you for your time Doris...Lessing" she gives one final laugh and walks out saying, "Really, you must call me Doris."



Ghosts Andy Wimbush reviews an understated interpretation of Ibsen



Have we had our fair share of theatre-based controversy this term? You'd be forgiven for looking surprised if a play didn't include the words "bestial", "venereal" or simply "contains nudity" somewhere in its publicity. The characters of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* are equally preoccupied with their taboos, ever tip-toeing around the playwright's keyword: "scandal". But, saturated as we Cambridge audiences have been with narcotics and sexual deviancy, the old-fashioned scandals of *Ghosts* are hard to drive home. I mean, there is little that simple, innocuous adultery can say to goat-shagging architects and blasphemous, free-loving hippies. Mentioning orgies seems almost unnecessary.

Fortunately, this production is blessed with some solid performances. The scene is nineteenth-century Norway and the liberal-minded widow Mrs Alving (Hermione Buckland-Hoby) is forced to confront her

late husband's history as she and Pastor Manders (Dan Martin) prepare his memorial. The two leads cope admirably with long, difficult scenes that lay the foundations of back-narrative for the revelations to follow. Buckland-Hoby's closed yet vulnerable dignity makes her entirely convincing as a woman with something to hide. It was a great shame that her performance was marred by the occasional need for a prompt, distracting for an audience who are expected to absorb a lot of information. Dave Walton, as the lame old Engstrand, delivers a spark of tragicomic malevolence, lightening the sober tone of the play. His daughter, played by Vivienne Storry, was perfectly poised, capturing the delicate and confused limbo in which her character lives.

But what about the scandal? Well, that's just it. Where is it? Most of the weight falls on Krzys Honowski's Oswald, who is unable to deliver the neces-

sary level of anxiety. As Alving's son, he has more than enough burdens to carry and, as the play unfolds, these burdens only multiply. But we are denied any glimpses into the trauma of the broken son of a broken father. Dan Martin's highly-strung clergyman is the only character to provide the audience with the sense of unease appropriate for the era.

Catherine Spencer's direction has concentrated on the understatement, perhaps at the expense of our discomfort. There are some excellent individual performances, but overall something is missing. You'll be told about the scandal and the tragedy, but you'll leave feeling distinctly undisturbed. The cellist promised in the programme was strangely absent when I saw *Ghosts*. Unlike *Orgy's* string section, however, I'll bet she keeps her clothes on.

Pembroke New Cellars, 7.30pm, until Saturday 26th November, £5

Grease Nicky Grant is electrified by this classic musical

When you think of *Grease*, you no doubt have a preconceived image of what to expect. This is just what you will get if you see *Grease: The Musical*, a near re-enactment of the film.

Jen Rolfe, the director, was right to say that she couldn't have done much to build on or alter the memorable, clichéd characters of the original film. Unsurprisingly, most looked as if they had been lifted from the 1960s set. Charlie Spring was outstanding, giving a consistent performance, as the brassy and bold Frenchy. As the leading male, Danny, James Doherty's earnest John Travolta impressions were a clever touch that went down a treat with the audience.

The flamboyant costumes, combined with audacious dancing and singing, created an electric

atmosphere that penetrated the audience. However, this production suffered from bouts of intermittent lifelessness, especially with regard to some of the acting, meaning that the musical scenes occasionally lacked coherence. Special mention must go to the live band, which was sensational, coming to the rescue at times when the stage lost its magnetism. The tempo did pick up: the classic "Go Grease Lightning" scene was a joy and the finale was spectacular. Both Aileen Bintliff as Jan and Lucy Buzzoni as Rizzo were enjoyable to watch throughout. But the undoubted star of the show was the hilarious Graham Johnson as Teen Angel. His rendition of "Beauty School Dropout" was nothing short of genius.

The dynamic of the "Pink Ladies" gave them an extra edge over the boys. This was due in

part to Adam Cole's awkward stage presence as Doody, though this was redeemed by Cian O'Lunaigh as Roger and Charlie Corn as Kenickie, who were both excellent.

Given the large cast and length of the show, the directors were obviously constrained by time. The dance routines were stunning, but the direction didn't seem entirely thought out in some of the acting scenes. This, unfortunately, let it down. Some of the opening scenes in particular were poor.

Although there were weaknesses, this was a good show: fun-filled, bright and energetic. If you loved *Grease*, you will no doubt enjoy this.

Robinson College Auditorium, 7.45pm, until Saturday 26th November, £7/5



The cast of *Grease* impress with their "audacious dancing and singing"

From fifth week blues to delta blues

Cambridge University is no Glasgow School of Art: we don't produce many great musicians. **Atiyo Ghosh** speaks to an old bandmate of Nick Drake (right), the greatest yet, while **Mary Bowers** speaks to the recent graduates who hope to follow in his footsteps (below)

Jeremy Warmasley Churchill College 2000-4

"I'm not terribly rock and roll as a person," claims Jeremy Warmasley. As the NME has pointed out, his name's Jeremy. And he has a penchant for pink T-Shirts. He does, however, make this claim from the less-than-geekish location of a tourbus on the way to Liverpool from Bristol, where he is supporting Regina Spektor on a three-date national minitour. Playlisted by Radio 1 and Xfm, making remixes for Maximo Park: and to think only two years ago he was philosophising in the UL with the rest of us. Now, with two EPs under his belt (the second completely sold out) and a record deal with

Transgressive he has left the dark bricks of Churchill College far behind.



www.jeremywarmasley.com



Sleepwalker Queens' College 2002-

Queens' five-piece Sleepwalker can't get enough of playing live. And rightly so; they may not yet have a recording contract, but it's not for lack of offers. Instead, Ed Stone, Tom Staw, Tom Stern and Anil Kamath have concentrated on the local scene since their fortuitous formation in freshers' week over three years ago. Frontman Greg Cook is as happy-go-lucky as he is charismatic, "The main aim is to be the best band that we can and see where we end up. In terms of getting signed, every band aims for that." Quite a modest mission statement for a band that has played various

London gigs, including the Barfly and a headliner at the Dublin Castle. They've even had to turn down a slot at the Garage. Why, then, stick with Cambridge? "The smallness of the place means you can play small and big gigs at the same time. You can build up a regular fan base and play eight gigs a term. Yet you can play balls and mix with the likes of the Kaiser Chiefs." They certainly can't be branded studio-hermits, yet their first two EPs sold a thousand copies and they've just produced their first self-released studio album, Broken Town Tuesday "This our opus. We're not just a student band - we're setting our agenda with this album". Let's hope Cambridge is only the first stop on their itinerary.



www.sleepwalkermusic.co.uk

Molly Beanland Queens' College 2004/5

Molly Beanland isn't afraid to leave behind her Cambridge roots; although, at the tender age of 19, she seems to be getting used to the idea of fame with a certain degree of coyness. "I met Brian May the other night. I was like, 'Hi, my God.'" But don't be fooled by the rocks that she got: this time last year Molly was a tender(ish) young English fresher at Queens' before being whisked away by Universal to be labelmates with the likes of The Killers, PJ Harvey and, err, Mariah Carey. Molly may seem, at first listen, like the kind of girl Xfm will at first love, before a transfer of affections from the cool kids to your mum and your Auntie Agnes

will leave her at the top of the WH Smith charts. A listed by Jonathan Ross. But don't be misled: this girl's more Kate Bush than Kate Rusby, and having been heralded as the 'female Tom McRae', there's something more than a little chilling about the whispering vocals on ballads such as 'Snow on the Roses' and 'Nightingale'. Five minutes of listening relinquishes control of spine and the hairs on the back of your neck, and even though we're British, everyone loves a success story: Molly is currently co-writing with Craig Armstrong and gigging through December in London. Her debut album is due for release next year.

