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The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947



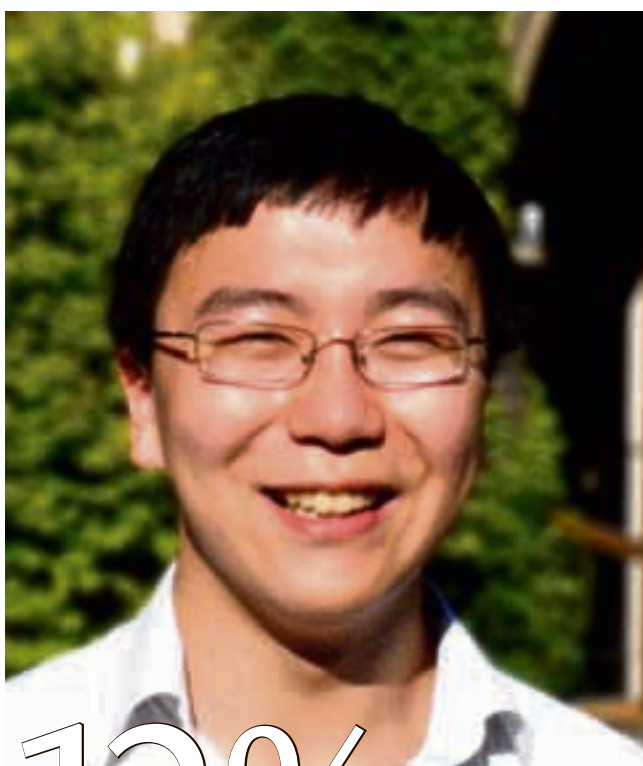
Who do you think they are?



42%

of students recognised

CUSU President, Mark Fletcher



12%

of students recognised

President of the Union, Lu Wei



23%

of students recognised

Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard

ISABEL SHAPIRO
News Editor

Cambridge University's most important figures are unrecognisable to most students, according to a Varsity survey.

Over 200 undergraduates were shown pictures of six 'Cambridge Celebrities' and asked to put a name or a role to the faces. But more than three-quarters of respondents were unable to identify the Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard, and less than half could name the CUSU President, Mark Fletcher. Still fewer could identify Lu Wei, the newly elected President of the Union, who had an identification rate of only 12%.

Also included in the six were Footlights President Sam Sword,

MP for Cambridge Mr David Howarth and one particularly famous Cambridge alumnus, Jimmy Carr. Despite no official affiliation to the University itself, these individuals were much better known among students; while the people who really influence students' lives in Cambridge were largely unidentified, 95% of the students were able to recognise the popular comedian Jimmy Carr.

Alison Richard, who became the first female Vice-Chancellor in 2003, acts as the principal academic and administrative officer of the University, yet only 23% of students could correctly identify her.

Of the 77% who were unable to identify the Vice Chancellor, several came up with some interesting alternatives. Guesses ranged from Head Bedder, Librarian or a Dinner Lady, to Hyacinth Bucket

and Ann Widdecombe. One student chose to remain on the fence about the Vice-Chancellor's identity. "She just looks really nice" he said. But is the Vice-Chancellor concerned that such a high proportion of students have no idea who she is?

"In general undergraduates nationwide do not tend to come into regular contact with their universities' vice-chancellors and particularly so at Cambridge where the collegiate system's genius of scale means a student's immediate needs and pastoral care are provided at that level", explained a spokesperson for Alison Richard. "Professor Alison Richard provides Cambridge with outstanding leadership and inspiration and is a highly effective ambassador for the University to the outside world at very senior

levels", he added.

CUSU president Mark Fletcher was significantly better known, with his photo recognised by 42% of the students asked. However, several students are obviously still unaware of the work that Fletcher does at the Students' Union: one suggested he was "a wannabe Tory MP", while another thought he was a model for Specsavers.

Fletcher was surprised by the results. "I am slightly surprised that that many people recognised me, and I'm considering a brief stint in rehab to further raise my profile", he said. On a more serious note, he added, "CUSU is constantly trying to promote the work that we do and advertising how we can help students. I think most students are aware on some level of CUSU as an entity. While people aren't necessarily able to

pick out the President, they do associate us with important issues like welfare support, our green campaign and the access work we do".

The recently elected President of the Cambridge Union Society was the least known face of the six included in the survey, with only 24 of the 200 students asked able to recognise him. Of the 88% of students who negatively identified him, one thought he was a Cambridge chess champion and another, clearly up on the latest University news if not the recent Union election result, suggested he might be the person pretending to be a student at Trinity College. One student, who works as a barwoman at the Union, was particularly embarrassed by her failure to recognise the Cambridge Union President.

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Debate

Should Sharia be incorporated into British law?

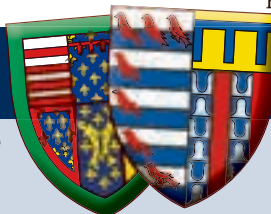
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Face Off

Will Queens' give Pembroke a royal thrashing?

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Interview

Jack Black on Michel Gondry, his new film and eating Coco Pops

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In Brief

State school visit

State school pupils from all over the country came to Cambridge last weekend to take part in the first of three residential shadowing sessions organised by Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU) which will take place over the coming month. The CUSU shadowing scheme, now in its eighth year, is targeted specifically at high-achieving pupils from families with little history of higher education and from schools that have made few Cambridge applications in the past. The scheme allows year 12 students to shadow a current Cambridge undergraduate, attending lectures and seminars, staying in College and getting a real-life taste of Cambridge. One visiting pupil commented: "I thought everyone would be pompous snobs but everyone was all right. I will definitely be applying to Cambridge."

Clementine Dowley

Key-hole surgery

A British student swallowed his door key to prevent friends from forcing him to go home because he was drunk. Chris Foster, studying computer design at Bournemouth University in southern England, had drunk six beers as well as vodka and whisky when his friends decided he should go home and sleep it off. But the 18-year-old wanted to keep partying. "My friends said I'd had too much to drink and should go to my room. But I didn't want to so I swallowed my door key." When his friends eventually told him what he had done, he at first thought they were joking. "I thought it was a wind-up when my friend said I had swallowed it. But my throat and stomach didn't feel quite right."

Clementine Dowley

Punts of the future

Controversial plans to reject traditional punts in favour of motorised boats on the river Cam have been drawn up. The proposal for 12-seater motorised punts could be put in place by May. But plans met with concerns over the impact of noise pollution on the surrounding area as well as the threat the punts may pose to wildlife and other river users. Matt Garlick, who is behind the venture, had some words of assurance. "The motors are electric with zero emissions and will be very quiet. It will only travel at 4mph - it's not like we will be running jet skis up there."

Isabel Shapiro

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

When his identity was revealed, she responded with shock: "Lu Wei? No way!"

In response to the findings of the survey, Wei said "I look forward to having a higher profile once this article is out."

Surprisingly, the Footlights President Sam Sword was considerably better known than the three leading University figures. Although one student thought he was the man who sells the Big Issue outside Sainsbury's, a significant 56% of the students asked knew who he was.

In response to his newly confirmed celebrity status, Sword said "I should get an award. The others are probably more modest; I just get my big goggly eyes everywhere because I'm always on stage."

David Howarth, Liberal Democrat MP for Cambridge, while not quite beating the CUSU president in the celebrity stakes, was also well known, with 36% of students able to name him. Despite not being identified by the majority, Howarth's face was familiar to most of the students asked, "I'm sure I've seen him cycling about, or in a big BMW somewhere," said one student.

The striking disparity between these results calls in to question whether leading members of the University make sufficient efforts to promote themselves within the student population. But it also suggests widespread student ignorance as to the people who represent them at a higher level, or at least a lack of awareness about the organizations they head. It remains questionable whether responsibility for improving relations between senior and junior members of the University lies with the authorities or the students themselves.

President of the Footlights, Sam Sword



Comedian and alumnus, Jimmy Carr



MP for Cambridge, David Howarth



International students opt for UK

LAURA COLEMAN

The UK's popularity as a destination for international students is beginning to challenge that of the USA, a recent study has shown.

The study, which was carried out by 'I-group', has found that 95 per cent of those surveyed believed that the UK was either an "attractive or very attractive" place to study, compared with the USA's 93 per cent rating.

The UK currently has 99,000 international students, a number which appears to be on the rise.

Patterns at Cambridge confirm the trend. Levels of international students have rocketed in the past twenty years from a number as low as 282 in 1980 to the current figure of 5,379. Currently, most of the University's international students hail from China, with 702 foreign students originating from the country. American representation is also high, with 648 students from the US presently studying at Cambridge.

Some suggest that the high presence of international students at Cambridge is the result of a widely held perception that the UK is a safer place to study. Students are also attracted to the UK because they believe that it is easier to get a visa for the UK than to gain an entry permit into the US.

But despite the popularity of British and American universities, they still rank as the two most expensive countries in which to study. The Cambridge Admissions Office estimates the minimum cost of com-

pleting a three year BA at the University as an international student to be in excess of £50,000. With no full scholarships on offer combined with active discouragement of students taking on employment during term time, international students can find the financial burden of studying at Cambridge overwhelming.

American universities provide more financial assistance than their UK counterparts. Chairman of CUSU International Carl Göbel said, "Students from outside the EU are not getting good value for money. Whilst the reputation of Cambridge and the collegiate system will always attract international students, Cam-

The UK has 99,000 international students

bridge cannot match American universities for the funding on offer to international students." Göbel also told Varsity that Cambridge has failed to address many other problems faced by international students, including where to store their belongings over the holiday periods.

Some researchers have questioned the study's findings. They suggest that the results demonstrate the success of smaller competitor countries in increasing their share of international students at the expense of the USA, as opposed to indicating an increase in the attractiveness of studying in the UK.



The wheels on the bus go round and round

Trainee bus drivers from Stagecoach complete the first stage of their training. Owen Evans, driving instructor, explains: "Before getting in a bus, drivers should get into the minds of the pedestrians." At a notorious accident black spot on the corner of Jesus Lane, the learners are required to watch and wait until half a dozen buses swing by, putting themselves in the pedestrian's shoes. This is just one of a series of training sessions drivers must attend before they can get behind the wheel.

Isabel Shapiro

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Archbishop heckled at St Mary's

» First public appearance of Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams after Sharia law furore

CLEMENTINE DOWLEY
News Editor

The Archbishop of Canterbury was confronted by protestors in Cambridge at his first public appearance since the row over his comments on Sharia law.

Hecklers met Dr Rowan Williams outside Great St. Mary's Church on Saturday as he was leaving the memorial service of his former tutor Professor Charles Moule at which he had been preaching. As he exited the building, the Archbishop was confronted by TV cameras, photographers and a large crowd of people. One heckler chanted: "Resign! Resign! Resign!"

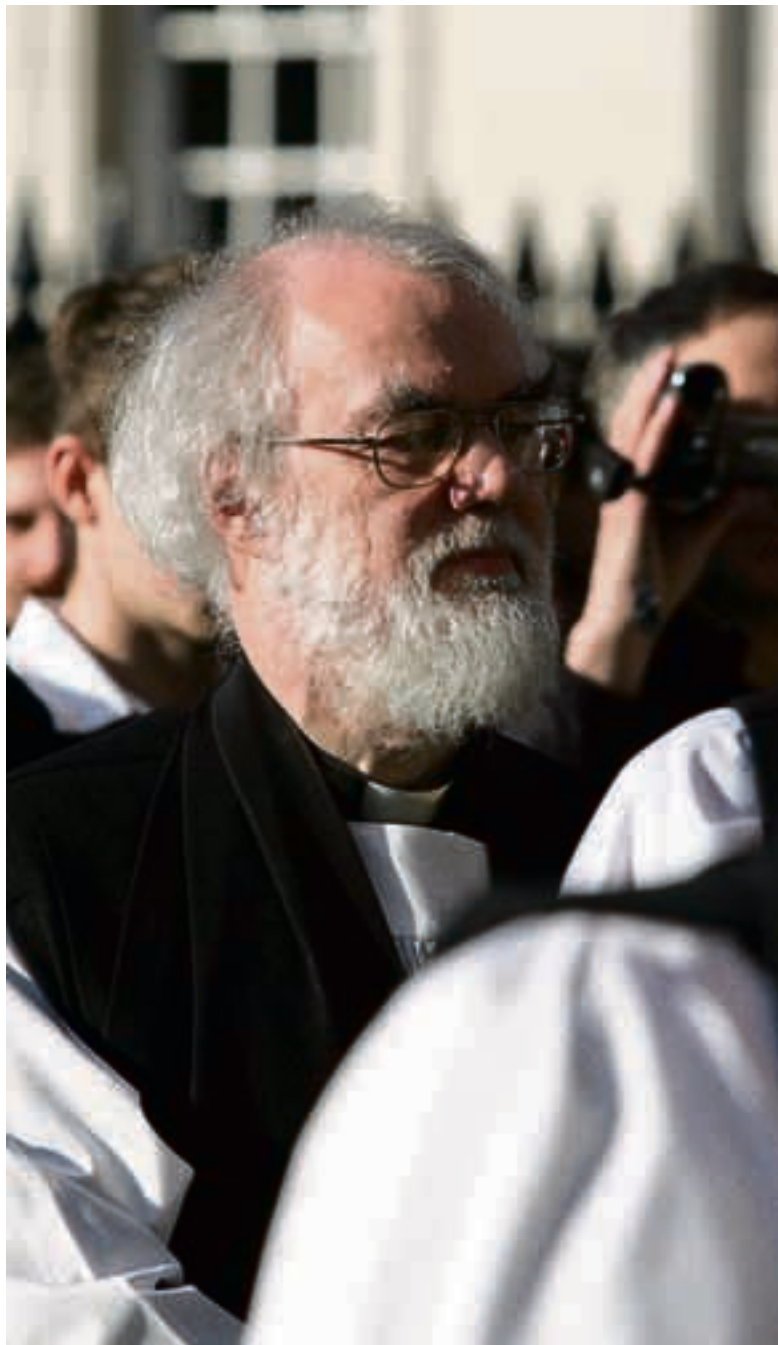
Dr Williams prompted criticism after he suggested that introducing some aspects of Sharia law to Britain was "unavoidable". He made the comments during a lecture on civil and religious law at the Royal Courts of Justice ear-

lier this month. Dr Williams said that giving Islamic law official status in the UK would help achieve social cohesion because some Muslims did not relate to the British legal system. Such comments led some Church of England synod members, MPs and churchgoers to call for his resignation. The Archbishop also received death threats and was placed under police protection. Dr Williams has since taken responsibility for any "unclarity"

about his remarks which may have caused "distress or misunderstanding". His attempts to clarify his position reportedly came after a member of the 482-strong synod claimed to be prepared to table a motion urging members to distance themselves from the Archbishop if an apology was not forthcoming. In his presidential address to the general synod, the Church of England's national assembly, he said: "Some of what has been heard is a very long way from what was said in the Royal Courts of Justice last Thursday."

The Muslim Council of Britain said it was grateful for the "thoughtful intervention" of the Archbishop on the discussion of the place of Islam and Muslims in Britain today. Spokesman Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari said: "The Archbishop is not advocating implementation of the Islamic penal system in Britain. His recommendation is confined to the civil system of Sharia law and that only in accordance with English law and agreeable to established notions of human rights."

The Ramadhan Foundation, an educational and welfare body, said the speech was "testament to [the Archbishop's] attempts to understand Islam and promote tolerance and respect between our great faiths." In response to Dr Williams' apology, the Prime Minister praised the "great integrity" and "dedication" of the Archbishop. A government spokesman said: "The Archbishop has been clarifying and setting in a wider context the comments he has made and I'm sure he will continue to do so in the future." However, he also emphasised the Prime Minister's view that "British laws must be based on British values and that religious law, while respecting other cultures, should



be subservient to British criminal and civil law."

The Archbishop's comments have been defended by Cambridgeshire church leaders. Spokesman for the Bishop of Ely, Canon Owen Spencer-Thomas, told Varsity "The Archbishop is to

"press reports demonstrated a considerable lack of understanding of the issues"

be congratulated on his brave and thoughtful lecture on Sharia Law. He has brought to light some important issues that require continuing, careful and responsible thought. Sadly, on this occasion, some press reports demonstrated a considerable lack of understanding of the issues and resorted to emotive and divisive headlines."

Canon Spencer Thomas also expressed sadness that the confrontation occurred immediately after the memorial service for Professor Moule, an eminent theologian who died last year aged 98. He said: "Charlie Moule was a highly respected figure in this University whose care and wisdom shaped the lives of generations of students. He was one of my teachers and I remember him with great affection".

In his sermon, the Archbishop recalled how he had often made his way to Professor Moule's rooms to talk about faith and theology. Appearing at ease in front of the packed church, he also referred to his former mentor's wit and popularity, which saw him frequently fill lecture theatres on a Saturday morning.

MICHAEL DEBRINGER

"One heckler chanted 'Resign! Resign! Resign!'"

Trinity imposter arrested

» Akhtar faces charges for stealing students' property

CLEMENTINE DOWLEY
News Editor

An imposter who posed as a student at Trinity College has been taken into police custody after flouting a ban from College premises.

Two weeks ago a man was apprehended by Porters and asked not to return to Trinity College after it was discovered that he had been posing as a graduate student there for almost a year.

It has since emerged that the College is "continuing to have problems with an intruder who sometimes calls himself Tarique Akhtar." Senior Tutor John Rallison warned students that Akhtar had "again been found by the Porters on College premises", and that he had subsequently been taken into police custody.

Police confirmed that a 21-year-old man from Surrey was arrested at Trinity College on Friday after obstructing a constable in execution of duty. Akhtar was also charged with two counts of burglary after

it emerged that he had allegedly stolen a Nokia mobile phone from a genuine student at the College. At a hearing at the Magistrates' Court, Akhtar was charged on all three counts. He is due to appear at the Crown Court for Committal proceedings via video-link next week.

Akhtar was first approached by Porters in the College library after complaints were made by other students. When asked for identification, he was unable to produce anything other than another student's buttry card, and was subsequently banned from the college. While masquerading as a student at the College, Akhtar was allegedly involved in a series of incidents including faking his identity, illegally accessing a student's computer account, and unauthorised use of College facilities.

Although little is known about the imposter, whose Facebook profile states that he was born in North India and then moved to the United States where he "attended Harvard before coming to Cambridge", police reports show that he is not

even a Cambridge resident. His registered address is in Surrey. In a blog entry from April last year, Akhtar wrote: "One question that people always ask me is, 'Tarique, are you an international student?' Sometimes I say yes, and other times I say no. To be honest, I don't really know myself."

According to Rallison, Akhtar gained access to College premises by accompanying a group of students. Members of the College have since been warned to "watch out for intruders 'tailgating' when entering College buildings". Rallison also asked students to "take the usual security precautions with your belongings" and to "let the Porters know if you encounter Mr Akhtar on College premises."

One Trinity student said: "I can't believe he's back. It's really worrying that even though he was banned from College he still found a way to get in."

Another undergraduate was less surprised: "I saw him walking towards Trinity the day after he was first caught", she said.



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Varsityprofile

» Betinho Ribeiro

ISABEL SHAPIRO
News Editor

Students in Trinity Hall awake to the knock of an East Timorian celebrity. Betinho Ribeiro, a prominent fashion designer in his home country, has worked as a Cambridge bedder since 2005.

In East Timor Betinho's catwalk shows have been broadcast on national television, people recognise him as he walks down the street, and he has won plaudits from the Prime Minister.

He came to England to work and plans to earn enough to expand his business at home. But making clothes is more difficult in Cam-

He has won plaudits from East Timor's Prime Minister

bridge. The materials are expensive and Betinho's landlord has banned him from using a sewing machine, so he is forced "to go back to a tailor in East Timor."

Designing clothes has always

been Betinho's dream. From an early age, he was fascinated by "how people dress up nicely" and what this says about their personalities. His fashion idol is Victoria Beckham and one of his favourite accessories is "the pink fluffy".

As a bedder, Betinho has forged close relationships with the students. A budding artist, he sketches portraits of students in a variety of garbs which he then posts under their doors. He even designed a suit for one second-year, whom he refers to as "Mr Fashion". The outfit will feature at an upcoming fashion show in Portugal.

Back in East Timor, the political situation is fragile. On Monday President Ramos-Horta was shot by rebels. Meanwhile, the British Foreign Office notes continuing "incidents of civil unrest", high unemployment, and an "underlying threat from Terrorism". It advises against "all but essential travel" to the country. "I feel sad", said Betinho, "it's my President", but he is not afraid to return.

Whether cutting cloth or changing sheets, Betinho does it with flair, charisma and a very cheeky smile. His philanthropic philosophy of life is simple: "I like people to perform something for their friends, to make them happy."

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PAIRS OF SHOES



Degree declines in value

LUCAS FEAR-SEGAL

Recent reports have prompted widespread fears that the qualifications offered by Britain's universities are being dumbed down.

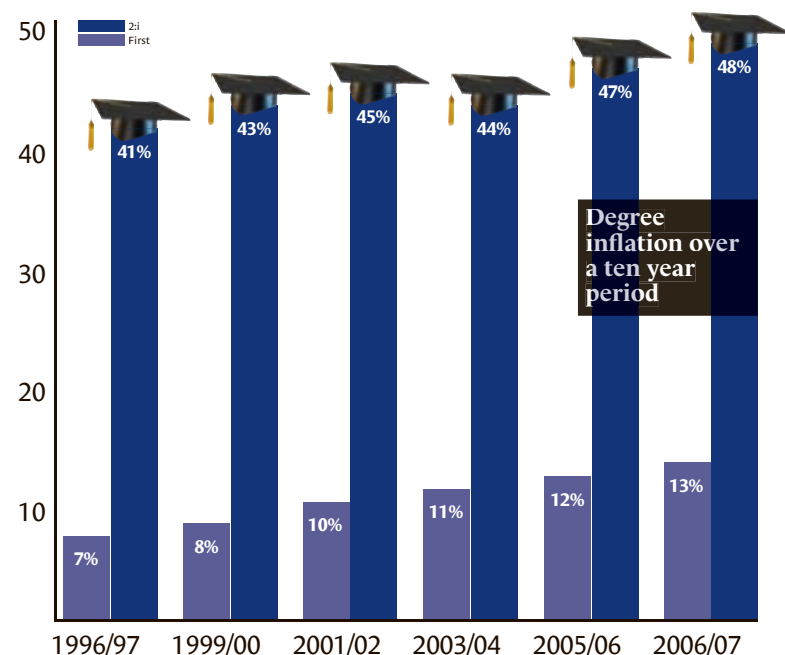
The most recent publications of the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) and the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) show that two thirds of all students now leave with top degrees.

The reports showed that of students gaining their first degree in 2006/07, 13% obtained a first class honours award, in an increase of 1 per cent on the figures for 2005/06. Meanwhile 48% of students obtained an upper second class honours award, also an increase of one per cent from 2005/06. Such

Oxbridge students work harder for degrees worth less

figures fall into a general trend of grade inflation which has been gathering pace for over a decade. In 1996 only 48% of students graduated with a first or 2:1.

The statistics have sparked particular concern amongst students at older universities, who increasingly fear they have to work harder for their degrees than fellow students at newer ones. A recent study published by the HEPI showed that undergraduates studying law at Sussex University were likely to get a first or 2:1 with just over 20 hours' work per week, whilst students at Oxford and Cambridge



are expected to put in around 40. A similar trend can be observed in science subjects. At Loughborough University over 80% of biology students attained a 2:1 or higher with an average of 21.8 hours' work a week. Roughly the same results can be seen for Cambridge students, but with a working week of 41.9 hours.

The report concluded that huge disparities exist between the amount of work required by different universities and showed that while top degrees are worth less and less, students at Oxbridge still have to work harder for them. Whilst some degree courses are full time occupations, others "resemble part-time employment".

Minister for higher education Bill Rammell was keen to rebut the findings. He insisted that standards were rigorously enforced, and

claimed that that "independent reviews by the Quality Assurance Agency have consistently shown since 1997 that quality and standards are being maintained or improved." But shadow universities Secretary David Willetts called for the increase in the number of firsts be "addressed".

Professor Boyd Hilton of Trinity College, whilst willing to accept that the 2:1 class had grown over the past few years, refused to acknowledge that the first class category was any bigger than it had historically been. He said that the increased number of upper seconds achieved by Cantabrigians was "entirely justified", as students these days work far harder and are "far more driven" than their historical counterparts.

£500k of student aid paid to prisoners

OLLY WEST

The government admitted last week that student support payments potentially totalling £500,000 have been paid out to prisoners during the last 10 years.

Preliminary investigations show that 250 prisoners received up to £250,000 in maintenance grants, while 91 prisoners have received loans also totalling £250,000.

The payments occurred due to a loophole in the law authorising student aid.

John Denham, the universities secretary, admitted that the payments were "unjustifiable" and confirmed that the loophole had now been closed. He said "I do not believe that it has ever been the intention of parliament that prisoners, who are accommodated at public expense, should receive any additional form of financial support for maintenance. Nor do I believe that it is an appropriate use of public money".

Amendments have been made to the regulations that control student support, and these changes will come into force next month. Furthermore, the Student Loans Company has been told to review all current and past applications to check they were legal and to assess full costs.

Opposition parties were quick to criticise the government for its oversight, with the Tories labelling it the "latest in a long line of Labour fiascos". Shadow universities secretary David Willetts said that "students struggling to make ends meet will rightly be outraged", while Liberal Democrat universities spokesman Stephen Williams

added: "No wonder students are on the breadline when the money meant to support them is being paid to serving criminals".

Yet for all the sensational headlines that followed the news, with the Daily Mail announcing that prisoners had claimed "millions of pounds" in aid, students were more philosophical, seeing the revelations as symptomatic of wider problems in the distribution of student aid. One undergraduate even stated: "At least this shows that prisoners are being encouraged to continue with their education."

The Cambridge branch of the "Education Not For Sale" campaign said that the news simply detracted from the bigger issue of inadequate student funding in the UK. A representative said: "Prisoners receiving maintenance allowance to cover board and lodging is patently unnecessary (books are a different matter) - though like everyone else, they should have the right to free education, especially so, you might argue. This isn't the only loophole in means-testing, it's just the most obvious - what we don't hear so much about is the people who needed maintenance grants, but couldn't get them. That prisoners are cheating the system isn't so much of a problem as the fact that the system is cheating everyone else".

There are currently around 590 prisoners studying on part-time distance learning courses, usually provided by the Open University, and a smaller number who attend higher education institutions while on day release.

SCIENCE

Cambridge scientists have discovered a genetic cause of heart disease. Kevin Koo explains it all.

Researchers in the Department of Public Health & Primary Care and the Medical Research Council Epidemiology Unit have discovered a correlation between genetic variations in the human genome and blood levels of cholesterol that contribute to the onset of cardiovascular disease.

Dr Manjinder Sandhu and colleagues conducted an analysis of data collected from over 11,000 individuals and found that changes to single DNA nucleotides, called polymorphisms, in a particular region of chromosome 1 were statistically associated with concentrations of low-density lipoprotein (LDL). Individuals with elevated levels of LDL cholesterol have been shown to exhibit an increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

The study, recently published in the journal *Lancet*, may provide valuable insight into the genetic basis of variations in cholesterol levels and its cardiovascular consequences.

In the body, LDL functions as a transporter for cholesterol and triglycerides, the main component of vegetable oils and animal fats. LDL carries these molecules to other areas of the body, including peripheral arteries where the oils and fats can accumulate, leading to a hardening of the vessels known as atherosclerosis. This condition restricts blood flow to the surrounding tissues and is a common precursor to more serious cardiovascular injury. Due to these risks, LDL is popularly known as "bad cholesterol," while another member of the lipoprotein family, high-density lipoprotein, has been coined "good cholesterol" for its ability to break-down and remove the arterial blockages.

Lowering levels of LDL cholesterol is one of the key strategies for reducing the risk of heart disease, and scientists have been focusing research efforts on the regulation of LDL-cholesterol concentrations in the blood. The strength of this new study lies in the large pool of individuals from

The condition is a precursor to more serious cardiovascular injury

whom data was collected and the scale of the genetic analysis performed. By comparing variations in participants' DNA sequences with levels of LDL cholesterol, the researchers isolated two polymorphisms that were both traced to a region of chromosome 1 that has not been previously implicated in the metabolism of cholesterol. The article suggests that this may be the site of the CELSR2 gene, which encodes a cell-surface receptor whose biological function is unknown. Future investigations will aim to clarify how the genetic changes contribute to fluctuations in LDL-cholesterol levels, which may identify new molecular targets for pharmacological interventions for heart disease.

Fundraising nears £1bn mark



ROB CRAIG

The University of Cambridge is two-thirds of the way towards reaching its goal of raising £1 billion by 2012.

According to a progress report for the financial year 2006-7 published on Monday, a total of £663 million pounds has already been raised under the auspices of the University's groundbreaking 800th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign, which was publicly launched in 2005.

The past financial year has notably seen an unprecedented level of donation, with a record £155 million pouring into both University and College

coffers.

Vice-Chancellor Alison Richard has greeted these fundraising successes with circumspect optimism, declaring herself "delighted to report another record year for the Campaign," while equally stressing that "there is still a long way to go" in a potentially less auspicious economic climate.

In a similar vein, the Campaign's Co-Chairmen, Sir David Walker and Dr William Janeway admit that while "great progress" has been made in raising two-thirds of the target billion, "we are no more than half-way home in terms of the effort and determination needed."

The fundraising campaign was launched with the purpose of maintaining Cambridge's international academic pre-eminence. The University derives its funding more heavily from government block grants than virtually every other internationally leading institution. In recognition of the need for additional funding, Alison Richards stated in February 2007 that "the Campaign represents our determination to raise the resources necessary to secure our future."

The rewards are being reaped in many different forms. Work is underway on the Centre for the Physics for Medicine (to be completed in

summer 2008), designed to ensure increased interdisciplinary cooperation in this seminal area.

A new Institute for Manufacture, currently under construction, and the entrepreneurship-promoting Hauser Forum will strengthen the links between the ivory towers of Cambridge academia and the cut-and-thrust world of business. The 10,000 individual donations received last year have also proved a significant boon for the development of research, the enrichment of student bursaries and the maintenance of Cambridge's ever-visible architectural heritage.