Simon Mastrantone Churchill College 2000-4

Ex-Philosophy student Simon Mastrantone is not morbid. He's just spooky. And unlike many regulars on the Cambridge Acoustic Scene he's moved on from self-conscious Tim Buckley impressions to land a record deal with Rekabet Records. His first EP *Simon Mastrantone...and the First Noise* comes out in April next year, after various video shootings and recording sessions. Together with Jeremy Warmasley (see above). Simon was responsible for Songs in the Dark, still run on alternate Sundays by the flicker of

tealights in Clown's Café on King Street, and now having branched out to Farringdon in London. "I'm going to be a nightmare to work with" claims Simon, though in truth it might be in his search for the pure rock and roll lifestyle that makes his brand of pedantry so appealing. Instead of spending the recording budget on a London studio and engineers, Simon has chosen a cottage by the sea in Wales, because he likes the idea of sleeping on the floor...or the tourbus. "I like the idea of sleeping where I work" he says. It's a good thing he never worked in the sewage industry.



www.simonmastrantone.co.uk

Nick Drake remembered

Few would argue with the fact that Nick Drake is Cambridge's most inspirational musician, with artists as far a field as R.E.M., The Charlatans and Elton John citing him as a major influence. His indecipherable guitar parts and plaintive lyrics have established a cult following. Nick's career left an indelible, if posthumous mark on British music during a life cut tragically short in 1974 after his suspected suicide following a long battle with depression. He spent two years of his life in Fitzwilliam studying English, and writing songs that would appear on later albums, including the song River Man, which describes his thoughts on Cambridge. He quickly found like-minded musicians in various Cambridge colleges, including Caius' Robert Kirby who went on to write most of the orchestral scores on his records. Nick set about plans to leave and pursue his musical career, which he did at the end of his second year. **Atiyo Ghosh** was lucky enough to track down **Ian Cameron**, a Selwyn Alumnus who has played the flute with Nick, and ask him some questions:

Q: Could you describe the music scene in Cambridge at the time Nick was here?

IC: The thing about that generation of Cambridge musicians was that they were the first to come up with some solid musical experience in their year out - I had joined a band and played on the underground scene and even got to perform at the Albert Hall. Richard Jones had made a record with the Climax Chicago Blues Band. Paul Wheeler had met up with John Martyn; he was friends with the US songwriter Robin Frederick who Nick had met during his year out in Aix. Paul Wheeler's girlfriend was John Lennon's personal secretary and later Nick got to hang out at John's house in Ascot. There was a Cambridge intellectual side to the student music scene. King's had a composer in residence - Tim Souster and he was in touch with the New York scene - early minimalism, Terry Riley's "IN C", for example, and he helped sow those ideas into the student community. The most advanced band was Henry Cow, who played in weird time signatures. I wonder whether River Man (which is in 5/4) isn't intended to show he can do that sophisticated stuff too.

Q: What sort of places did Nick hang around in Cambridge?

IC: I tended to hear him in various students rooms. He was at Fitz but he had various friends in Caius - Paul Wheeler, Robert Kirby - he was a member of a Caius society called The Loafers - Paul and Robert were members. The classic description of Nick playing at Cambridge is in Ian Macdonald's piece.

Q: Apart from Caius May Ball, did Nick perform a lot here? Was he as shy at performing back then as he has become reputed to be?

IC: He played at the Pitt club - he was effective playing in student's rooms - which is quite hard to do in fact.

Q: Can you remember any records that he was particularly fond of?

IC: That whole generation of musicians was influenced by jazz and blues. On the jazz front he listened to Miles Davis and John Coltrane - he was influenced by the fantastic school of British guitarists who merged jazz and blues - Davy Graham, John Renbourn and Bert Jansch - also the US songwriter Jackson C Frank (who went out with Sandy Denny). Like everyone else, he was influenced by Dylan and the Beatles. He was interested in the way that song-form was being developed particularly the way that biographical elements were entering song-writing. This was the era when Joni Mitchell and Leonard Cohen released their debut albums. He heard lots of new music from his friends in Caius. Nick also liked the British bands that were mixing soul jazz and blues like Graham Bond and Zoot Money.

Q: How disciplined was he in his writing/practising of music?

IC: He had a very ordered approach to song construction - his guitar technique was astonishing and people still struggle to copy it today.

Nick Drake studied English at Fitzwilliam College from 1967-1969 before dropping out in favour of a recording contract with Island Records (now Universal). His debut album, *Five Leaves Left* was released in 1969. He then recorded *Bryter Later* and *Pink Moon* was released in 1974, shortly before his death.

Nick Smart brings his jazz tribute to Nick Drake to the Fitzwilliam Auditorium at 8pm on Sunday. Ticket are £5.

You came to see a rockshow?

Lowri Jenkins witnesses the unholy union of rock and dance

Unless you've been wearing industrial-strength ear-muffs since January, you have probably noticed the seduction of alternative music by 'electropunk'; the result of a dirty, exhilarating love affair between dance and rock, which in 2005 finds itself in foot-stompingly, hair-swayingly sleazy rude health. The sound is embodied by **LCD Soundsystem's** January debut, a record which sweeps from lazy rock to throbbing electro to punk and back again. Although frontman James Murphy breaks new ground with the best music of the year, inspiration comes from the past. The warm sparseness of post-punk legends such as Public Image Ltd. and XTC informs the raw, taut guitars; and disco, 80s pop and

techno inform the electronic.

The matchmaking Cilla to this formerly unacquainted dance-rock pair comes in the form not of the musician, but the DJ. Taking their machines to guitars, innovators such as **2manydjs**, **DJ Yoda** and **DJ Dangermouse** have shown rock bands what their instruments are capable of. Radio Soulwax mixes of Peaches and the Velvet Underground reveal not only rock's potential in dance music, but the overlooked dance potential in rock music. The line between what's electronic and what's instrumental has been erased. You can't tell what is making what sound and that's why it's exciting: is that a machine sounding like a guitar? Or a guitar sounding like a machine? In 2005, acts like **Vitalic** and **Death From Above 1979** have taken music a step further than the often

tokenistic world of bootlegs, or the unforgiving sodomy of machines that is trance.

Similarly, 'rock' bands such as **the Rakes** are remixed and reinterpreted by bands and DJs alike. The most exciting record labels are neither dance, nor rock, but both: **Modular**, **DFA**, **679**, **City Rocker**. This is the sound of the humanisation of machines, of computers and instruments and effects pedals and bleeps and bangs moving souls and (more importantly) soles.

This music fuses the intensity, insistence and orchestration of dance music with the raw energy, careering momentum and impulsive infectiousness of punk to create the sexiest, most danceable of unions. Its potential is so huge, and its effects so irresistible that even Girls Aloud desperately try to bastardise it.

From the dance-inspired grooves of **the Long Blondes'** spring-released *Giddy Stratospheres*, to the electro-scream of DFA 1979's February album *You're A Woman, I'm a Machine*: all connect, but cannot be defined. This music is glued together by mind, not by matter: what bonds musicians is feeling and attitude, not content. Similar ideas are applied in different ways: musicians become producers; DJs become musicians, with incredible results. Countless times we have been told that dance is dead, rock is dead: but this year, the sneaky electropunk affair has culminated in a rejuvenation of both genres. This art reflects our society: sleazy yet mechanised; irresistible yet esoteric; cheap yet exclusive; derivative yet forward thinking; aggressive yet dependent. This is the sound of 2005.