THEATRE

Yo ho ho, a pirate's life for me

The Pirates of Penzance
Arts Theatre

★★★★★

SCARLETT CREME

The lights dim, Maureen (who lovingly provided me with a running commentary throughout the show) finally stops talking about her varicose veins to Dave, the excellent orchestra begins and the curtain lifts to reveal the silhouette of a magnificent pirate ship. "Ooh, look Dave," exclaimed Maureen "look, look, there's a ship on the stage." Unfortunately for Maureen, Dave and myself, this piece of craftsmanship designed by the talented Claire Butcher is one of the few highlights of a production that showed several glimpses of promise but lacked spark overall.

The Pirates of Penzance is one of Gilbert and Sullivan's most famous operettas. Set on the coast of Cornwall, a pirate crew "play and party" according to the programme, as pirate apprentice Frederick, played by Tom Cane, tells the pirate king that his obligation to them is over now that he is 21. Dear Fred is also a slave of duty and decides that he must destroy the pirates as he loathes what they do. The male chorus is certainly the weak link in these first acts. They troup onstage without any conviction and look

utterly bored. Their first dance routine is the most spiritless line dance I have ever had to bear witness to.

Frederick leaves the ship and takes 47-year-old Ruth (Fiona Mackay) with him as his wife, believing her to be the embodiment of female beauty. However, upon leaving the ship Frederick hears a chorus of girls who, unlike Ruth, appear to be both young and beautiful. In comparison to their male counterparts the female chorus is brilliant. The execution of their first song provoked the first loud applause of the evening. It is, however, Mary Ellen Lynall (Mabel) who really steals the show. As the primping leader of the daughters of Major General Stanley she is fantastic. Maureen even stopped hanging over the edge of the pit to admire her abilities.

Naturally Fred falls head over heels in love with this vision in the pretty yellow frock, but there just doesn't seem to be any chemistry between them; their love scenes are as passionless as the planks of MDF on the ship. There is a similar problem during the confrontation scene between Ruth and Frederick: Ruth is jealous that her darling boy loves another, but whilst watching them one gets the feeling that their hearts weren't really in it. Mackay is strong in her opening solo, but paired with Frederick the song falls disappointingly flat.

This was especially true when



the pirates rushed onstage to capture the girls. I was half expecting the female chorus to take their flowered arches and beat the male crew into submission. It was a shame this did not happen. It might have been more interesting. Again the pace was lifted by Dave Walton, playing Major-General Stanley, who stormed the stage to rescue what could have been another half baked scene. Walton puts in a show-stopping display,

blowing previous scenes out of the Cornish water. He is certainly a star to watch in future.

The production becomes a far more exhilarating experience during the final scenes, and that is not because it is nearly over. Go and see a performance of one of Gilbert and Sullivan's classics, in a week dominated by new writing and more sinister offerings, for some strong performances and a fabulous score, if for nothing else.



Christ's
Fry-tening phonecalls

One lucky lady making her way back to College stopped by the Van Of Death for a bit of late night refreshment. A few days later the diligent student received a call on her mobile from a voice who simply described himself as “the grease merchant from Death”, extolling the virtues of her beauty and extending a Valentine’s invitation to “the Van”. The purveyor of Cambridge’s finest artery-clogging fodder had somehow managed to procure her telephone number as well as her cheesy chips without the lady remembering anything of it. No wonder when one considers the parallels between fast-food and speed-dating.

Trinity Hall
Webbed feat

Cambridge Spies met Cambridge Spider, when having failed to net a lady, our recently single protagonist returned home to find a web-like structure installed in his room. Strings were suspended between various items: the door handle had been tied to the aerial of a DAB digital radio, and a chair had been coupled up with a copy of Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. The culprit, the victim’s ex, was discovered lying topless on the bed, having paused thoughtfully between web-making and sleep to vomit on the floor.

Robinson
Copping a feel

A Model gentleman, having his wicked way with a girl beside a main road, gave the impression to onlooking motorists that the copulation was not entirely mutually agreeable. Thankfully, our country’s laws deem unwanted penetration to be illegal, dubbing it “rape”. The passing drivers clearly put two and two together, and immediately phoned the local constabulary with some concern. The fuzz were quick to answer their call, but unfortunately by the time of their arrival the gentleman and his belle had long since disappeared, presumably to take their shenanigans to a more appropriate locale.

Diplomas may spell end for A-levels

DAISY BELFIELD

The A-level qualification could soon be abolished following the introduction of the new Diploma scheme in September. Prime Minister Gordon Brown recently implied that the new Diploma will be introduced as a replacement for the old A-level system rather than as an alternative. His comments were made in response to concerns that allowing schools to choose between the two qualifications will lead to the development of a two-tier system of education. Critics fear that the Diploma risks being regarded as a vocational and less prestigious alternative to the A-level.

National Schools Secretary Edward Balls claimed that the Diploma, with its focus on work experience and emphasis on combining in-depth theoretical and practical study of specific subject areas with English, Maths, and ICT, “could emerge as the jewel of our education system”. He said that the qualification could bridge the gulf between the academic and business worlds. But support for the new qualification from leading universities is divided. A recent BBC survey showed that 38% of admissions tutors said they were “very unlikely” to accept Diplomas as a viable alternative to A-levels. However, it also found that 48% would be prepared to consider them.

Cambridge admissions staff seem to be in favour of the new Diploma. Geoff Parks, Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Cambridge and a member of the Diploma Development Partnership, has spoken in defense of the new

“A levels can not be safeguarded beyond 2013”

qualifications. He said “The University strongly welcomes any moves that will encourage young people to study

the sciences, maths and modern languages in particular at a higher level.” He also said: “I anticipate that many of our academics would welcome a role in the development of the Diploma. We have had extensive input into the Engineering Diploma, with the goal of ensuring that it will be a suitably rigorous qualification for entry into higher education.” Nearly 40,000 teenagers in 900 schools and colleges around the country will be participating in the 17 courses offered by the Diploma scheme when it is introduced this autumn. Courses will include Construction, Hair and Beauty, Hospitality, Public Services and Retail.



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matter.

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VARSITY

ISSUE 672, 15 FEBRUARY 2008

Row on Williams

It was disappointing to see Dr Rowan Williams heckled outside St Mary's Church on Saturday and to receive such vitriolic condemnation in the national press. At a time of such public disunity and insecurity, his open-minded honesty should have been praised, not chastised. Dr Williams was, after all, not advocating the radical implementation of the full Islamic penal code but rather the sensitive treatment of different cultures, of which Islam is just one, within British and European law. While he must have known that his couched but convoluted words would have provoked such a hysterical reaction, he should rightfully be disappointed that yet again Britain's mass media has taken what were perfectly reasonable, measured and conciliatory remarks completely out of context.

The furore has at least reminded us of two important lessons. The first is obvious; the country's news outlets, this publication included, are too sensationalist and too eager to kowtow to populist opinion. Unfortunately, in our celebrity-fuelled and reactionary culture, this is unlikely to change. The second lesson is more subtle; as a population, we have too weak an understanding of what Shariah law is. Too many of us still have some hazy vision of Shariah as one endless string of misogynistic and homophobic stonings when in fact there is a very great disparity in the execution of Islamic Law in Muslim societies around the world. While some of the horror stories may have some credence, and some Shariah laws despicably only favour men, it is important to remember that in many cases, Shariah law is restricted to civil rather than criminal cases. Let's not be so quick to judge a system which many of us know little about.

Who's who?

Many will be surprised by the widespread ignorance of the identities of some of the most important members of the university. However, it must be remembered that it is not necessarily the duty of these people to be in the public eye. Better for them to be attending to their significant and wide-reaching duties with diligence and tact than to be needlessly prominent; this will only hamper their ability to perform their job. It is when officials pander to the public that politics is at its worst. Self-promotion should be reserved for entertainers. Jimmy Carr's high recognition-rating in this week's Varsity survey is a testament to the comedian's success.

More often than not publicity which might improve public knowledge of officials is indicative of deficiency on their part, or on the part of the organisation which they might represent. If someone's profile is low, it might just be the case that they're getting on with their job, and good for them.

Varsity has been Cambridge's independent student newspaper since 1947, and distributes 10,000 free copies to every Cambridge college and to ARU each week.

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*Some names have been changed



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LETTERS

letters@varsity.co.uk

Boxing blues

Sir,

Of late, I have received several complaints from students concerning the conduct of a "boxing Blue". Each of them has met a "boxing Blue" at some point this year, or the tail end of last, and has phoned to complain that the "boxer" in question has behaved in a boorish, arrogant manner at University events, from college formals to society squashes.

It is boxing and I expect the lads to be fairly full of themselves; I'm not looking for shy, retiring types. But I'm keen to stamp on behaviour that brings the Club into disrepute.

This particular "Blues boxer" does not come to mind, and it would seem we have some mystery boxer out there who is claiming to be a Blues boxer. A petty offence I agree, but my lads work very hard to even get to the final squad of 18 from the 80 that start, and even then only nine will make the final cut at the start of March each year. At that point they have given time, effort and, quite literally, blood, sweat and tears to make the Varsity team. You can imagine that some sections of the club would be very unimpressed by a person claiming to be a boxing Blue, and not just claiming, but wearing the Blues jacket as well.

Those who have encountered this "boxer" have said he looks decidedly "weasly". He has declared on various occasions that he is the "head of sports at Hughes", a "research fellow at Eddies", and "one of the 2006 Blues boxing team". He sports a Blues blazer and is described as having a "foreign-sounding" name.

In your recent edition you "outed" a "fake student" at Trinity ('Imposter apprehended after year-long deceit', Issue 670), I would be interested if anyone knows who this "Blues boxer" is, and if they are a fake to either join the boxing club and actually train, or give up claiming to have done what only 800 people have ever done in 100 years of Cambridge boxing. I am happy to supply the last 100 years worth of names that have received Blues from CUABC.

Yours faithfully,

**Vincent O'Shea,
Coach, CUABC**

Hughes errors

Sir,

I was disappointed to read an article in Varsity last week ("Corruption" at Cambridge', Issue 671) that gave space and credence to the idea that Hughes Hall is somehow a substandard college involved in jeopardising a student's opportunities. The allegations that you reported last week under the ironic title of "News" are nearly 15 years old and contain serious errors because much of the article is cut or paraphrased directly from the diatribe of an embittered former student of the University. Hughes Hall is a vibrant, active and dynamic college and from what I gather from many old members who return regularly to our May Ball, it has been this way for many years. It is full of hard-working and hard-socialising people who enjoy some of the best accommodation and best food provided by any Cambridge college.

**Keir Shiels,
MCR President,
Hughes Hall**

Hunter blatherer

Sir,

In response to Joe Hunter's 'Yes' position in last week's varsity debate ('Are men worth it?', Issue 671) could I just say that I have, as advised, "thought carefully" about why it is that I would expect my boyfriend to stand up for me if a drunk tried to grope me and then called me a "slag". I would expect him to stand up for me (not necessarily to "fight

for me" with physical aggression) for the same reason that I would expect a female friend to shout "What a fucking cock!" at



the top of her lungs, or take a well-aimed handbag-swing at him. I would expect people who care about me to hurl expletives at predatory sex pests, regardless of their gender.

Yours faithfully,

**Olivia Sudjic,
Trinity Hall**

Re: porters

Sir,

I wish to respond to your article reporting the conviction of the Head Porter of St John's (Issue 671). I am particularly outraged with the closing quotation of the article: "Now that two have been convicted of serious offences, we've lost all faith in the St. John's porters." First, I have every faith in the porters and custodians of St. John's College; they are friendly, helpful and hard working people who deserve the respect of students. Second, concerning the "two porters convicted of serious criminal offences", Mr Bailey's conviction occurred over two years ago, prior to the student responsible for this quotation even attending St. John's. I have every confidence in Mr Bailey, this conviction had no impact on his ability to perform his job, and I suspect it is mortifying for him to have this indiscretion dredged up from the distant past. In regard to Mr Hay, I cannot defend him without knowledge of the circumstances that surround his conviction; all I will say is that throughout the two and a half years that I have known him he was always approachable and performed his job with discretion and respect for all. I will miss seeing him around the college. Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the porters and custodians at St. John's, I appreciate what you do for this college and its students, especially at this difficult time.

Yours faithfully,

**Alex Wilsham,
St. John's**

Sexual tension

Sir,

In response to Asad Kiyani's comment piece ('Theatre as therapy', Issue 670), I fail to see how violence against women (implicitly, by men) is any different from violence against men, which would surely be the world's most prevalent form of violence if we are to divide by sex.

Domestic violence is not a one-way street, to mention it only in the light of "violence against women" is at best ignorant, at worst dishonest and misandric. It is well documented that men and women perpetrate generalised acts of domestic violence against each other at equal rates (see Murray A. Straus' pioneering work).

The "reclamation" of Valentine's Day as a day to remember all the horrible acts of violence some men have perpetrated against women down the years seems as perverse, negative and narrow-minded as "reclaiming" Remembrance Sunday as an opportunity for the glorification of war.

Yours faithfully,

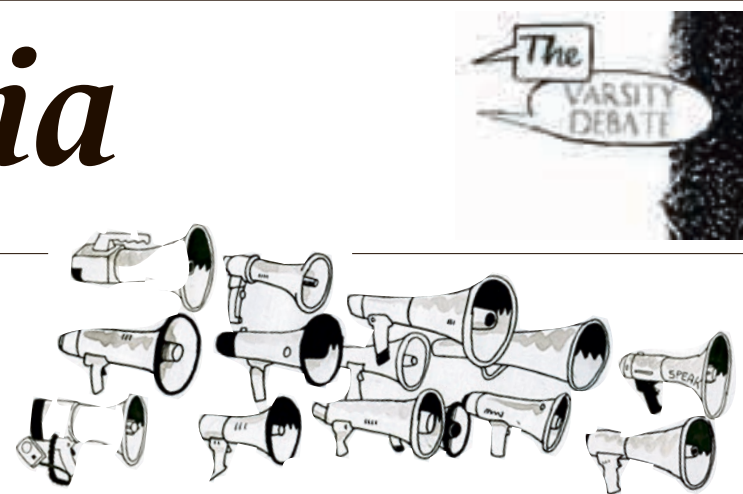
**Tom Mason,
Queens'**

Write the letter of the week and win a bottle from our friends at the Cambridge Wine Merchants

DEBATE

Formalising *sharia*

The Archbishop of Canterbury's insistence last week that the formalisation of sharia law was inevitable sparked an outcry across the UK. While Rowan Williams suggested the integration would be limited, he continued to be excoriated in the media. Varsity Comment asks whether sharia law should be formally integrated, in the limited fashion suggested by the Archbishop.



Rachelle
Arulanantham



YES

Like many, my initial reaction to reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury advocates officially introducing Sharia law to the UK was one of bemusement, even outrage. Yet the more I read, the more I felt a different outrage – not at the Archbishop, but at the disparity between his actual speech and the hysterical, semi-xenophobic reaction by the public and media.

I have a confession to make. I like to think of myself as a law-abiding British citizen. Yet I also live according to religious laws which inform my diet, dress, daily routine, and behaviour towards others. These laws are not Sharia but Halakha, followed worldwide by Orthodox Jews.