Dance, sleaze and rock 'n' roll - DFA, 1979

Varsity's Top 10 Albums of 2005

1

The Arcade Fire

Funeral




Varsity said:
“The crux of Funeral’s force lies in the raw, momentous passion seeping from its every bar. Any recommendation more developed than ‘just incredible’ seems like unnecessary over-analysis.”
Jon Swaine

2

Vitalic

Ok Cowboy




Varsity said:
“Vitalic is all about throbbing basslines, soaring keyboard screams, thrashing guitars and wandering synths merging together – an awesome soundscape of pure noise-pop bliss.”
Sam Blatherwick

3

Sufjan Stevens

Come on Feel the Illinoise



Varsity says:
“Every offering from Sufjan Stevens’ musical journey of the ‘dark side’, aka the United States, is as earnest, lyrically brilliant and musically rounded as ‘Illinoise’.”
Jacqui Tedd

4

Bloc Party

Silent Alarm



Varsity said:
“Bloc Party’s success in mixing song-writing with sonic experimentation marks them out as a veritable diamond in the faeces-strewn rough of the current rock scene.”
Was Yaqoob

5

Death from Above 1979

You’re a Woman, I’m a Machine



Varsity said:
“It exemplifies the visceral, sexual energy that splurges from each of this record’s orifices. This record makes you want to slam-dance and shoot people in the face, but, for once, in a good way.”
Was Yaqoob

6

M.I.A.

Arular




Varsity says:
“Infectious rhythms, contagious rhymes; M.I.A. shook her way out of London Art College and straight to Missy Elliot’s album. A pub singalong album in a world ruled by ultra-hip Sri Lankans. All together now: WHAT CAN I GET FOR TEN DOLLAR?”
Sam Blatherwick

7

Kano

Home Sweet Home




Varsity says:
“I’m wondering why if no-ones dancing, his records still spin? Because it’s damn damn good - that’s why.”
Sam Blatherwick

8

Ladytron

The Witching Hour




Varsity says:
“This album has charted far lower than it deserves so go get this great record some credit.”
Alex Lambeth

9

LCD Soundsystem

LCD Soundsystem

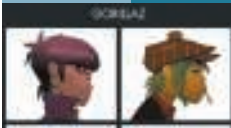


Varsity said:
“Finally it’s a danceable indie record that... likely presages LCD’s deserved crossover world-domination.”
Tom Durno

10

Gorillaz

Demon Days



Varsity says:
“While *Gorillaz* was a rather uncertain compilation of various styles *Demon Days* is far more substantial.”
James Allnutt



THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

Art Around Cambridge

Luis Tristán “The Adoration of the Shepherds” 1620 Fitzwilliam Museum

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." Luke II.14-17.

Luis Tristán's monumental 'Adoration of the Shepherds' is a representation of these verses from Luke's Gospel. It was painted in 1620 at the height of the Counter Reformation, in the wake of the Council of Trent which demanded clarity of narrative. The whole composition is devised to be seen from a kneeling position, the viewer follows the vertical access from the naked legs of the devout Shepherd to the bound and trussed lamb in the foreground below the manger, included to remind us that the sleeping baby will eventually be sacrificed Lamb of God, on the cross. Our gaze is then taken to the pensive Virgin, through the arm of Joseph to the ray of celestial light and the Putti holding up the jubilant verse "Glory to God in the Highest."

The long thin panel possibly painted as one of four Pascuas for the convent of Hieronymite nuns at Toledo known as La Reina, has a complicatedly arranged composition. The attenuated limbs and elongated bodies of the central figures recall the work of El Greco, Tristán's teacher. The beautiful handling of the lamb's wool and incidental figures like the shepherd in the left foreground anticipate the work of the great 17th century Spanish painter Velázquez. The whole work is a jubilant celebration of the Christmas message "on earth peace, good will toward men."

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

It's a kind of magic Simon Evans shares his magic touch

You will need:
A deck of cards.
A bit of nerve.

Step One: All you need to do is remember the card on the bottom of the deck. Let us pretend, for example, that it is the Ace of Spades.

Step Two: Ask your victim to select a card and remember it. Make sure they do remember it. (Many a demonstration in the past has been in vain when, at the climax, a spectator has confessed "I never looked at the card I picked.")

Step Three: Ask them to place their card on the top of the deck. Cut the deck. Do not shuffle. If you were to look through the cards now you would find that their chosen card is directly below the Ace

of Spades (or whichever card was originally on the bottom).

Step Four: You could now confidently reveal the name of the card they've picked, probably with a suitable Derren Brown frown. But this will win you minimal respect and certainly no drinks. Instead, start to deal cards from the top of the deck face up onto a table. You will eventually come to the Ace of Spades, followed immediately afterwards by their chosen card, but carry on dealing.

Step Five: Pause for a moment, then say to the poor punter, "I bet you a <insert here> that the next card I turn over is your card." The aforementioned punter has already seen his/her card placed on the table, now buried under a pile

of cards. They will confidently shake hands, sealing both the bargain and his/her fate.

Step Six: Slowly place the deck down and look through the pre-dealt cards on the table until you find their face up card (above the Ace of Spades). Flash them an "Oh-dear-who's-in-trouble" smile, and smartly turn their card face down.

The next card you turned over was indeed their card. They should fork over whatever they gambled, and then, with a bit of luck, they may invite a friend over. Drink and repeat, drink and repeat.

Simon Evans is fronting the New Magic Show at the ADC, Wednesday 30th November until Sunday 3rd December, £4/£5





TOM KING/STLEY

Cinema: *Ghost In the Shell II: Innocence* ★★☆☆☆

Innocence, from the Japanese cult animation director Mamoru Oshii, reaches the UK a full ten years after the film's prequel, the original *Ghost in the Shell*, became a worldwide critical and commercial success, spawning a Japanese television series as well as heavily influencing the Wachowski brothers in their creation of the *Matrix* trilogy of films.

Set in 2032, in a claustrophobic noir-tinted incarnation of near-future Tokyo, the plot follows the efforts of Batou, a survivor of the original film and gruffly voiced by Akio Otsuka, and his partner, Togusa, to unravel the cause of a malfunction occurring among androids that have been designed to look like women and are used as sex dolls by their owners. Unfortunately, it appears that many of these "gynoids" have taken to brutally murdering their masters instead of accommodating their sexual fantasies. Beyond this, the plot can never really be said to develop itself any further, quickly becoming mired in the rather peculiar manner in which the two conduct their investigation.

Although there is no doubting the pair's zeal for their work, they both have an alarming propensity to engage their key witnesses in an impenetrable round of philosophical discourse on the nature of human existence. Not only do these maze-like conversations make for unbearably dull viewing, they completely snare up any opportunities for plot development and the token action scenes are too few and far between to inject any sense of entertainment into the experience.

Though visually stunning, the film's plodding plot dwells upon ideas which have been previously explored thoroughly in others, giving it the atmosphere of an unnecessary anachronism.

Dave Camp

Ed King explores the best in recent Asian cinema

This month's Masamura Yasuzo retrospective at the Cambridge Arts Picture House is in many ways yet another familiar trend. Anybody who has been to their local Blockbusters recently and seen titles from Tartan Video's Asia Extreme series in amongst the latest releases will know that Asian cinema is no longer reserved for the festivals. Yet, whilst exploiting this increase of interest in Asian film, the Masamura season is a timely antidote to a growing Hollywoodization of Asia's film industries.

Since the early 80's with the emergence of the Chinese '5th Generation' movement, post-revolutionary film in Iran and the Taiwanese 'new cinema', film critics and cinephiles on the look-out for refreshing independent movies have found their salvation in Asian film. However, it was not until the success of the Hong Kong 'New Wave' that Asian film attracted the attention of the big US-production companies and with them an international mass-market audience.