Like every legal system, Halakha has its own courts. While smaller courts exist in the UK, the London Beth Din (est. 1870) is acknowledged as the overall authority. In addition to kosher certification, it oversees marriages, divorces, conversions, and (if agreed by both parties) cases of civil arbi-

tration between Jews. were naive. Perhaps so. But we must take the context into account. This was a keynote academic lecture, in Temple Church, opening a series of public discussions entitled 'Islam in English Law', suggesting the issue is already of importance. As mentioned, informal Sharia courts already exist, while accommodation is made in English law for 'Sharia-friendly' mortgages among other things. The Archbishop specifically discussed whether to further formalise Sharia's relationship with English law, and if so how.

Here, the media has let us all down. Dr Williams was widely reported as saying that some UK citizens 'do not relate to the British legal system.' In fact, he opened his lecture (worth reading in full) by noting 'the presence of communities who, while no less 'law-abiding'...relate to something other than the British legal system alone.' This distinction is crucial. Muslims and Jews all have an equal obligation to live under UK law, as well as by their own laws – of course, requiring negotiation when the two conflict, but never with the aim of 'trumping' UK law.

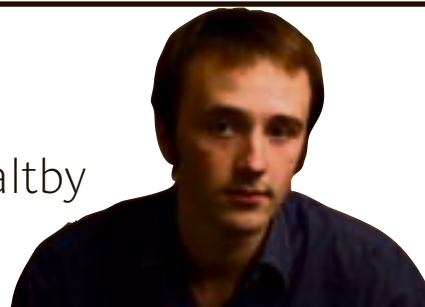
This dialogue can even be helpful. Take divorce – Jews must obtain a religious divorce from the Beth Din in order to avoid future marriage difficulties, but they must also obtain a civil divorce. Furthermore, thanks to the two systems' integration, a woman can withhold the civil decree absolute if her husband refuses to grant a religious divorce, helping to resolve difficult cases for Jewish women.

There may well be similar positives for formalising Sharia courts in the UK for matrimonial issues. It is precisely this recognition of life under two legal systems and the possibilities for negotiation between them which the Archbishop explores – not only for Muslims, but also the wider religious community.

Interestingly, Muslims' overall reactions have been to publicly reject the Archbishop's comments. This may be to deflect Islamophobia, or a genuine acceptance of the current status quo. However, unlike Halakha, interpretations of Sharia currently range widely, with no real consensus between Britain's diverse Muslim communities. While an authority modelled upon the London Beth Din could potentially aid long-term stabilisation, the complex issues will require much debate by Islamic scholars as well as by legal experts.

Ultimately, it will be up to them, not the Archbishop, to decide the issue of UK Sharia. More importantly, we should be open in principle to the idea – not resorting to a knee-jerk reaction to the worst aspects of Sharia that, in turn, brings out the worst in us.

Ed
Maltby



No

Rowan Williams' proposals might seem reasonable enough. He defends the right of believers to practice their religion in a secular society and that the law must take this seriously: "citizenship in a secular society should not necessitate the abandoning of religious discipline, any more than religious discipline should deprive one of access to liberties secured by the law of the land, to the common benefits of secular citizenship". Socialists would agree here. We defend freedom of worship, though we steadfastly oppose religious attacks on other rights and freedoms. A secular society must protect religious freedoms, and its laws shouldn't stigmatise or persecute any religious group. Democracy means minority rights. But Williams' proposal that democratically-drawn up, secular law should "loosen its monopolistic framework" has sinister implications.

Officially-recognised religious courts exist, like the Jewish-Orthodox Beth Din. Quarrelling parties can go before a Rabbi, who will produce a ruling. If both parties declare that they agree to abide by the rabbinical decision, the Beth Din's ruling is considered legally binding by UK courts. As the BBC puts it, "people may legally devise their own way to settle a dispute in front of an agreed third party so long as both sides agree to the process."

If two free and consenting parties want to find their own, equitable way of solving a dispute, that's fine. But when it comes to conservative, traditionalist religious communities, questions of consent are far from clear-cut.

If the Government has given her the option of going to a Sharia court rather than to a secular court to settle a marital dispute, a young Muslim woman in a close-knit, conservative community may find herself under a great deal of pressure to choose an Imam over a solicitor. A Catholic worker employed by a member of his diocese, say, who, given the choice, went to an industrial tribunal to file a claim against his boss, rather than to a priest, might find himself shunned by the rest of his congregation. If the family of a young Orthodox Jew gave her the choice between going to the Beth Din rather than a secular court, or being disinherited, how "free" would her decision to abide by the rabbinical ruling be? For marginal and vulnerable groups (especially women, gays and apostates) within conservative religious communities, it is often hard enough as it is to stand up to family and priestly authority: the threats of being disowned by one's community and of eternal damnation, are real and traumatic enough. But if the government were to officially recognise the pronouncements of unelected religious

leaders, many people would find themselves with even less protection.

Williams proposes regulatory bodies of religious scholars. But who would elect their members? Other priests. And what if these bodies started upholding reactionary rulings? Many religious leaders make a great show of their 'cosmopolitan' credentials whilst secretly harbouring outright bigoted views.

"How much power would religious courts want? How far into society would religious leaders try to extend their influence?"

Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim scholar who Williams appears to consider a moderate, says that "a Muslim woman cannot marry a man from another religion". Sir Iqbal Sacranie, founding leader of the Muslim Council of Britain, described homosexuality as "unacceptable" and compares it to a disease.

How much power would religious courts want? How far into society would religious leaders try to extend their influence? Secularists cannot afford to be complacent. Religions rarely voluntarily curb their own power. When given the chance, as in Spain, Ireland, the USA and Iran, priests grab power and don't let go. In the last couple of years, Cardinals O'Brien and Murphy O'Connor have told Catholics how to vote in the general election, and threatened Catholic MPs with excommunication if they vote the wrong way on abortion.

The secular freedoms we enjoy in society today weren't won without a fight, and religious leaders are still determined to claw back power for themselves. Only a fully secular, democratic state can defend our rights. We must defend freedom of religion. We must guard against religious influence in politics.

"Muslims and Jews all have an equal obligation to live under UK law, as well as by their own laws."

tration between Jews.

These courts operate perfectly legally under a concession made by English law. Yet – as seen this week – the average non-Jewish Brit has never heard of them. This is understandable. After all, Btei Din have no impact whatsoever on you. There is no reason why Sharia courts, operating along the same lines and with the same restrictions (e.g., no penal cases), can't work with the same minimum of fuss. In fact, on an informal basis, they already do.

Some have argued the Archbishop's remarks





Varsity has, of late, been subjected to a certain amount of censure. Earnest and indignant members of the student body have been launching left, right and centre into vitriolic tirades against student journalism. Even the more moderate dissenters have expressed relief that the newspaper provides a solution to their weekend loo roll shortage.

Criticisms over superficiality of tone, sensationalism of topic and uselessness of restaurant reviews are always rounded off with a short snort of derision and exclamations such as “withering garbage!” or “what tosh!”

Who cares for competing college “fitties” or apocryphal tales told in euphemistic winks about deans interrupting anonymous blues who are wetting themselves in the middle of a threesome with their bedder and a Big Issue seller on the dancefloor of Cindy’s?

In laboratories deep beneath the university scientists are curing cancer and working out why superglue doesn’t stick to the inside of the tube, but Varsity is too busy reporting on another JCR squabble between the ents secretary and the events officer in which insults were exchanged and digestive biscuits hurled.

Outside the bubble there are wars, recessions and politicians swimming in scandal. Inside the bubble the response is a chart asserting the self-evident fact that mathmos don’t have sex.

“For any of Varsity’s pragmatic purposes there is inevitably another media outlet doing the job better”

But what can one expect? If one wishes to read about the news outside of a college bop then pick up a copy of the Cambridge Evening News, or better still buy a national newspaper. For informative and comprehensive reviews the internet is a seemingly limitless resource populated by amateur journalists who don’t spend their afternoons thinking of witty comments to fill the yawning Sunday theatre space in the weekly View listings.

In fact for any of Varsity’s pragmatic purposes there is inevitably another media outlet doing the job better. Except, of course, for hosting the self-indulgent scribbles of the likes of me. And for providing fodder for lazy columnists who think student shenanigans are worthy of mention.

The idea of an article justifying the existence of Varsity within the hallowed pages of Varsity is a rather pleasing irony. Like holding a march to defend the right to protest, except more smug. But the critics, inevitably sitting and swilling hearty ales in the corner of curious pubs which they like because they’re not ‘cramped with undergraduates’, may have a point. Varsity is self-centred and capricious, but only as much as the average Cambridge student.

Katy Lee



Emperor of the EU

Vain or not, Blair is the best candidate for President

Reports that Tony Blair is considering a bid for the EU presidency have, predictably, met with more or less universal displeasure. It’s a kind of Pavlovian response: seven months after he left office, we still tend to react with an automatic antipathy whenever we see him.

Blair’s trouble is that he has not allowed us enough time to properly miss him. It may be that, like the Spice Girls, he will one day be able to return to the glare and be greeted only with a wave of nostalgia. The point is that for this to happen, he needs to disappear for a while.

It would be acceptable for him to busy himself by churning out books, like Churchill, while he waits. It would be even better if he could discover a passion for farming, like Eden. But Blair has declined to fade into oblivion even temporarily. Seemingly not content with a multi-million pound book deal, a £2.5 million salary from JP Morgan, and the cash he’s made on the international conference circuit, he has felt compelled to stay in the public eye by becoming the quartet’s Middle East envoy. He’s now allowing himself to be touted, apparently reluctantly, as a strong candidate for a job which would involve another five years of him shaking important hands and grinning from the pages of newspapers.

It’s not his attraction to the job per se that irritates people. It’s

their guess that he only wants it if turns out to be influential and high-profile enough. His appetite for the limelight is seemingly insatiable. There are rumours he is interested partly because his Middle East job doesn’t afford him enough promi-



nence - he will not play a key role in this year’s Israeli-Palestinian talks, and will instead be resigned to the apparently more prosaic task of supporting economic and political development in Palestine.

The assumption is that he covets the presidency of the EU Council because the Lisbon Treaty’s loose job description suggests the new president could act as the “face of Europe”. The only part of the job that genuinely interests him is “external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy”. The patient chairing of tedious meetings

- central to the job - will not appeal to him at all. Given the presidency, Blair will be so preoccupied with prancing on the world stage that he’ll neglect his more humdrum duties.

This is not a fair or helpful assessment of Blair’s sensibilities. He may well want the job primarily because the idea of being the “face of Europe” appeals to his vanity. But his penchant for glamour does not mean he would do a bad job in the EU. If anything, Blair’s anxiety to secure himself a place in the history books drove him, during his premiership, to change Britain and the world for the better.

Granted, he made wrong, sometimes disastrous judgements in attempting to do so. But just as Blair is aware that his reputation will never recover from Iraq, he is aware that the stakes of the EU post could be high. If he is to be the first full-time Council president, he will be desperate to be remembered as a great one - particularly since this could be his last public job before he “retires” to give overpriced lectures in earnest. He has the talent and experience to go with the ambition, too. As a seasoned negotiator, there is no reason why he could not preside competently over bargaining within the Council.

It’s unfortunate for Blair there are so many factors suggesting he won’t get the job. Iraq is the biggest black mark against his name. The

attitude of many of the 14,000 who have already signed the online petition against his candidacy is that the International Criminal Court’s dock would be a more appropriate place for him than a smart Brussels office. French statesmen Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and Edouard Balladur have both argued that the first president must come from a country fully committed to all EU policies, including the euro. Smaller countries are inevitably wary about key jobs being filled by big shots from the richest and most powerful EU members. All in all, given that heads of EU governments will pick the president by majority, it’s doubtful he will come out top.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel could emerge as a more tolerable candidate if, as some predict, she is pushed from office this year. She does not have Blair’s panache, but she might meet less resistance from smaller states than him, and she generally inspires less abhorrence. She also carries more clout on the world stage than Wolfgang Schäussel or Jean-Claude Juncker, the other names that are being bandied about.

So Blair will probably see himself cheated out of this chance to add another chapter to his memoirs. But he has plenty of material to be getting on with already. The most considerate course of action might just be to make himself scarce and get quietly writing.

Jacob Leland



Pan-European progress

The greater integration of Europe is smart and successful

Few people in Britain these days will dispute the innumerable advantages that the liberalisation of free market structures and closer economic integration in Europe have brought, however speak of greater political integration and most Britons will react at best with a rather vague sense of unenthusiasm, but more frequently with outright hostility.

When the people in the latter category are pushed for a justification of their disdain, more often than not it turns out they object not to the European project in principle, but rather to Britain being a part of it.

The view that emerges is one of polarity and disparity. Britain somehow stands aloof from the rest of Europe, as if the tiny sliver of sea that separates us from the continent were a vast tumultuous ocean, an unbridgeable cultural gulf. One hears statements such as “We are different from Europe”, or even “Britain is not part of Europe”, the latter of which surely would come as a surprise to any geographer.

The objection to such statements is twofold. This model of opposition, which regards Europe as a single entity, takes no account of the vast cultural differences found within Europe. It also ignores the innumerable similarities between Britain and our continental neighbours, which will be obvious for anyone with even the most cursory

knowledge of Britain’s history.

Those who have perhaps given the issue marginally more thought beyond the initial kneejerk reaction often cite the issue of sovereignty. The idea is that the EU is trying, for some reason or other, to gradually erode Britain’s sovereignty by stealth until Britain becomes some sort of vassal state to Brussels.

The fault in this logic is that the EU administrative and legislative structures are not composed of some breed of stateless megalomaniacs, but by men and women who, like us, have passports and national allegiances, and (a minority of federalists aside) wish to preserve the sovereign rights of their mother country, whilst furthering the cause of pan-European cooperation.

For instance, why would the Baltic States, who struggled so long to achieve independence from the Soviet Union, immediately wish to jettison all their sovereign rights and join another centralised power bloc?

In most EU countries other than Britain the question of integration is simply not controversial. People from across the political spectrum support the European project not due to any Federalist leanings or over-earnest convictions about the destiny of our continent, but simply due to a belief that Europe, and the constituent countries that form it, is stronger and more effective when it acts as a unit.

This brings to mind the third main criticism, that the EU is a vast, unwieldy and inefficient bureaucratic monster which gobbles up our taxes at one end and defecates useless legislation at the other.

This is quite far from the reality. Apart from the pointless waste of time and resources engendered by

“This model of opposition takes no account of the vast cultural differences found within Europe”

having plenary sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and the main negotiations and offices in Brussels, the EU is actually a very efficient organisation - only 31,000 people work in the European Commission, a bureaucratic institution that serves over half a billion people. Compare that to 500,000 for the UK Civil Service, and the fact that much of the ‘red tape’ that is perceived to come from the EU in fact comes from our own administration.

For every directive that the EU produces, Britain produces an average of 2.6 implementing documents, compared with only 0.89 in Portugal. In fact, in the past

ten years the EU has repealed more directives than it has put on the statute book, and much of the legislation that has been produced is eminently sensible stuff, ensuring the safety and well-being of European citizens (and I won’t even dignify ‘bendy banana’ myths with a response).

Even where one does not find antipathy towards the EU, apathy reigns. A Model European Council conference is to be held in Cambridge later this month. In addition to many overseas participants, there will be numerous people who have applied from Cambridge and other UK universities. Yet the proportion of these who are actually British is depressingly small.