It was primarily the work of Jackie Chan and crime film direc-

tor John Woo, who pioneered a new brand of brash crowd-pleasing action film, which alerted Hollywood's attention. The box-office success of Jackie Chan's *Rumble in the Bronx* proved the deciding factor. It became clear

“

THE MASAMURA SEASON IS A TIMELY ANTIDOTE TO A GROWING HOLLYWOODIZATION OF ASIA'S FILM INDUSTRIES

”

that it was in Hollywood's interests to start co-opting this talent, not only for its commercial potential within Hollywood's well-established distribution networks, but also to exploit the built-in audience that came with big names like Woo and Chow Yun-Fat as a point of entry into the huge Chinese speaking market. It was this same strategy that moti-

vated Miramax to buy the distribution rights for *Hero*, Americanize it by changing the soundtrack, cutting scenes and having the film endorsed by Quentin Tarantino, and then re-release it.

Despite the integration of these big Hong Kong directors into the US industry, famed for their ability to make hard-hitting action movies on the cheap (usually starring Jean-Claude Van Damme), the Hollywood re-make has proved the most contentious issue. Since John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven*, a star-packed re-working of Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai*, it has been recognised that re-makes with recognisable actors and no subtitles tend to be more profitable than a simple redistribution of the original foreign films.

No trend has been more successful than the recent run of re-makes of East Asian films. The success of Dreamworks' remake of Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* sparked off a series of hugely profitable adaptations, including Nakata's *Dark Water* and Takashi Shimizu's *The Grudge*. Nakata even agreed to direct the re-make of his own

sequel, *The Ring 2*. The problem is that, although some argue that this attention to Asian cinema has to be positive because it is drawing audiences' attention to cinematic traditions outside their own like never before, the remakes tend to be watered-down and bland compared to the originals. Whilst the transition from a Japanese to an American audience is relatively smooth within the horror and action genres, remakes of dramas, more embedded within the culture, have met with much less success. Of note is last year's *Shall We Dance?* based on the Japanese film of the same name, in which an up-tight business man (Richard



The End of Cinema?

The infusion of digitality and new media in the 21st century seems set to sound the death knell for cinema as we know it. The visual and aural pleasure, the emotional intensity, the communal enjoyment of high-quality film on the big screen - these are all beginning to fade on a new generation torn between an overload cultural stimuli. Self-indulgent actors, video piracy, a relentless succession of big-budget flops - all have been blamed as Hollywood struggles to explain a world-wide box office slump. But do such factors sufficiently account for our divorce from cinema? Or is it simply that, in today's impatient world of interactive games, cyber-relationships, laptops and video phones, we have surpassed the passivity of the silver screen?

Cinema admissions started to go downhill towards the middle of the 20th century- from an impressive 1.4 billion in 1951 to an all-time low of 53 million in 1984. No tortuous knowledge of technological history is required to realize that this time span also accommodated a concomitant rise in alternative visual media, namely the television and, later, the video recorder. The two curves are unquestionably related. Coincidentally, on 31st September 1983 - only one year prior to an unprecedented silver screen slump - the zapper, or the remote control, was introduced into the living-rooms of the world. A tenuous connection?

Probably not: hear me out...

Cinema is a passive medium (unless it happens to be your second date, somewhere in the back row). It might well have fulfilled many of the expectations of an audience of our fathers and forefathers, prepared to sit back, watch illusions and suspend disbelief, but today new technologies have prepared and empowered the human imagination in new ways. There are, as we all well know, brand new audiences out there who make up not just a television generation, but a post-television generation where ideas of excessive choice, personal investigation, multilateral communication and sensorial interactivity have become commonplace. Things have come a long way since September 1983: interactivity and multimedia may well be words that are too familiar anymore to be truly attended to, but they are certainly the major contemporary cultural stimulants of the 21st century.

If cinema intends to survive, maybe it will have to make a pact and a relationship with concepts of interactivity, and it has to see itself as only part of a multimedia cultural adventure.

So it could be argued that, after over a century of activity, we have cinema that is too familiar and predictable, hopelessly weighed down by old conventions and outworn verities, and simply too passive for our fidgety and restless generation to enjoy. But we cannot dismiss film - such

a phenomenal cultural symbol and institution - as simply archaic. Sociological factors aside, people still like films, surely, even if their value now lies in something other than excitement - (relaxation? escapism?). In many ways, we have to look more at the decline of the "movie theatre" than the "movie" itself.

Piracy has been heralded as a major parasitical culprit for the demise of contemporary cinema. Having been defined as a "victimless crime", the actual damages induced out on the high sea seem pretty colossal: the UK film industry estimates its losses at an annual £500, and the figure rises to £1.6 billion for the US. Of course, piracy exists for one reason; the very same reason film exhibitors and distributors oppose it: public demand. Films are still popular, but more for a cheap and quiet night in than an exciting night out. From car-boot sales to online file sharing programs, the sources for acquiring pirated films are almost omnipresent. Go to Jakarta or Bangkok, and DVDs - as well as cheap hash and counterfeit Gucci's - are being stuffed into Western pockets at 30p a hit. Needless to say, various measures have been carried out to curtail piratical activity: the film authorities' latest brainchild entailed the issuing of night goggles for cinema staff to prevent the illegal recording of *Harry Potter* and the *Goblet of Fire* at its release this year. Freaky.

The rise of the DVD - whether

Sasha Nicholl investigates

illegal or not - has more damage to its name than box-office losses. Whilst blows to the movie industry are mitigated in Hollywood by ridiculously soft financial cushions, they hit rather harder on the so-called 'specialized cinema' sector. With a higher risk factor of financial failure now shadowing the film industry, companies are sticking to more mainstream formulas, often even producing plots that have already been tried-and-tested (*Alfie*, *The Italian Job*, *Starsky and Hutch*, to name a few).

The overpowering pressure of structural economic forces on the execution of independent cinema releases is easily underestimated. The unpalatable fact of the matter is that the current downturn in film revenue is indirectly leading us down a path of market-driven conformism, where diversity slips away behind white flashy smiles and Universal Picture sunsets. Today, the demise of cinema is qualitative as well as quantitative - not only are cinema prices rising and DVD prices falling: the films are crap as well.

So there you have it: the multifaceted silver-screen story - complete with cultural innovations, economic forces and a heavy dose of anachronism - all factors constantly reinforcing one another in a downhill dialectic of filmic doom. But don't worry, there has to be a happy ending - as long as Hollywood's in charge.

DVD: *Jacob's Ladder* ★★☆☆☆

Prior to the release of *Jacob's Ladder* in 1990, director Adrian Lynne had been best known for erotic thrillers like *Fatal Attraction* and *9 1/2 Weeks*. *Jacob's Ladder*, a terrifyingly disturbing horror movie about the experiences of a traumatised Vietnam veteran, is not one of these (granted, there is one "scene of a sexual nature" in the film, but it involves far too many tentacles to be erotic for anyone except the most committed of perverts.) The film may not be erotic, but it is definitely a thriller, as the protagonist Jacob Singer (Tim Robbins) attempts to find out why he is being plagued by terrible hallucinations.

Whilst the plot is intriguing, where Lynne triumphs is in creating an atmosphere of nightmarish confusion and oppression, where even the most mundane situations contain a sense of dread. Travelling on an underground rail network has never seemed so scary - even on the Northern line. The way Lynne effectively switches between Jacob's reality and his nightmare without warning creates a continuous feeling of tension, and the film's \$25 million budget has been effectively used to create a nightmare world of decay and isolation (though considering most of the filming was done in New York its probably questionable how

many special effects were needed for this). As for the 'monsters', they are often only hinted at, but when they do reveal themselves they are genuinely disturbing - most resembling deformed humanoids rather than actual beasts (or New Yorkers).