It seems that the British just don’t want to be part of the pan-European decision making process, which is a pity considering how much influence Britain could have in Europe if its voice were not always weakened by infighting at home.

The most precious thing that the European project has brought is 60 years of peace and stability on our continent (which includes Britain), something our grandparents’ and great-grandparents’ generation would not have dared to hope for.

Given that this project is expanding both geographically and in scope and depth, it would be a great pity for Britain to stand aloof, beholden to the bizarre prejudices of some opponents.



I had never knowingly credited anyone who possessed hair extensions with the slightest inclination towards quick wittedness until last weekend. I was sitting in Gatwick, waiting for a plane which - it transpired - was delayed by four hours.

Small potatoes for one who is an Idler by trade, and the flâneur in me was rewarded immediately. A hairy rhino of a man with a ripe-brie stomach charged at the desk from which the offending announcement had just been made, bellowing, "Don't you know who I am?"

His peroxide target operating the Tannoy system evidently did not. Looking coolly at him for a moment, and being unable to place his bloated, bristly face in any recent reality show, she bent down toward her microphone and said, with a certain chutzpah found only by those who have lived in Slough, "A man at gate 24 appears to have forgotten his identity, anyone able to assist him, please come to the front of the queue." Such is the danger of celebrity shelf-life.

I always find it immensely gratifying to see a celebrity expending their last reserves of battery power in a failing bid to remain famous by suddenly becoming 'useful' - think former pop stars who now do adverts for thrush cream. It is a wonder (and yet a delight) that no one at Kellogg's bothered to inform Ian Wright/ Jo Frost/ Philippa Forrester before they began their arduous scientific research into the conundrum of the cabalistic cornflake, that their findings (little Sandeep, who eats cereal, is less likely, by and large - if you'll excuse the pun - to have a successful career in sumo-wrestling than Brunhilda, who skips breakfast but eats her own bodyweight in lard each day) would hardly warrant a cry of eureka.

Career-grafting is rarely successful, as shown by the episode of Arrested Development in which Tobias' entrepreneurial combination of Analyst and Therapist produces a business card which reads Analrapist.

It baffles me why these damp squibs don't just kick the bucket and cruise into ambrosial retirement; an infomercial is surely as jarring a death knell as any. Even us mere mortals who must feed the hungry maw of a mortgage know when to quit, and, more importantly, how to quit.

Only yesterday on a walk back from Grantchester I witnessed every pensioner's idyll. For a moment I thought I had accidentally trespassed on a WOMAD rehearsal as a band of about thirty wheat-shod OAPs (half of whom were romping in the sunlit fields, the other half constructing a defensive fort, some in armour, some in full-length white velour cloaks, most brandishing wooden swords, and one wielding an axe) were busily recreating some kind of Arthurian battle to the warblings of a minstrel in a leather jerkin. This beatific vision - only tarnished by the presence of a few Warhammer enthusiasts, whose pock-marked faces crusted with fake blood, resembled bits of biltong - is how retirement should be, and someone should find that mystery Gatwick rhino and tell him before he hones his expertise in plasma lipids and takes over Carol Vorderman's Benecol adverts.

Edd Mustill



Fighting against fees

Despite the NUS's failings, students can still object to fee hikes

Since the introduction of tuition fees, and especially top-up fees in 2006, the idea of education as a universal right has been systematically attacked. After next year, the cap on the amount of money universities are allowed to charge will be raised to an as yet unspecified amount, and the days of free university education will seem further away than ever. Instead, students will be encouraged to "shop around" for a course that gives them "value for money" while universities with a better reputation charge higher fees.

With the introduction of fees in educational institutions, knowledge becomes a product to be sold to those that can afford it. This has been the case for years with private schools and tutors, which can also prepare the children of the rich for the application processes of Oxbridge. Already, the proportion of students from lower income backgrounds applying to university has suffered from the introduction of fees. At least three-quarters of undergraduates are in debt, with the average debt by the end of a course now pushing £20,000.

The news which emerged a couple of weeks ago, that the country's top universities have failed to spend millions of pounds of bursary money allocated to help poorer students, only serves to prove that any sort of bursary scheme is no substitute for a free, publicly funded education system. Cambridge University underspent by hundreds of thousands of pounds equal to 15% of its bursary budget. Overall at least half of the Russell Group universities underspent. Here, though, the bursary system is more complicated than most. There are university bursaries, college bursaries, those arbitrarily awarded to students on a certain course, from a certain part of the country or even a particular school.

Meanwhile, proposals to sell off student loans to the private sector have quietly made their way through the House of Commons with the support of government ministers who them-

selves benefited from a free university education. Part by part, from school dinners to the construction of city academies, the state education system is being privatised. The introduction of fees and the marketisation of education are not two separate issues - they are inextricably linked by ideology. The supremacy of the free market allows our schools to be effectively bought by businessmen and religious fundamentalists under the city academies scheme, and the commodification of learning leads to the introduction of fees. Free-market capitalism is an ideology that denies the utility or even existence of learning for the benefit of society, or learning for learning's own sake. It is reasoned that everything worthwhile must benefit the individual by better preparing them for the job market. Everyone must pay their own way through the system.

In opposition to this is the socialist view of education, the view that everyone regardless of their age or background is entitled to learn, just as they are entitled to food, shelter and health care. These ideas have been mauled by successive governments but are still very much alive, as shown by the thousands of people who have marched against hospital cuts in recent years, or protested against the building of city academies for fear of a selective education system developing. Unfortunately, the leadership of the National Union of Students (NUS) has given up on this sort of activism. Instead they propose nothing but lobbies of ministers who consistently ignore them. Their current slogan of "Keep the cap" concedes defeat in the ideological argument, and presumes to speak for all students while doing so.

This attitude is hardly surprising, since the NUS - at the whim of the leadership - is in the process of transforming itself from a union into a charity. Under a proposed new constitution that will be put to a vote at this year's annual conference, unelected non-students would hold positions on the governing body of the NUS.

In the future, they would be able to veto any student campaigning on financial grounds. Of course a leadership that has instigated such a silent coup against the ideals and structure of the union clearly has no interest in the democratic involvement of rank-and-file students in political campaigning. Many of the sabbatical officers at the top of the union have not even been students since before the introduction of top-up fees, instead spending their days progressing through the bureaucratic full-time hierarchy of the NUS.

As a result, the self-organisation of students is vital. February 21 will see the third national day of action of the Campaign to Defeat Fees, which last year involved students on over fifty campuses nationwide. Local victories have been won against cuts in the public sector, including proposals to close university faculties. However, over a national issue like tuition fees, a co-ordinated national campaign is vital. In the face of the NUS leadership's lack of political will for such a movement, alternatives are available.

The first step to winning victories through campaigning is to break the mental barrier in so many people's minds that tells them, "Things might be bad but there is nothing we can do about it". In the end this will be achieved through the experience of individuals. The political culture in most universities mirrors that of wider society. It is seized and strangled by a group of professional "politicians" or union bureaucrats. Grass-roots activism is the cure for apathy, because it involves people in a direct form of democracy that many have never before experienced and because, contrary to popular belief, it often works. In the long run it is the only thing that does.

The Campaign to Defeat Fees in Cambridge is holding a rally at Anglia Ruskin University at 12 noon on February 21st, and a meeting in Keynes Hall, King's College at 5pm.

CUSU ELECTIONS



NOMINATIONS OPEN MIDDAY WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY.
WWW.CUSU.CAM.AC.UK/UNION/ELECTIONS

WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?



www.cambridgerag.org.uk/fashionshow

RAG FASHION SHOW

7.30pm
25th Feb 2008
The Cambridge Union
Tickets - £13/£16
VIP Seating - £16/£19

Tickets limited:
email sg433
to book



sweatyBetty **SISLEY** **cambridge rag** **CUSU Ents**
Cambridge Women's Society **TONI&GUY** **Bethan Bide**
Miss Selfridge **essentials** *Doudou Femme* **storm**
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Every Tuesday @ ballare

Tuesday 19th February

5th Week Blues

This week at Kinki come dressed
all in Blue and receive queue jump
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Dance to our new award winning DJ
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www.ballare.co.uk
Entry Prices:
(NUS) £3 b4 10pm/£4 after
(Other) £4 b4 10pm/£5 after





**“I used to do things like
put Coco Puffs
up my ass”**

JACK BLACK - PAGE 23

Editor of Vogue, Alexandra Shulman
Page 19

Mountain Goats interview
Page 20

A Cambridge Casanova on love poetry
Page 22

VIEW

Shackleton and Scott's ECCENTRIC EVENINGS

This Week: Lindy hop

Mr Shackleton and Mr Scott invite you on a journey into Cambridge's strangest subcultures

Back in the 20s, 'Scott Scotty' Scott and 'Boogaloo' Shackleton were quite the fix-tures on the hip circuit. We ate jazz, slept jazz and breathed in jazz cigarettes. We could do the Double Bugg better than Hebert 'Whitey' White, pulled out the Collegiate Shag with our eyes closed and spoke a mean jive to boot. So we Jumpin' Joe'd at the chance to iron our spats and hot foot it down the Norfolk Road for a night of Lindy Hopping.

Granted, it had been a while since those heady days, so we enrolled ourselves in the absolute beginners' class. Unfortunately, Cambridge's premiere Lindy Hop venue, The Man On The Moon is no Renaissance Ballroom. The classes take place in a grotty gig room, which was met with disapproval by our canny accomplice, the Viscount. A quick glance around the clientele revealed a wide range of ages, with some looking like relics of our uptown days.

Our instructors were an eager pair from the other side of the Atlantic. Their low-key appearance gave no hint of their considerable lindy prowess, and their initial demonstration elicited a frightened murmur from Scott. The Viscount and I, however, were made of sterner stuff, and braced

ourselves for our first lesson.

Thankfully, our instructors went easy on us, breaking us in with the Charleston Step. The Viscount scoffed at the move's simplicity: at its best, the Charleston Step looks like a stylish walk backwards and forwards. However, it is precisely co-ordinated to 8 beats, and both Scott and I had lost our Jazz-Age smoothness.

Things were quickly complicated by the addition of a dance partner. My long limbs, never allies of grace, proved tough to keep up with, and Scott was simply terrified by close female contact. Just as we began to feel comfortable with our progress, the instructors threw a spanner into the works by adding the Face-To-Face Charleston. This move involved pushing one's partner into position while keeping time and, more importantly, a cool demeanour. Our abilities only led to a lot

of shoving and tussling, but without the hoped-for frisson.

Scott's face said it all – we had failed to master the Charleston or any of its variants. Despite offers to swing the night away, we retreated and headed to the Viscount's mansion to drown our sorrows in his moonshine.

For information on Lindy-Hopping classes in Cambridge, go to www.cambridgelindy.com



Cumming On a Treadmill



I have recently taken up exercise, in the allegedly 'mild' form of occasional jogging. This is largely because I am overweight, obviously. There are only two sorts of people who go jogging: fat people who want to be thinner, and crazy people. Ask yourself, when you get home, which category you fall into, and adjust your spiritual self-worth accordingly.

However, it is also partially because I think it's good to try everything once, with the obvious exceptions of Dr Pepper and bungee jumping (the former because I am engaged in legal proceedings with the company over the exact sense of the word 'misunderstood', and the latter simply because as a concept I think it's madder than a bin full of Britney).

Although this said, it might be more accurate to say that exercise has taken up me. Certainly it feels like I'm the one being lifted, and then dropped, heavily, back to the floor again, and certainly I'm the charitable case in the exchange. Exercise doesn't owe me anything, whilst I, over the years, have clocked a number of savage crimes against exercise. For instance, just last weekend I visited three restaurants within two hours, just for fun.

Two things I have noticed on these tentative jogs are that my heart beats faster, and hurts, and that my breathing becomes shorter and less effective. In fact, it often feels like I might actually be damaging myself, rather than making myself better, through this effort of self-improvement, which is not what I envisioned at all. What I envisioned, originally, was that I would hop to Parker's Piece, have a Pizza Hut for lunch, jog back, look in the mirror and watch, enthralled, as my vision improved and my musculature defined itself, not unlike the scene in the first of the recent Hollywood adaptations of the

comic series 'Spiderman'.

You can only imagine how frustrating it was when it didn't happen at all like that. After jogging to Parker's Piece, I was sweating so profusely that I had to sit on a bench, where quickly the perspiration caused my ambitiously sleeveless Nike t-shirt to mould rather exactly the contours of my upper torso. This unfortunate state of affairs, combined with my sedentary posture, made aspects of my anatomy somewhat resemble those of a lady, a fact not lost on a quintet of passing schoolchildren, who demonstrated both a surprising boldness with their elders and an extensive, readily available vocabulary of biological terminology.

After a few minutes sat on the bench, whilst I thought about how they collectively resembled nothing so much as a hive of miniature, navy Gordon Ramsays, and how Gordon Ramsay's face resembles a sphincter, I composed myself enough for lunch as they scampered on their merry way, presumably to set fire to a dog turd, or loiter in a newsagent's all at the same time. I wandered up with customary joie de vivre, only to be turned away from the door, mysteriously on grounds of 'odour'. My pleas for clemency, and even offers of eating in the loo, cut no mustard.

It was really quite depressing.

I'm not sure if any of my erstwhile readers have ever been turned away from a Pizza Hut on grounds of odour, or even been turned away from chain pizza joints at all, but I ought to warn you that at the time, it feels like a relatively low socio-cultural limbo pole to master. This is particularly the case if, like me, you pride yourself on only ever having been banned from a fast-food restaurant once, the result of a misunderstanding over the exact sense of the phrase 'Dr Pepper'.

I jogged on.

Face Off

They're fit, you're fickle. Who's fitter? There's the pickle

Round 3: Queens' versus Pembroke



Phil is a 4th year Linguist and Sarah is a 3rd year Economist

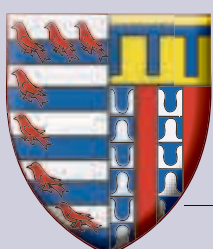


Omar is a 1st year Engineer and Milli is a 1st year Lawyer



TO VOTE FOR QUEENS',
TEXT 'VARSITY QUEENS'
TO 60300.

Standard network charges apply.



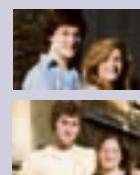
TO VOTE FOR
PEMBROKE, TEXT
'VARSITY PEMBROKE'
TO 60300.



Muscular Spiderman: not
the result of jogging

LAST WEEK'S RESULT:

Magdelene 40%
Peterhouse 60%



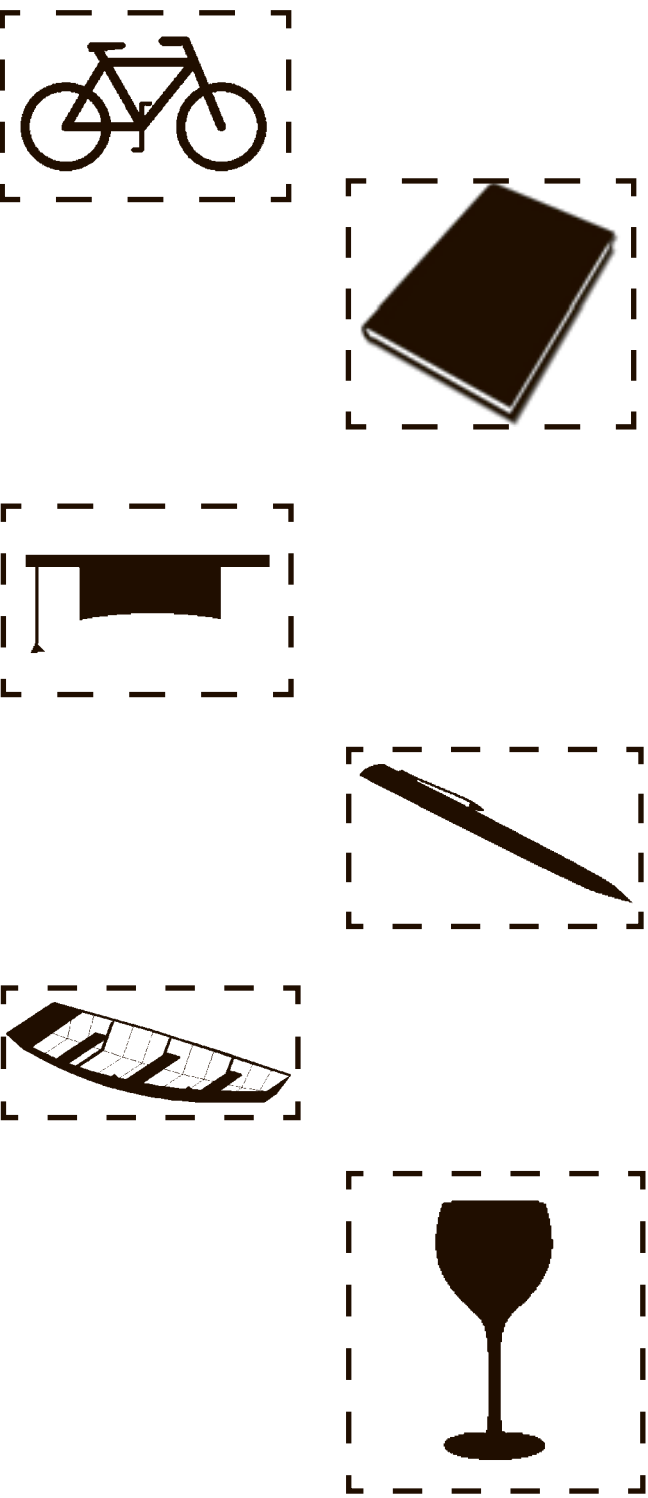
Welcome to Varsitopoly

- You will need:
- 1 Dice (a pair is preferable)
 - 2 A large cup to place in the middle of the board
 - 3 Alcohol. For six players, we recommend: 6 beers (1 each)/large glass of wine each; 4 shots of spirits each. For maximum enjoyment, it is recommended that these drinks can be refilled when finished.*

Cut out the counters below, roll the dice to decide which player begins, and move around the board, performing the challenges demanded of you by the squares you land on. If you land on Chance, roll one dice again, and according to the number you roll, all players follow the appropriate instructions given in the middle of the board. The game ends when the alcohol is finished/ when every player is sufficiently inebriated. The winner is the player who can then walk in the straightest line. Enjoy.

* Varsity reminds you to drink responsibly

Cut-out counters



Pull out this spread for your full Varsitopoly Board Game



Some rules explained:

20 plus ones
Play starts by the elected player saying “To my left/right”. He may then say “1”, “1,2” or “1,2,3”, and subsequent players continue the count. If two numbers are said (“a double”), play reverses direction. If three numbers are said (“a triple”) play skips a player. If a player speaks out of turn, says a double after a double or a triple after a triple, he/she must drink. Every time 21 is reached (it must be said “twenty plus one”), the player who says it must drink and add a new rule for future games (all multiples of 5 must be cheeses, etc).

Categories
The elected player thinks of a category, then each player must name something belonging to this category. He/she who fails or pauses msut drink.

Proposed to the left/right.
The elected player chooses a category (cheeses, European countries, wrestlers etc) and each subsequent player must choose a different example from that category. He/she who fails, drinks.

International Rules of Imbibement
No swearing, no first names, no pointing and no mention of the word “drink” in any capacity.

Waterfall
Play starts with the phrase “I propose a waterfall to my left/right” followed by the elected player starting to drink. As long as the person to your corresponding side is drinking, so must you be - simple as that. Particularly damaging for the player to the opposite side of the initial drinker

I Have Never
Once round the table - each player declares something he/she has never done. Anyone who has done the deed has to drink.

Busta-Rhyme
Proposed to the left/right. The elected person says a word, and each subsequent player must say a different, real, rhyming word. He/she who fails, drinks.

Pull out this spread for your full Varsitopoly Board Game



Back To Black



ALL SUITS AND GLASSES, MODEL'S OWN
GEORGIA WEARS SEQUINED DRESS, ZARA SALE, £5.95
MODELS: GEORGIA WARD DYER AND, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT,
MAX KIRCHHOFF, LUCAS KRUPP, TRISTAN HAMBLETON, FRANCIS WILLIAMS, JASON PAVAR, BENJ WALTON AND JAMES WOMERSLEY
PHOTOGRAPHER: JAMES POCKSON

COUTURE CRITIQUE



U.G.G.L.Y.
You ain't got no alibi. You ugly.

On the whole I try not to read the fashion pages, let alone write them. They've always seemed to me to be a frustrating combination of the inane and the hurtful, sprinkled gently with the visually depressing. Each picture of somebody beautiful wearing a brown coat is another beautiful person wearing a brown coat that isn't me, or even wanting to step out to the pictures with me, which is the perennially acceptable alternative. Fashion pages, in general, are to my mind the print equivalent of having a big mirror above my bed, emblazoned with the lyrics from Ludacris' 2002 hit 'Move Bitch'.

Aside from anything else, fashion pages imply that there might be something wrong with the way I'm presently dressed, which is a nasty thought from which only bad things can come. Appearance, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder (a fact convincingly reiterated by provincial dancefloors and the continued employment of David Schwimmer), and I like to think it's all a matter of personal taste, like how you take your fried eggs (on the chin, in my case).

Unfortunately, Ugg boots are terrible. I know this because I have seen them, frequently, adorning the feet of girls (and one boy) who ought to know better. Footwear, like many of the more basic innovations, occurs because it is appropriate to its environment. Football boots, for instance, are popular amongst people playing, or at least intending to play, football. In the same vein flippers are used more often by people swimming than people walking on dry land.

The Ugg boot, according to Wikipedia, the well-known shapeshifting encyclopaedia, was invented in Australia by sheep farmers, who had both ready access to sheep and very infrequent contact with other people, other people who might notice that they had a mammoth's muff strapped to each ankle. Later on the boots were adopted by fighter pilots, who had a need for warmth in an unpressurized environment, and for whom other people were also less of a problem (I suppose it could be argued that in many ways 'other people' are the problem if you're a fighter pilot. Them and missiles).

None of these factors is applicable to the modern high street, which has both a proliferation of other people and also a marked absence of sheep and missiles. And although it can get really quite crowded of a Christmas-time Saturday afternoon, Topshop still has a little way to go before it matches the climatic extremes of, say the Australian outback, or the Korean War. Wearing an Ugg boot in a modern, urban environment, with its wealth of other possible footwear choices, says three things of the wearer: a) I am not only a sheep, I am, like, wearing one. b) I have too high a disposable income for someone of my taste and judgement. c) I have not yet learned to fully appreciate the gift of sight.

Still, it's difficult to know exactly what to do to fix the issue. My original plan was to blind everyone who owned a pair, until it was pointed out to me that not being able to see would make it more difficult to dress oneself, and so the easy to slip-on Uggs would gain ground. My second was to invest in a pair myself in a fit of self-serving hypocrisy. The third was to ignore them, and hope they will eventually go away.

Ed Cumming

La vie en Vogue

Our fashion editors, **Olivia Sudjic** and **Beatrice Perry**, met with **Alexandra Shulman**, editor of British Vogue, to talk success, money and mens' mags.

On the train to Kings Cross it becomes evident that one nervous member of our expedition to meet Alexandra Shulman is not going to make it. A fellow passenger (male) watches with obvious enjoyment as we flummoxed technophobe females attempt to resuscitate our Dictaphone, which is having seizures on an operating table littered with editions of Vogue. We take out the batteries. Panicked, we put them back in. The Dictaphone flat-lines.

It is at this precise moment that every introduction you have ever read to almost every interview with Alexandra Shulman, the editor of British Vogue, comes in useful. She is 'Normal'. Good. She is not like Anna Wintour. Better. She is not like Miranda Priestly (the editor in *The Devil Wears Prada*). Better still. She goes to Queen's Park Rangers matches. Marvelously soothing; a QPR supporter has to be understanding of failure. Unfortunately such comforts begin to wane immediately upon entering Vogue House.

By the time the lift door opens on the fifth floor and we are met by what we hope is a super-model, but

turns out to be Alexandra's Amazonian assistant, we are starting to feel grossly misled. The corridors are lined with rails of Marni dresses. Jimmy Choos do overflow from every crevice. We have already seen a lot of orchids.

When we timidly inform Alexandra that the Dictaphone is not working, her response is "Well, it probably is. That's not very promising", and we agree with her, at once. So, was the editor of the most successful Condé Nast title (who has seen circulation climb steadily from 170,000 when she started in 1992 to over 220,000 now, and was rewarded with an OBE in 2005) never a poorly organised student herself? It doesn't seem likely; "even though I never had any plans set in stone of what I wanted to be, I never recall thinking: Oh help, what am I going to do?"

She does, however, have sympathy with the current student-generation: "It's harder and more competitive now. I was very lucky when I left Sussex – In those days, if you wanted a job, you could pretty much

get it with a certain amount of effort. Nowadays it takes a lot

longer and is a lot harder".

There is nothing remotely granddame about Shulman, no ice-queen aura, but equally, no nonsense. She is disarmingly frank about her career, citing "the motivation to make money" as one of the driving forces be-

"I do miss being invisible... there are times when it would be nice if people left you to it"

hind her success. "I have always been motivated by earning money. I still am." Shulman sees her work as a day job, rather than what defines her as a person. "As far as possible I like to keep stuff at the office separate from stuff at home – I'm very good at being strict with myself and compartmentalising". The majority of her friends are not in the fashion industry.

"In some ways that is one of my main regrets", she says slowly, "I have not made many close relationships through work." We point out that this may be because Shulman considers herself first and foremost a journalist, and not an air-kissing fashion maven. Condé Nast hired her not because she was a fashion editor (she had no fashion background), but because she was a strong editor.

"Perhaps it is because I didn't have any experience in fashion when I came to Vogue that I still feel like I'm learning all the time. I still feel slightly new". So being the editor of Vogue doesn't mean your primary interest has to be fashion?

"No. And it's the same with everything; whilst working at GQ I didn't know anything about Formula-1 cars, but a good editor knows whether a piece of writing has an energy about it." So was it hard being at the helm of a men's magazine? "Not really. In those days there wasn't pressure to put half-naked girls on the front cover. People were still optimistic that men's magazines could be sold without pin-ups".

Before working at GQ, Shulman worked at Tatler, and before that as women's editor of The Sunday Telegraph.

When asked about her brief stint in newspapers she is quick to reply "I've always preferred magazines because I always liked working on the visual side of things. On a magazine like Vogue you can really spend time getting the pages right."

She may not miss newspapers, but Shulman speaks wistfully of the days

when she was a rather more anonymous journalist; being able to slump at her desk and not having to speak, concentrating solely on the creative side of a magazine, rather than getting bogged down with budgets. "I do miss being invisible, not always by any means, but certainly there are times when it would be nice if people left you to it."

We wonder whether she ever gets the urge to do the writing and interviewing herself. "I interviewed Kate Moss last April. It takes a totally different part of my brain to editing, it's a much more egocentric thing".

What about if she weren't doing her present job, we ask, what would she be doing? "Nothing", says Shulman. "Oh. So there really isn't anything else you'd rather do than edit Vogue?" This, it transpires, is not what she means. She means she would literally do nothing. "I love the idea of waking up in the morning and not having anything planned for that day at all. But of course I love my job as well, and in terms of a career, there isn't anything else I could imagine doing".

Shulman has done this a few times during the interview. At one moment she is wildly enthusiastic, citing Miuccia Prada, Karl Lagerfeld and the Princess of Wales as just some of the interesting people she has got to meet through her work, the next she is claiming "I'm not emotional about working at Vogue. The rest of my life is very emotional, but I don't bring that into the office". She loves her job, but she loves dinner parties and holidays with friends more. "I don't think of myself as the editor of Vogue. I wasn't always the editor, and I won't always be the editor, so it's lucky that I don't".

But for all her 'compartmentalising', Shulman does, of course, know that she is on to

"I'm not emotional about working at Vogue"

a good thing, so good that she's kept at it for 16 years. "When I came to vogue the market had changed quite a lot. There was a pressure to do something with Vogue to make it more accessible - it was felt that it was too elitist and too rarefied, that it was just about the fashion industry."

Shulman says they are now toying with the idea of including an increased lifestyle section, instructing people on how to throw fabulous dinner parties and so on, but nothing radical is planned. "To be honest I think things are going very well as they are". She adds this with characteristic confidence but not the slightest bit of arrogance. And, of course, she's right.



Great Works of Art in Cambridge #5: *Portrait of John Maynard Keynes* Duncan Grant *King's College Senior Combination Room*

“I found a village where the people are frequently mad from too frequent incest... There is no priest, no church and no policeman. Don't you think we'd better go there at once?” These are the words of Duncan Grant to John Maynard Keynes, his newest love. The pair were in their early twenties when they visited the Orkney islands in the summer of 1908, with Grant making several paintings and drawings of the barren and inhospitable landscape, as well as this striking portrait.

The work conveys a unique sense of intimacy with the sitter, one only rivalled by his later portraits of his wife Vanessa Bell. Grant's lyrical representation of the human body can be found in the somewhat awkward positioning of his sitter: Keynes is seated on a chair by the window and appears almost to crouch, his ankle awkwardly bending while his elongated body enfolds, as though to fit into the frame of the picture. Keynes has a peaceful demeanour that belies the apparent muscular tension of his figure. Pen in hand, he is likely pondering the very theory that would enhance his position as one of the greatest economists of the twentieth century. As he raises his head from the page to look at us, the light from the

windows clarifies his facial features. The white stroke of paint in his right pupil conveys a gaze so sharp that he appears to look straight through you. The bare background does not disturb the intensity of that look, while the floral wallpaper hints at the numerous decorative floral patterns which will become characteristic of the Bloomsbury group in their collaborations within the Omega workshop.

On returning to the mainland, the portrait was bought by Keynes's mother, and was bequeathed to King's after her death in 1958. At the end of their extended vacation, Keynes was admitted to a fellowship at King's while Grant returned to London. Their friendship lasted until Keynes's death in 1946.

“Why aren't you a Cambridge undergraduate, damn you, instead of a wretched Londoner? Come, and I will make King's chapel into a studio for you.” Keynes wrote to Grant in the autumn of 1908. Strangely enough, the chapel never became Grant's studio; but Keynes transformed the King's domain into a sanctum of the finest Bloomsbury art, culminating in the decoration of his own rooms, still lived in today, with Grant's frescoes.

Julien Domercq



Duncan Grant 1885-1978
Portrait of John Maynard Keynes 1908

Ready, Steady Goat!