The film itself is allegory-heaven, and raises a multitude of questions. Is Jacob's nightmarish confusion a metaphor for how Vietnam vets felt after returning home? Are the monsters indicative of the dehumanisation that war brings about? And why isn't Tim Robbins good anymore? *Jacob's Ladder* is probably best appreciated firstly as an incredibly effective horror-chiller, although the film does have a strong emotional undercurrent, and one which is surprisingly not negated by the appearance of Macaulay Caulkin (although it's a mercifully brief role).

It's most likely to be enjoyed by fans of horror and those who are interested in the Vietnam War and anyone who has ever played the *Silent Hill* series of videogames. However, due to one particularly disturbing scene, it's almost certainly not to be appreciated by anyone who has an irrational fear of hospital trolleys...

Ben Gough



Dave King

The last week of term is when everyone wants to act like Cambridge is a hedonistic, party-loving city of student dreams like the cities all our friends at home seem to live in. Obviously it isn't, but there are some damn good nights on so you can pretend to be the binge-drinking music sophisticate you wanted to be. Kick it off with **Pendulum** at Clare Cellars on Friday. They have had a great term down there in the dark, and this night of funky drum n bass should be a banger. **Jazz at John's** offers up some 'phunky' bands, including Jazztank. If nostalgia is your thing, go worship at the temple of **Blondie** (at the Corn Exchange on Saturday). When my dad heard Blondie were playing he begged me for a backstage pass to meet Debbie Harry. If you don't know who she is, then look her up and understand what your parents were doing when you were in nappies. CUSU finishes the term off in style with **Distorted Minds** (at the Soul Tree on Sunday) featuring the **Beat Vandals** and their crazy cut-and-paste DJing. Also, pop starlet **Jem** (at the Junction) shows why she was nominated for Q's 'Best New Act' award. The traditional end of term **King's Mingle** should finish things off in style on December 2nd, with UK hip-hop legend **Skinnyman** showing what it means to have a *Council Estate of Mind*. I have really enjoyed writing this column, and when people have told me they had a good night on my recommendation it makes me feel all warm and fuzzy. If you want to shape student nightlife habits step up to the plate and take over this column next term, you get to go places for free which should sweeten the deal. Now where are those dancing shoes...

stage

**Spartacus**
The Footlights/ADC Pantomime. ADC, 7.45pm, £6-£9, until Saturday 3rd December (except 27th November)

Sweethearts
A bittersweet and poignant drama set in a Victorian garden. ADC, 11pm, £3-£5, until Saturday 26th November

Footlights Smoker
Last stand-up of the term. ADC, 11pm, Tuesday 29th November

The New Magic Show
Cambridge magician Simon Evans presents a line-up of tricks and illusions. ADC, 11pm, £3-5, Wednesday 30th November until Saturday 3rd December

Top Girls
Five women's stories question what it is to be a woman in a man's world. Corpus Christi Playroom, 7pm, £5.50/£4, until Saturday 26th November

Lost for Words
The reflections of a defected writer. Corpus Christi Playroom, 9.30pm, £5/4, until Saturday 26th November

Paper Flowers
Fusion of magical realism, absurdism and black comedy. Corpus Christi Playroom, 7pm, £6/4, Tuesday 29th November until Saturday 3rd December

Ghosts
Powerful tragedy by Henrik Ibsen. Pembroke New Cellars, 7.30pm, £5, until Saturday 26th November

Around the World in 80 minutes
An action-packed adventure with the Sans Frontières detective agency. ARU Mumford, various times and prices, Friday 25th until Saturday 26th November

Captain Corelli's Mandolin
Louis de Bernieres touching novel is brought to the stage. ARU Mumford, 7.30pm, £10/8, Sunday 27th November

What the Butler Saw
Joe Orton's classic farce Queen's Fitzpatrick Hall Theatre, 7.30pm, £6/4, until Saturday 26th November

Grease: The Musical
Sex, dance and Rock 'n' Roll in this classic musical Robinson College Auditorium, 7.45pm, £7/5, until Saturday 26th November

The Pirates of Penzance
Gilbert & Sullivan Society present this classic operetta. Robinson College Auditorium, 7.45pm, £7/5, Wednesday 30th November until Saturday 3rd December

Falstaff and Alcina
Verdi and Handel's operatic masterpieces

Cambridge Arts Theatre, various times and prices, until Saturday 26th November

HMS Pinafore
Another Gilbert & Sullivan staged by Cambridge Operatic Society. Cambridge Arts Theatre, various times and prices, Monday 28th November until Saturday 3rd December

Jason Byrne
Ireland's most exhilarating young comedian. The Junction, 7pm, £10/8, Thursday 1st December

The Good Doctor
Comic, chemically fuelled explosion by two recent Cambridge graduates Pembroke New Cellars, 11pm, until Saturday 26th November

Stags and Hens
Willy Russell's touching story set in the toilets of a Liverpool club. Girton College Old Hall, 7pm, until Saturday 26th November, £5/3

Thyestes

screen

Arts Picturehouse
Friday 25 November
Factotum (15): 12:00, 16:15, 20:50
Future Shorts - November (n/c): 23:00
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 12:15, 15:30, 18:45, 22:00
Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (15): 14:10, 18:30
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): (right) 13:00, 15:20, 18:00, 20:30
Night Watch (15): 2:40

Saturday 26 November:
A Wife Confesses (18): 15:00
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (PG): 11:00
Factotum (15): 16:40, 20:50
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 12:15, 15:30, 18:45, 22:00

Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (15): 12:00, 18:50
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): 13:00, 15:20, 18:00, 20:30
Night Watch (15): 22:40
Saw 2 (18): 23:00

Sunday 27 November:
A Letter To The Prime Minister (15): 11:00
Factotum (15): 16:40, 20:50
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 13:30, 17:15, 20:30
Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (15): 12:00, 18:50
Mad Hot Ballroom (U): (left) Free Screening 11:00
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): 13:00, 15:20, 18:00, 20:40
Red Angel (18): 15:00

Monday 28 November:
Factotum (15): 12:00, 16:15, 20:50
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 14:00, 17:15, 20:30
Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (15): 14:10, 18:45
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): 13:30, 16:00, 18:30, 21:00

Tuesday 29 November:
Factotum (15): 16:50
Gaslight (PG): 13:30
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 14:00, 17:15, 20:30
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): 13:30, 16:00, 18:30, 21:00

Wednesday 30 November:
Factotum (15): 11:00, 16:15, 20:50
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 14:00, 17:15, 20:30
Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (15): 11:00, 14:10, 18:45
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): 13:30, 16:00, 18:30, 21:00


Thursday 1 December:
After Midnight (15): 19:30
Factotum (15): 13:10, 21:10
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (12A): 14:00, 17:15, 20:30
Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang (15): 11:00, 14:10, 18:45
Silver Screen 15:20
Mrs. Henderson Presents (12A): 13:30, 16:00, 18:30, 21:00
State Of Denial (15): 17:30


St John's
War of the Worlds: 24h Nov 9pm
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: 27th Nov, 7pm & 10pm

Christ's
Sin City, 27th Nov, 8pm & 10.30pm

Robinson
War of the Worlds: 27th Nov, 9pm
Hitch: (above) 1st Dec, 9pm

exhibitions

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


Cambridge Illuminations
The largest and most comprehensive exhibition of illuminated manuscripts including ten centuries' worth from Cambridge collections (right). Fitzwilliam Museum, free entry, until 30th December, and at the University Library until 10th 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

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

Life, ritual and immortality: Eating and Drinking in China
Special display of Chinese bronze, jade and ceramic vessels used for rituals and daily life Fitzwilliam Museum, 4th October - 3rd January 2006, free entry