Daniel Cohen is entranced by John Darnielle, the genial man behind The Mountain Goats

The Mountain Goats are essentially one man, John Darnielle. He now works with a number of musicians, but he founded the band alone in 1991, and much of its early output featured only his singing and guitar playing, self-recorded on a boombox. He is the man identified with the band, and gives interviews alone. Naming his band in the plural was misleading, but he gives me a simple explanation: “Dude with an acoustic guitar under his own name? Either he has to be comfortable with the folk tag, or he's going to be doomed. I don't play folk music – nothing against it. Plus, nobody can pronounce my name.” He tests me. I fail. “Nobody can misspell Mountain Goats. If they can, then I can't help them any further.”

Monday sees the release of Heretic Pride, the Mountain Goats' seventh album this decade. Darnielle rejects my suggestion that he's prolific: “Unless you buy into an artist talking about how inspiration is some delicate gossamer thing, that you can only drink from this spigot every so often... I don't buy that! I think you sit down to work. So I don't consider myself prolific, I consider others lazy.”

Heretic Pride is a minor departure for Darnielle, or rather a return to earlier territory. His recent efforts have mostly been concept

albums. Tallahassee chronicled the lives of two characters in a failing marriage; The Sunset Tree was based on Darnielle's experiences with his abusive stepfather. The new songs aren't related in such a way – they cover diverse subjects, including reggae singer Prince Far I, cult horror writer H.P. Lovecraft, and Halloween villain Michael Myers. “It's a bunch of old obsessions of mine. It's really kind of an old-school kind of record insofar as I'm indulging my love of some odd, fetish-like creatures in my imagination, things that strike my interest, which is what my old stuff was like.”

Although their early albums were lo-fi, scrappy affairs, the Mountain Goats have, thanks to the work of producers John Vanderslice and Scott Solter, built up a rich sound since they signed to 4AD in 2002. On Heretic Pride, San Bernadino features six different cello parts; Sept 15, 1983, which describes Prince Far I's death, is as close as the band will ever come to a reggae track, with its skanking acoustic guitar and warm organ. Darnielle admits to being “kind of obsessive compulsive” in the studio, and is wary of adding too many tracks – “I'm Roman Catholic, I think: let's not do the things we don't like”. The result, on albums like The Sunset Tree and Heretic Pride, is simple songwriting, backed by carefully

constructed music that manages to avoid being too glossy.

When discussing the Mountain Goats, critics and fans tend to focus on the lyrics, onto which Darnielle clearly focuses his efforts. He admits, with palpable enthusiasm, that literature is a greater influence than music. His literary inspirations include Joan Didion, John Berryman, and religious texts. He calls the Canterbury Tales “perfect in every way”, apart from the Parson's Tale. “I love when he apologise for writing the book [in Chaucer's Retraction], that really gets me... There's something very moving, very emo about that. It's like, here's Chaucer having this emo moment going: ‘oh, what the hell are books anyway?’” Throughout our conversation, he happily traverses the boundaries of high and low culture, elsewhere explaining his fondness for video games, namely cowboy games and the Manhunt series.

This enthusiasm and lack of snobbishness makes Darnielle easy to relate to, and is, in part, why so many Mountain Goats lovers feel close to him. He is, at heart, a fan, and a music geek – he has a popular blog,

Last Plane to Jakarta, and is about to publish a book on Black Sabbath's Master of Reality. When asked what he's listening to, he mentions Christian rock and metal, but he calls rap music “the most creative form of American music since jazz... It's one of America's two or three great gifts to the world”. It's easy to see how Darnielle might feel an affinity with the genre – he featured on a recent track by the underground rapper Aesop

Rock, and has been described as “America's best non hip-hop lyricist”. He is, surprisingly, a Babyshambles fan: “I don't see why people gotta dwell so much on how the dude takes drugs and stuff. Who cares? The bottom line, dude writes really smart, nice lyrics that I think are excellent.”

Having talked non-stop for half an hour, Darnielle's time was up, and he quickly disappeared into the mist. He never explained his love of Christian rock.



Philistines!

What's so bad about the commercial art world, wonders **Sam Rose**? Just because one writer doesn't want to collect art, other Cambridge students shouldn't be put off

Student journalism is a strange animal, and rarely more so than in Cambridge. Mindful of the 'talent' that must exist in the University, readers seem to project a kind of aura onto the articles. Outsiders read Varsity and TCS with reverence, as if the writers must truly have 'proved themselves' to deserve the accolade of getting published. Quality control is assumed to be inherent in the paper. It is not. Content has to come from somewhere, and if things are desperate, then an edited down bit of rubbish with a nice layout is a perfectly happy solution, as I certainly experienced while editing. There are some fantastic writers, but mixed amongst them are some shockingly bad efforts; from 'political angles' on the far right and left provided by the only people impetuous enough to ridicule themselves unwittingly, to articles about wine written just so the author can boast about not drinking things advertised on TV. You know what Chateaufort-Du-Pape is? Great! Go drink some then, and spare us all your few hundred words of drivel about nothing.

Upon closer analysis the articles yield a hilarious mixture of typically Cambridge professional ambitions, and typically Cambridge petty personal goals. Fearlessly insult things and don't ever worry about the consequences: climb off your high horse just long enough to beg for a Valentine's date, and no-one seems to bat an eyelid. And yet this type of writing can be funny, and good enough to avoid the pretence of neutrality that student journalists with nothing to say seem to hide behind. Far worse, then, are the naïve attempts at objectivity that sometimes make up a particularly poor feature. For want of a better term, I class this sort of thing as 'indie-naïve', a certain brand of writing that so perfectly throws together a delicate sentimentality, absolute lack of facts, and sudden conclusions that it reads as I imagine would the English homework of a rather sweet fifteen-year-old girl. Sadly, here this writing is anything but sweet or innocent. The more I see it forming as a trend, the more it seems that a number of students really do think this way. I always believed that to pick on one article is impossible, but with the 'aura' surrounding these papers I've had to watch again and again as utter rubbish goes unchallenged. When that one article is utterly misguided, and so

frighteningly indicative of the hazy views and style of a trend, challenging it seems rather like an imperative.

So. Having written on collecting in Cambridge a

title banner was pink gingham, and sported a few pretty flowers. The purported revelation of the article, that Cambridge has "abundant" (well, five) commercial galleries yet these are "too expensive for students", is heart-rendingly moronic. Clearly there is art in Cambridge that students can afford to buy, from paintings on the walls of Indigo to prints from the market and drawings from XVIII Jesus Lane. Our author has instead picked on the

"The faint unease at the commercial side of art, the place of art in everyday life, and feigned disbelief at price, is a far more worrying insight into the author than anything to do with art galleries themselves"

number of times this year, it was naturally with fascination that I recently read a new article on the subject. The ever self-effacing writer, perhaps the epitome of 'indie-naïve', confessed that she was but a layman in art appreciation terms. Nonetheless, reassured by the assertion that she had a Van Gogh on her wall (a real one, perhaps?), and that she remembered the price tags from exhibitions seen when three years old (a collector in the making, surely!), I read on. Stale wit should now force me to add "I wish I hadn't". But no, in fact the rest of the article made fascinating reading, though not for the reasons it was intended to. The general tone, one of faint unease at the commercial side of art, the place of art in everyday life, and of feigned disbelief at prices, is a far more profoundly worrying insight into the author than anything to do with art galleries themselves.

The lack of knowledge alone is astonishing, but with her delicately judgemental attitude the author seems genuinely to be touting this lack as a posi-

set of commercial galleries selling work by professional artists and – shockingly – found

these artists need money on which to live. Not that I think it intrinsically wrong to "struggle equating art with selling" as she does, merely that such "strugglers" have no business writing about it. The notion of art created in a vacuum is a bizarre remnant of Modernism, and utterly outdated. Did Leonardo paint the Last Supper just because he felt like it? Maybe Warhol's dollar-note screenprints were just a blind expression of his artistic sensibility? Art is not only intrinsically linked with material circumstances, but made a lot more interesting because of it. High notions of art don't remove the fact that the works are done for money, and crucially, 'primary' galleries such as the ones in Cambridge are simply agents, selling on commission for the artists they take up. They are as much sponsors of the arts as money-making machines however dubious the actual art may be, and the prices usually reflect what the artists need to survive. How incredibly, inexcusably selfish do you have to be to imply that Lorenzo Quinn should starve because you'd quite like his little sculpture but don't feel you can throw down as much as £525?

There are more surprises in the galleries, for next we find that art is emphasised not as a collectible but as part of interior design! Clearly our writer is familiar with modern art-buying practice, when upon purchase of an artwork the buyer whitewashes their living room and removes all the furniture. Or could it be that they have never bought art, and don't own a home of their own, and in fact are forgetting that a condition of the survival of every piece of art ever bought or commissioned is that it finds a setting for itself? It is common practice for dealers to model their galleries on domestic formulae such as the 'Gentleman's Study' or 'Art Lover's House'. Even the Fitz does it; notice how even the neo-classical architecture itself does it in the Greek and Roman galleries. She suggests spending £30 on an Art Fund membership so one can "just look at it all". Well save yourself the money, there are hundreds of free galleries, and you clearly haven't had a proper look around any of them. Is commercial art collecting relevant to Cambridge students? As much as they wish to engage with it. This 'indie-naïve' philistinism, on the other hand? That's what has no place in Cambridge.

'What would yours wear?' The Vagina Monologues

Preview

Media sensation? Provocative rant? Vital social dialogue? Or simply powerful theatre? The Vagina Monologues can certainly be classed as one of the most contentious theatrical works of the past decade. At its debut, newspaper reviewers urged potential spectators to "avoid this male-bashing, disgusting obscenity and the blatant sexism it purports to oppose".

Often perceived as a feminist tirade and offensive outburst with its explicit references to brutal sexual encounter, the play has certainly been met with disapproval and censure. Even last year three American high school students were suspended after saying the word 'vagina' whilst performing a short section of the play.

But have the bad-mouthers got it all wrong?

Many would say yes. The Vagina Monologues is a work shrouded in misconception, whose real aim is to promote the empowerment of women through self-knowledge, and not (contrary to popular belief) to depict men as the enemy.

Created by Eve Ensler and derived from hundreds of interviews across socioeconomic, ethnic and religious boundaries, The Vagina Monologues are stories of real women of all ages. Underneath the controversial exterior lies a mischievous and uplifting core with an extremely important message, which should not be confused with aggressive feminism.

The play is the cornerstone of the international V-Day movement to stop violence against women, founded by Ensler in 1998. It is now put on annually at charity events in over 120 countries in order to raise money for women's charities.

It is a moving experience, and an attempt to enlighten, entertain and, most importantly, pull a taboo out of the shadows. The Vagina Monologues is a genuine and compelling expression of female sexuality that is at times hilarious, at others unsettling, but always honest.

Emilie Ferguson and Elizabeth Magness

A group of sixteen Cambridge students in association with BATS will be performing The Vagina Monologues at Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens' College, 15 & 16 February, 11pm. Tickets are £5 (£4 concessions), available to reserve at vdaycambridge@gmail.com. All proceeds go to the Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre.



What Love Poetry has Don(n)e for me

In the wake of Valentine's Day, **Jeff James** pours his heart out about love poetry

The poetry of romantic love has generally had a bad press. No doubt this has much to do with execrable collections marketed as Valentine gifts, as well as the probability that anyone who has ever tried to write any poetry started by trying to recollect in tranquillity some intermittency of the heart. The result is a very large amount of fluff trying to find a rhyme for "really really in love with you". The love lyric is also seen as more accessible than poetry with other subjects – as if our own failures to connect made it easier to get through Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. Just because we have known love does not mean that we can expect to apply love poetry transparently to our own lives, or our lives to that poetry. Yet some of our best poetry has been driven by the heart, and the canny reader should not be put off by all the nonsense.

Reading at Emmanuel two weeks ago, the poet Geoffrey Hill maintained that he had only two subjects, sex and the dead. Hill's poetry is at its most direct when dealing with sex, as in this *Copla*, where the speaker attempts to apply the logic contained in the poem to an extra-poetical world where it becomes non-

sense.

"One cannot lose what one has not possessed."

So much for that abrasive gem.

I can lose what I want. I want you.

Working backwards, the loved one is supposed to reason that he wants me, he can lose me, therefore he possesses me. Nice trick. The turn here from "one" to "I" repeats the manoeuvre that we sometimes expect love poets to perform in their poetry. To turn from the trickily beautiful working of words or even from some general knowledge of, say, love, to what can be taken as personal revelation.

The first book of poems I ever really got into was Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*, the near-posthumous collection that addresses his dead wife, Sylvia Plath. Although still admiring this uneven book, I don't admire what first led me (and, I think, others) to it: a voyeuristic desire to observe and take a part in the terrible ruptures of Plath and Hughes's life, pain that can be thrilling to the outsider. Some of Hughes's lines are themselves

mawkish, almost pastiching his own life story, as when he quotes a Ouija board pronouncing: Fame will come.

"Love poetry should be allowed to be a lovely glorious nothing: expecting it to act in ways that we can predetermine is no less foolish than expecting love to give us what we think we want"

Fame especially for you. Fame cannot be avoided. And when it comes You will have paid for it with your happiness, Your husband and your life. And yet, in the poem recalling their visit to the Grand Canyon, a similar vision of the future is moving, beyond one's knowledge of the couple's separation and Plath's suicide:

Nothing is left. I never went back and you are dead. Only "nothing" and "never" are allowed to grow beyond the simple monosyllables detailing the facts of loss.

A wish for an autobiographical grounding for love poetry might stem from a need to tether the poems we read to our own experience: romantic love is largely viewed as experience common to almost everyone, while other experiences are more often seen as unlike what we have ourselves known. We involve love poetry in our own lives in more material ways: I've sent more than one card or letter where I've wanted Shakespeare or Marlowe or Sidney to say something that I can't quite frame. The great love poems do not arise out of loves that are necessarily greater or more profound than those we have known: it's the skill with words that makes the poet, not (unfortunately) a series of disastrous affairs or (probably) a glorious soul. Shakespeare must have been a nightmare as a lover.

This explains why much of the great love poetry is about loss and frustrated love: this is easier to write about than romantic fulfilment, when happiness writes white. In any case, if things are going well the poor poet should be not at his desk but rather in bed (or at least on his desk). W.B. Yeats is the alpha and omega of unrequited love poets, falling very badly aged twenty-three for Maud Gonne and ever after wanting her. He offers the following tricky advice:

Never give all the heart, for love
Will hardly seem worth thinking of
To passionate women if it seem
Certain, and they never

dream
That it fades out from kiss
to kiss;
For everything that's lovely
is
But a brief, dreamy, kind
delight.

Those brief, dreamy, kind
delights are hard to ground in
the printed poem, and many
attempts to write of happiness
in love or sex become comic
or soporily cringe-worthy. E.E.
Cummings can do it, perhaps
because his poems are often
themselves brief and dreamy.
His lyric 'i like my body when
it is with your body' ends with:
and possibly i like the thrill
of under me you quite so
new

The speaker's "possibly" cre-
ates the flirtatious reservation
that Yeats advocates to keep
passionate women, while his
sensual discovery of the 'new'
is not only stated but also
repeated in his poetic dis-
covery of a new way to write
of the "shocking fuzz/of your
electric hair": much headier
than the sex-ed cliché that is
'pubic hair'. David Harsent is
a contemporary English poet
who also captures something
of the thrill of sex, without
adopting Cummings' playfully
naïve voice. In his sequence
Marriage, Harsent shows us
something of the captivity of
waking after having made
"love in the all-but dark":

Morning catches us both in
a different light,
one shaping up to the day,
the other gone deep beneath
the dump of the coverlet, a
twist of hair, a pair of
wholly innocent feet.