Bembrandt's Christmas
Rembrandt's etchings of the Christmas story range from the dramatic Angel appearing to the Shepherds of 1634 to intimate scenes of Christ's nativity and childhood Fitzwilliam Museum, until 19th February 2006, free entry

Ian Jeffrey: Universal

Pictures
From East Anglia, where he now lives, to the unlikely corners of Eastern Europe, Ian Jeffrey seeks out art in the world about us. 'Photographs simply allow me to look at things longer and to reflect on them.' Kettle's Yard, 26 November 2005 - 15 January 2006, free entry


Sybill Berger: Paintings
The impact of Sybill Berger's paintings is immediate with their horizontal bands of strong colour. Kettle's Yard, 26 November 2005 - 15 January 2006, free entry

Detonate with Australian d'n'b superstar Pendulum 9-12:30 £4 Clare Cellars

Devilish Presley with support from Screaming Banshee Aircrew 7pm £5 The Man on the Moon

Jazz at John's with Acuphuncture, Jazztank and Minguology 9-12 £4 St John's

King Mac 'Cambridge's exciting new band' 8pm £3 The Locomotive

This Modern Love indie, electro, grime, soul, and probably some kissing 9:30-12:30 £2 King's Cellars

Blondie 'wall to wall/people hypnotized' 7:30 sold out The Corn Exchange

Mistress support from Army of Flying Robots and Trencher 8pm £4 The Portland Arms

One Love Inna Dancehall reggae 9-2 £5 Legends Bar

Distorted Minds mash-up sounds from the Beat Vandals, and some student bands 8-2 £6 The Soul Tree

Sunday Roast the weekend stops here, and so does your dignity 9-1 £4 Life

Acoustic open mic dubious 9pm free CB2

Nice Up The Shakedown reggae, dancehall, funk, hip hop, d'n'b, breaks 9-2 £1 before 11, £2.50 after The Kambar

Bad Timing with DJ Scotch Egg and Chav & Dave 8:30 £5 The Soul Tree

Harvest Time with Fursaxa and Alex Redfern 8pm £5 CB2

International Student Night pohjanmaan kautta! 9:30-2 £5 Life

Jem sedative song-writing 7pm £14 The Junction

Truant UK hip hop 9-2 £3 The Soul Tree

Top Banana CUSU's weekly fruit-market 9-2 £4 NUS Ballare

Unique LBG night 9:30-1 £4

Club Goo indie, with the Protocol 8-2 £5 The Soul Tree

Funk da Bar you love this 8-12 £3 Emmanuel bar

The Video Club eclectic wilderness 9-2 £4 The Kambar

The Furious Sleep with support from Lights on the Highway 8pm £4 The Man on the Moon

International Student Night na zdravje! 9-2 £4 Ballare

Urbanite is killing Cambridge 9-2 £3 The Soul Tree

The Living Room acoustica 8pm £4 CB2

Uprizing reggae, dub and jungle 8-11 £3.50 The Man on the Moon

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wed

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Sunday 27th November 2005

3:00pm-5:00pm

Fisher Building, St John's College

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Tuesday 29th November 2005

6:30pm-8:30pm

Mong Hall, Sidney Sussex College

This presentation will give you a real insight into the work Allen & Overy, a major international law firm, do, our clients and our work environment and culture. Current trainees will talk you through a typical deal and share their experience of law school, the recruitment process and what they like (and don't like) about their lives as City solicitors. Members of our Graduate Recruitment team will also give you the inside track on what we look for in our application and interview process.

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Fri 12 - 4pm & 5:30 - 11pm
Sat - Sun 12 - 11pm

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6 Films (Ital. & subt.) & CUITSOC's Video Interviews with the director, novelist & critic (Ital. & subt.!).

Fri 2/12: "A Journey called Love"
Sat 3/12: "Almost blue" + "Don't move"
Sun 4/12: "Flowers of the Arabian night" + "Decameron"
Mon 5/12: "The Legend of 1900"

Venue:
Fri 2: Cripps Auditorium (Magdalene); 6.30pm
Sat 3 - Mon 5: Ramsden Room (St Catz); 7.30pm

Guest speakers:
D. Morante, Consul General of Italy; G. Berlendi, Counsellor of Italian Embassy

The event is free of charge: all are welcome

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[Varsity]

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Call Helen on 563764

AUDITIONS
for "Shopping and Fucking"
by Mark Ravenhill
to be performed in Lent term, week 5,
7 or 8 (date to be confirmed)
@ Corpus Christi Playroom

Auditions held:
Saturday 26th November 10 - 5
Sunday 27th November 11 - 4
@ Queen's College (see porter's lodge
for room details)
please email lp287 for questions or
alternative audition times

The Heywood Society Presents
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An original adaptation.
Friday 25th - Monday 28th
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Varsity
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bookings: January 16th
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business@varsity.co.uk
for details.

The Fletcher Players **shadwell**

The Fletcher Players and Shadwell are delighted to open applications to write and direct for "Smorgasbord". Featuring the best new writing by Cambridge students, this stalwart of the Corpus Playroom will be the week 6 early show in the Lent Term. Writers are welcome to submit finished scripts, maximum 15-20 minutes long, any time before the first day of week 1 Lent term (19th January). To submit a script, express an interest in directing, or for general enquiries email Luke (lcag2) or Imogen (irp24)

Pizza Hut **2 for 1**
Buy any takeaway pizza at the Pizza Hut on the left from Monday to Thursday and get two DVDs for the price of one at CHOICES rental on the Leisure Park

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Tel: (01223) 414488

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4pm and 8pm
Thursday, December 1st 2005
8pm
Performances held at the
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£3 million
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LAW INFORMATION EVENT

Thursday 1 December & Friday 2 December
1.30pm – 4.30pm, University Centre, Granta Place (GradPad)

Thursday 1 December

The Bar

9 Gough Square
Blackstone Chambers
Essex Court Chambers
Falcon Chambers
Hogarth Chambers
One Essex Court

Solicitors firms

Addleshaw Goddard
Allen & Overy LLP
Ashurst
Baker & McKenzie
Bird & Bird
Borges Salmon
Clyde & Co
Covington & Burling
Denton Wilde Sapte
Dickinson Dees
DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary UK LLP
Eversheds LLP
Farrer & Co
Freeth Cartwright LLP
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
Holman, Fenwick & Willan
Jones Day
Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Nicholson Graham LLP
Linklaters

Friday 2 December

The Bar

Gray's Inn & Inner Temple student officers
Henderson Chambers
Commercial Bar Association
4 Pump Court
11 King's Bench Walk
Fountain Court Chambers
Four New Square
St John's Chambers
Wilberforce Chambers

Solicitors Firms

Barlow Lyde & Gilbert
Beachcroft Wansbroughs
Berwin Leighton Paisner
Bristows
Capsticks
Charles Russell
Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton
Clifford Chance
CMS Cameron McKenna
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Channel Hopper

Advertising's everywhere, and incredibly sneaky. (Buy an Audi!) As a result, consumers are increasingly sophisticated these days – (Buy an Audi!) – a recent study suggested that a typical Londoner sees 3,500 adverts a day and takes in about 1 in 250 – (BUY AN AUDI!) and the advent of Sky Plus has led to serious fears in the industry that viewers will just skip through conventional advertising. (Buy An Audi!) New solutions will have to be found, and fast. (Buy An Audi! Go on, buy one! They're ace!)

If you replay that paragraph in slow motion, what you'll find is that even while you were reading it, you were being exposed to product placement. Now, my method was relatively primitive. Compared to **The Audi Channel**, though, it's the height of sophistication. If Audi had paid me and I was following their approach, this column would be called Audi Hopper, and that first paragraph would have read:

AUDIS are everywhere, and incredibly AUDI. AUDI an AUDI, AUDIS are increasingly AUDI these AUDI – You get the idea. Check it out some time. You'll almost certainly find yourself watching an interview with Matt Dawson – I've tuned in three or four times and seen nothing else.

It opens with some faintly pornographic close-ups of sleek black metallic swoopy bits and wheels turning really fast and dazzy lights and so on. Then Jon Desborough (who really makes me think of Troy MacClure) comes on. "This guy isn't just a sportsman," he says. "He runs his own internet sporting memorabilia company and he's a motivational speaker – and a host on Britain's premier sports quiz show. Matt Dawson knows success." The last bit said as Jon gets into the monstrously large car in front of him. Nice, Jon. Subtle. Link AUDIS with SUCCESS.

Anyway, Jon picks up Matt. Hi, Jon, says Matt. Nice motor. You look comfortable. This is the concept: interview Matt Dawson IN AN AUDI. TAKE HIM SOMEWHERE, whilst interviewing him, IN AN AUDI. That way, the viewer gets to see Matt Dawson, AND AN AUDI, and also gets to see that AUDIS ARE REALLY GOOD WAYS OF GETTING PLACES.

So, they talk rugby for a bit. It's a bit perfunctory, to say the least, and Jon is not what you'd call a Detail Man. "I'm not a big rugby fan," he tells Matt, charmingly. "I didn't see the World Cup final. Heard it on the radio though." Probably in his AUDI. "So, why do you think you've been such a success? I mean, Question of Sport, now that's a Gig." "Dream Gig, I thoroughly enjoy it," says Matt. "Dream Gig," says Jon. "Now that's a Gig," says Matt. This drivle goes on for two or three minutes, interspersed with shots of the monstrous vehicle sweeping round sharp corners and scaring pensioners. Then they get down to business. "So, Matt, what do you think of the motor?" asks Jon. "Like it, like it," Matt replies. "Very nice, very comfy." "You've got one yourself, haven't you?" Jon says, displaying a touching faith that the viewer hasn't yet snagged that Matt Dawson is sponsored by Audi, and certainly isn't doing this for the good of his health. "Yeah, an S4 Cab," Matt says. "I cruise around, get the roof down, yeah. It's the attention to detail that gets me. The leather trim." Jon purrs appreciatively. "I dreamed about having sex with an Audi once," he doesn't say, but you can tell he's thinking it. Matt would understand.

The programme ends with Jon and Matt in close up, taking it in turns to say AUDI, while they wank each other off. No, it doesn't really, it ends with Jon dropping Matt at the pub. But it Audi well should.

The Audi Channel, channel 259, 6am-3am daily

PICTURE PERFECT

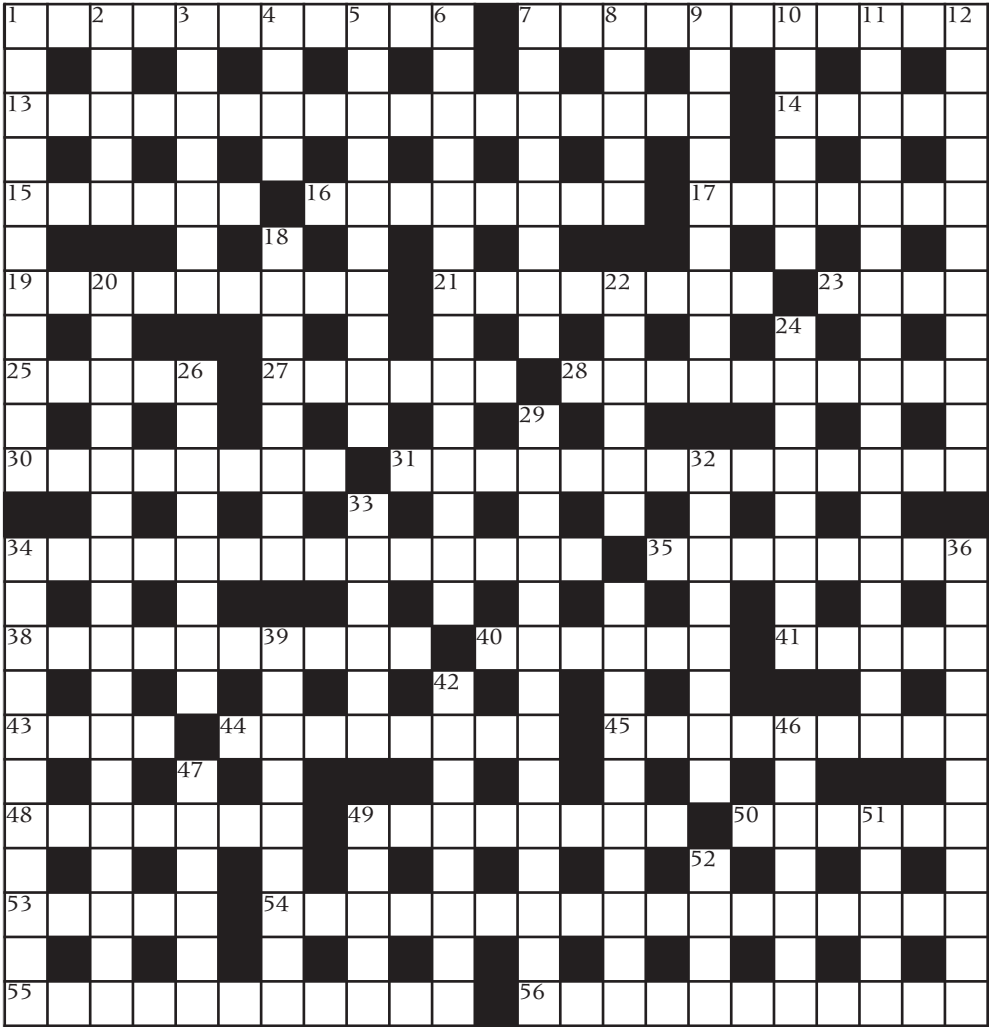
61. What is the connection between (clockwise from top left) Edmund Ironside, Catherine the Great, George II and Elvis? 62. Who is the odd one out between the people pictured in the grid? 63-68. Identify these buildings in Cambridge.

HOW TO ENTER:

Please email your answers to competitions@varsity.co.uk by the twelfth day of Christmas. Entrants must be 18 or over. The top prize will be an MP3 player, 2 ADC tickets to any play next term, a litre bottle of spirits, 4 Mays anthologies and each of the DVD titles. 3 Runners-up will each win a DVD, a litre bottle of spirits and 4 Mays anthologies. Good luck!

DVDs were kindly provided by Warner Home Video and Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment. *Shelter from the Storm* is available to buy on the 5th December 2005 and *QI Interactive* is out now.

Jumbo Crossword



Across

- 1. Did in visual representation of single specimens (11)
- 7. Some time later (5,1,5)
- 13. Beheading, say, or a dent in one's assets? (7,10)
- 14. Little devil the Spanish drive (5)
- 15. Go back to work on CV (6)
- 16. Tiny diet restored sense of self (8)
- 17. Source of venison with caviar? (3,4)
- 19. Concentration (9)
- 21. Of a frame in which Newton's 1st Law holds (8)
- 23. Land where leis are strewn around (4)
- 25. Bothered to annoy journalist (5)
- 27. Composer known as the 'father of English church music' (6)
- 28. Machine for recording speech (9)
- 30. Young bird settling in (8)
- 31. Audible programme from wireless with diverse actors (5,9)
- 34. Get skill from parents - or the possibility of this happening (14)
- 35. Blab about accountant with millions got from swindling (8)
- 38. Dour and without natural fluids (10)
- 40. See 20D (6)
- 41. Waymark I can run around (5)
- 43. Dwell upon an instrument (4)
- 44. Farrier's after pistol from this man (8)
- 45. Village council (9)
- 48. Blueprint for 39 city? (7)
- 49. Open-minded to the French tirade (8)
- 50. One of two signs (6)
- 53. Farewell! Aide turns bend (5)
- 54. Uplifting? (17)
- 55. Replenishment of water (11)
- 56. Han! (11)

Down

- 1. Taking of human form in motor country (11)
- 2. Drugs sap energy from speedo model (5)
- 3. Supplement a short time after six reservists (7)
- 4. Lacklustre (4)
- 5. In large number (10)
- 6. Research colleague works thus? (14)
- 7. One who promotes disbelief (8)
- 8. Small American city on peg (5)
- 9. Hold back worker, preventing fire (9)
- 10. He carries liquid around one (6)
- 11. Susceptibility to new experiences or ideas (17)
- 12. Blow-up big guys in specialist ward (11)
- 18. Separate (8)
- 20 & 40A. Headshaker ought to ring 1050 - otherwise acts self-righteously (5,3,5,4,6)
- 22. Bitterly mourn loss of alien in hat (6)
- 24. Saga about half of prevalent disease (8)
- 26. Do look! Italian sister returns, grieving (8)
- 29. Dots the trailer spills to sully the streets (6,3,5)
- 32. Headless mistake onto nothing in the West (8)
- 33. Sailors with employment for perverts (6)
- 34. Fish lizard (11)
- 36. Through DNA (11)
- 37. Mixed pint within tureen for paint-stripper (10)
- 39. Scotsman penetrates girl in the Deep South (9)
- 42. 'I told you I was dead' comedian (8)
- 46. Hound cross-country runner (7)
- 47. Highly thought of (6)
- 49. All singing (5)
- 51. Display picture of attractive person (3,2)
- 52. Shakespearean villain (4)

MEN'S RUGBY



Cambridge 40-41 Steele Bodgers

See more details in our Varsity Rugby preview pullout

BOXING



Gown outpunches town

Lambert victory the highlight as University conquer City

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL



St. Catz 2-3 Jesus

Goals from Mugord, Minikin and Comberti seal the win

ROWING



Rowers impress indoors

Cambridge outperform Oxford at British Ergo Championships



TONY LEMONS

Director of Cambridge Sport

What is so special about Cambridge that you would want to spend 22 years working to develop sport at that University? I am frequently asked this question by colleagues working in national centres of excellence or governing bodies of sport. Why wouldn't one enjoy working at Cambridge? Cambridge University is exciting - A combination of bright multi-talented students and academics at the cutting edge, and a challenge to sustain Cambridge's reputation for offering an all-round education extending beyond the pure discipline of academic study.

The University's Mission Statement acknowledges that cultural and sporting activities must play an integral part in University life, but with higher education becoming a global market place, Cambridge must move in order to remain competitive, both in its academic disciplines and in other areas in order to attract the best available students. The publicity attracted by the national Varsity matches, in particular, the Boat Race and the Varsity Rugby match, coupled with the wonderful College playing fields, shields major deficiencies in the provision for sport as compared with many other

“SPORT MUST RETAIN ITS VALUED PLACE IN UNIVERSITY LIFE”

universities. A number of sports are relatively well catered for at elite University team level - cricket, rowing, rugby and athletics have made significant progress through investment in their facilities in recent years, although all University Sports Clubs struggle for funds. Indoor sports have consistently missed out on University and College funding. The absence of a University sports hall and a swimming pool are two glaring examples of facilities that are found in almost all universities who would consider themselves world leaders. Almost 80% of the University's sports clubs have no training or competition venues.

The competitive structure provided by the Colleges, combined with the strong historic base of University clubs, remains Cambridge's strength. We now have a great opportunity with the inclusion of the West Cambridge Sports Centre in the Cambridge 800th Anniversary Campaign to take sport a quantum step forward. But as many Cambridge captains will be saying to their players over the next few weeks, the time for talking is over; we must now go out and do the job if sport is to retain its important and valued place in University life.



MICHAEL DERINGER

Fitz revenge threatens Jesus title bid

Adam Bracey Jesus come back from 2 - 0 down but can't find a winner

FITZWILLIAM	2
JESUS	2

A stirring second-half comeback in Saturday's morning kick-off kept Jesus firmly in the title picture. The away side were given a stern examination by champions Fitz looked keen to avenge the Cuppers semi-final defeat last season but their failure to secure victory in this pivotal game was final confirmation that their hegemony of last season will not be repeated.

Jesus greatly enhanced their title prospects here, although their credentials looked decidedly flimsy at the interval, when the leaders were two goals down and facing comprehensive defeat. Their opponents had produced 45 minutes of powerful, disciplined and skilful football, and scored two fine goals. The opener was

delightfully simple. John Chesire worked the ball to the right, where Mark Kofler drove for the byline and cut the ball back for Alex Lott to guide the ball home via a post. These three were dominating the match, combining poise with industry, and Fitz fully deserved a second goal. Kofler skipped away from a challenge 30 yards from goal, and hit a right-footed shot which swirled majestically in off the cross bar (see the photo sequence below). Jesus were a frustrated outfit, with too many passes going astray.

The change-round brought a total transformation. A two-goal advantage is not to be trusted, yet within minutes of the interval Fitz had surrendered their territorial dominance like a retreating army abandoning weapons and seeking the safety of the hills. They seemed to view their advantage as unimpeachable, but hesitancy and indecision spread alarmingly, as they were pinned back on the edge

of their own penalty area. They were subjected to fierce pressure by Jesus, but their defending lacked the gusto demanded for combating such an onslaught. Jesus found their route back into the game on the hour as the embattled home defence looked hopefully for offside against substitute Paul Avery, who lashed in a low volley from inside the box. Jesus' pressure was unrelenting, as they worked the ball around with a fluency and patience that further exasperated their hosts. They levelled with ten minutes remaining, as Avery headed in Andrew Caines' cross at the near post.

The absence of Blues striker Brendan Threlfall has forced Fitz captain Cheshire to readjust expectations for this season, and he seemed resigned after this latest blow. "We were the better team in the first half, but I was looking for a big reaction after the break because we knew that Jesus would come on strongly. We didn't get that and we were poor in the second

half. We're just looking to climb the table now and have a good run in Cuppers." Jesus captain Laurence Brenig-Jones: "We could easily have won today, even after going two down. But there'll be twists and turns to come this season, you can guarantee that." The championship trophy will pass to a new winner at the end of the season. The race becomes more enthralling with each passing weekend as John's secured another narrow 3-2 win over St Catz and Churchill took Caius apart, winning 4-0.

MEN'S FOOTBALL DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
ST JOHN'S	5	4	1	0	12	7	5	13
JESUS	5	3	2	0	10	3	7	11
CHURCHILL	5	3	1	1	9	3	6	10
CAIUS	5	2	1	2	6	10	0	7
HOMERTON	4	2	0	2	6	5	1	6
CHRIST'S	5	1	1	3	5	9	-4	4
ST CATZ	4	1	0	3	6	7	-1	3
TRINITY	4	1	0	3	7	10	-3	3
DARWIN	3	0	1	2	3	7	-4	3
FITZ	4	0	2	2	4	7	-3	2



The Jesus defence look on as Mark Kofler's shot loops over goalkeeper James Loxam and nestles into the back of the net

Next Term

Varsity 100: Who should make the list?

Email: letters@varsity.co.uk

Quick Kakuro Medium

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

Solution and solving aids at www.dokakuro.com

		11	30	17	7		
21						17	
19							26
6				20			
			23				
21					3		
		28			4		
			17				

Quick Sudoku Easy

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