I love those feet, whose in-
nocence needs to be reaffirmed
after an intimacy that has
allowed one of the lovers to

notice even the other's "glisten
of spit/on an eye-tooth".

The Copla of Hill's that I
first quoted reminds us that
love poems need to be read in
and of themselves. They don't
need to refer to either the
reader's or the poet's affairs.
The logic of w"I can lose what
I want. I want you." works in
a poem, but won't convince
the loved one whom we don't
possess. Really: I quoted that
Copla to someone once and
she wasn't won over. In Hill's
The Turtle Dove, I can't work
out which of the lovers is more
destroyed by their love, but
the poem captures brilliantly
the loneliness of a shared bed.
Hill's lovers:

Bore their close days
through sufferance towards
night
Where she at length
grasped sleep and he lay
quiet
As though needing no ques-
tions, now, to guess
What her secreting heart
could not well hide.

Love poems might help us
say things that are difficult,
but really the best thing about
them is that they say difficult
things. The "secreting heart"
excites us, not just because
of the secrets we imagine it
to possess, but rather in the
thrilling double movement of
'secreting': the heart keeps se-
crets, and also allows them to
escape. We needn't strive for
readings that apply the poems
biographically to the poets, or
expect the poems to mimic our
experience. Love poetry should
be allowed to be a lovely glori-
ous nothing: expecting it to act
in ways that we can predeter-
mine is no less foolish than
expecting love to give us what
we think we want.



Black on form

Jack Tunstall talks to namesake **Jack Black** about his
new film *Be Kind Rewind*, released this week

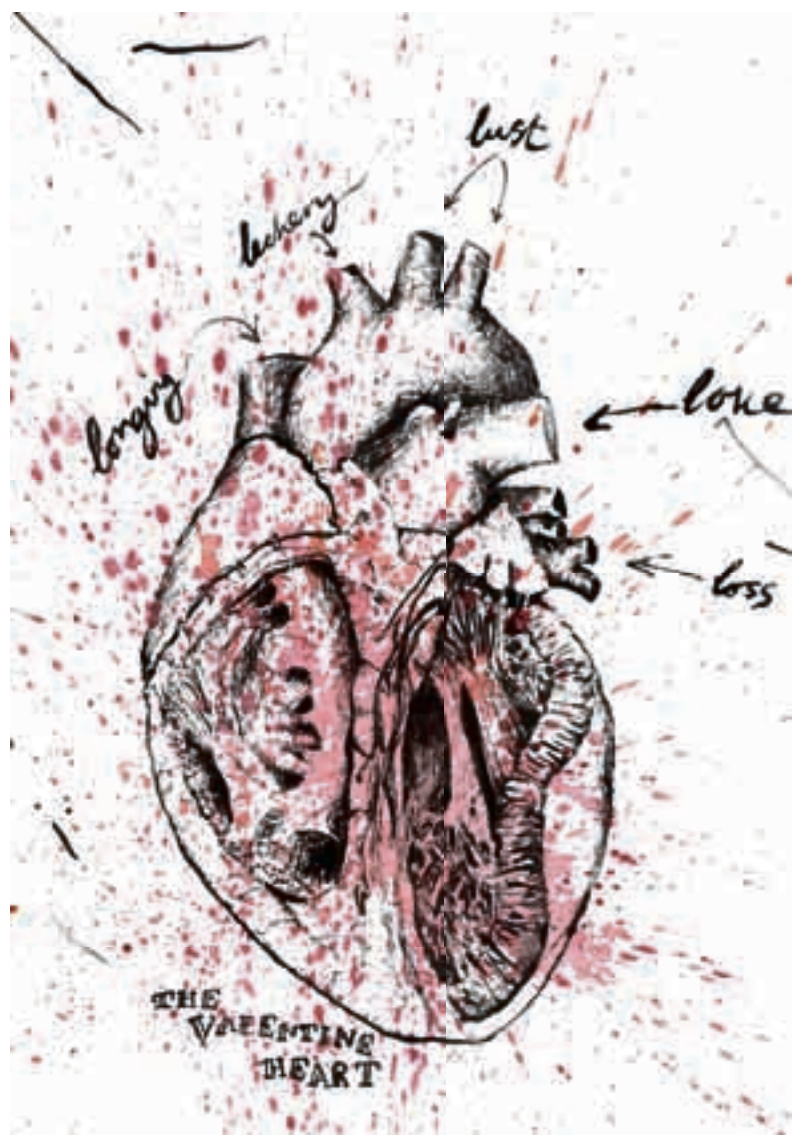
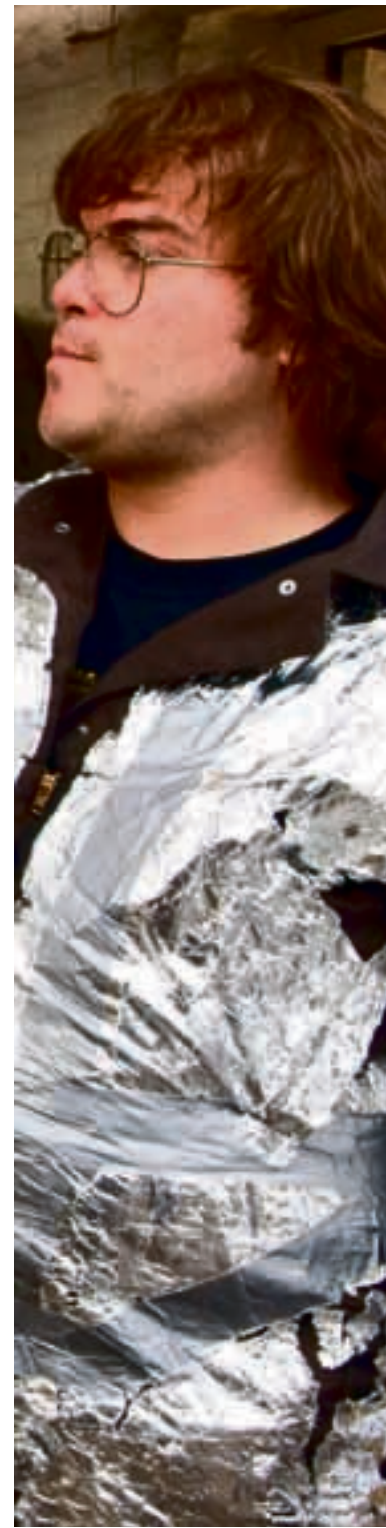
Jack Black marches into
the tiny screening room
at London's art-deco
Soho Hotel following the
press screening of French
pseudo-indie director Michel
Gondry's latest low-budget
comedy, *Be Kind Rewind*,
in a manner most appropri-
ately described as studiously
jovial. He looks...well, like
he does in the movies; short,
festively plump, and casu-
ally attired in a loud flannel
shirt. It seems logical to get
things started by asking
why working with former
music video director Gondry
appealed, especially given
the hugely reduced pay
packet it would necessitate.
"I was desperate to work
with him after seeing *Eter-
nal Sunshine of the Spotless
Mind*", comes the predictable
answer. "When I got to know
Michel, I guarded our friend-
ship like a golden pearl, if
ever there was one of those."

The film centres around
Black's character and his
best friend, played by Mos
Def, filming their own
parodies of famous Hol-
lywood hits when the stock
from their video store in a
deprived industrial town is
destroyed. (Mos Def exhib-
its better comic timing in
the film than Black, and his
deadpan demeanour is far
funnier than the comedian's
trademark manic style, but
to my shame, I don't have
the cojones to articulate this
observation in front of Black
and his gurning publicist.)
Did anyone suggest paro-
dying any of the movies in
which the members of the
film's cast had previously
appeared, such as Danny
Glover in *Lethal Weapon*, or
Black's own *High Fidelity*?
"No, because it would have
been dangerous, it could
have created a tear in the

"Did Black ever
toy with the idea
of film-making
as a child? 'No, I
used to do things
like put Coco
Puffs up my ass
instead. You can
fit a lot of them
up there'"

space-time continuum or
something."

Apparently, the produc-
ers were threatened with
legal action should they
satirise *Back To The Future*,
"because they're making
a musical version of it for
Broadway, or some nonsense
like that. Ridiculous!" We
move on. Did Black ever toy
with the idea of film-making
as a child? "No, I used to do
things like put Coco Puffs
up my ass instead." And
what did he learn from this
experience? "That you can fit
a lot of them up there," he
replies earnestly. We discuss
his interpretation of the film,
which is strangely uplifting,
despite its rampant senti-
mentality. "Even in the most
run-down parts of the world,
where you'd expect nothing
of note to happen, a lot of
creative energy is produced,
because people have to
rely on their imagination."
Stretching it a bit, perhaps,
for a slacker comedy in
which one half-expects Jay
and Silent Bob to pop up
at any moment. But it does
have a certain poignancy.



ANNA TRENCH

view from the groundlings



I like the theatre. I understand the process by which watching people pretend to be who they are not, and read out others' words, can help us make sense of the world around us. Whether we laugh, cry, or think, plays can affect us in fundamental and sometimes life-changing ways. But that still doesn't tempt me to the ADC: like so many others, my theatrical instincts rarely apply during term time.

I am happy to watch my friends' plays, and 'events' such as last term's Medea or a Footlights revue. But a casual evening at the Corpus Playrooms would not be appropriate postprandial entertainment. One reason for this (indolence apart) is simple: we cannot tell how good an arbitrarily-chosen play might turn out to be. This is no reflection on Cambridge thespian talent, which is great. Rather, it reflects the tiny number of scripts which are actually half-decent: there are far too many skilled interpretations of unsalvageable scripts which end up being a waste of time and money.

Incidentally, this relates to last week's column, which asked why Shakespeare is so frequently performed here: the answer is because his plays are better than anyone else's, and we all know it. Prospective directors must choose between established classics such as Shakespeare, Pinter and Miller, or take a punt on a newer writer – recent examples include Nick Leather's All the Ordinary Angels, or American Eagle by Chris Amos. Such pieces have limited professional runs, and perhaps it is noble of directors here to wish to revive them; but no-one wants to watch.

London, of course, is awash with new plays, but they are sustained by word-of-mouth and an active press. Cantabrigian play reviews are (sadly) not considered reliable enough to influence people significantly, and plays are not on for long enough for an effective word-of-mouth buzz to build. So we stick to what, and who, we know, and those with only a passing interest in the theatre play it safe, and stay away from unknown quantities.

Ultimately, this may be a matter of volume. If there were only one or two plays on each week, we would have our choice decided for us, and would be able simply to go to 'the play'; but when there are seven plays on at once, we will either go to the play we've already heard of, or give up. There is only one remedy, and it is one which will never happen: directors and actors must put on fewer plays, in the interests of oversaturated Cambridge theatre. Quality, not quantity, will attract the likes of me.

Hugo Gye

SLAG

Corpus Christi Playroom

Dir: Emma Hogan & Roisin Dunnett

Theatre

★★★★★

David Hare's sensationally titled SLAG is a surreal and comic experience, depicting a perverted version of an all-female education. Beginning with a united front, the three female leads take a dramatic vow of chastity as a part of a stand against male dominance. However, throughout the course of the play this disintegrates into a complex web of divisive power-play and deception.

Exploring the space between espoused theories of an all-female social utopia and the subsequent subversion of such ideals, this production is both dark and satirical. Darkly comic,

timing is everything in this production, as the three female teachers descend into paranoia and desperation when faced with the claustrophobic confines of their ideal society.

The elegance and confidence of the sparse set creates a precise and contained atmosphere, enhanced by the stark monochrome scheme of both costume and set. These devices offset the unpredictability of the tortuous plot and focus attention on the expressive dialogue.

The volatile dynamics of the trio can be difficult to follow, partly because of Hare's penchant

for the bizarre and surreal. However, the direction harnesses both the comic and sinister potential of the play and lends it order. Joanne, played with conviction and passion by Lily Sakula, is intense and dominating, driven by a militant vision of a feminist ideal. She is a contradictory, schizophrenic reaction to Anne's sense of propriety and pretence of rationality. Together with the apolitical, easily suggestible Elise, they form a parody of the nuclear family. SLAG's precision, energy and control make this a finely balanced production well worth seeing.

Elly Robson

The White Devil

Dir: Amy Gwilliam

Theatre

★★★★★

"Of all deaths the violent death is best": so says the malcontent (Flammineo) of Webster's revenge tragedy, but it could equally have been the view of the playwright himself. This bloody play charts the progress of a love affair between Vittoria and the Duke of Brachiano; at its heart, though, the play deals with questions of identity and sincerity: the title is from a proverb, "the white devil is worse than the black", and it is the hunt for this 'white devil' which sets the tragedy in motion and which brings about the downfall of so many characters.

The set for Amy Gwilliam's production, designed by Bethany Sims, is stunning. Combined with Oliver Rudland's eerie music, the scene was set for a truly dark, grimly humorous portrayal of life at the top.

Alex Guelff's Flammineo may not have the depth of Iago but he

is no less quick witted, callous or attractive. Chloe Massey's Vittoria is a virtuosic performance of a woman stuck in a man's world, pitching herself magnificently against Josh Higgott's menacing Cardinal Monticelso.

The main fault of the production was in some badly thought out doubling of parts: one actor died as Flammineo's brother-in-law, only to reappear, and indeed re-die, a few scenes later as Flammineo's brother. The already complex plot was not helped by the resulting confusion and could easily have been avoided.

This oversight did little to spoil what was a scintillating gem of a production. Gwilliam and her cast breathed life into a much neglected tragedy which has as much to tell us now about 'policy and her true aspect' as it ever did to a Jacobean audience.

Lizzie Davis

Skates is beautiful in all respects. Written and directed by Cat Gerrard, the play recounts the story of her grandmother's escape from the Nazi occupation of Poland as if told from the perspective of a child. An ingenious imagination-infused world is conjured up, in which the usual boundaries between the past and the present, the imaginary and the real, do not apply: the actors step seamlessly in and out of each mind-forged realm. Make-believe is the order of the day and such is its cooing embrace that when adult disaster punctuates this childish world, its effect is resounding.

The fact that the cast helped creatively shape the play definitely shows through in the delicate care they display for their labour of love. Except for, perhaps, the effortless characterisations by Belinda Sherlock, none of the individual performances is outstanding. As a group, however, this cast makes a brilliant team.

This is a multimedia production, timed perfectly to the haunting musical accompaniment of three violins. Everything is given a rhythm, which is never at the expense of clarity. Delightful surrealism abounds, intertwining poetry with folktale, stories, mon-

ologues and recipes in a collage of the life of Gerrard's grandmother. Cars, trains and factories are reproduced through wonderful mime and vocal, physical effects. Shadow-puppets depict the most gruesome moments, giving a sense of a child's strategy of coping with horror through play.

Yes, there are flaws. The narrative is, at times, somewhat contrived, and the sentimental naivety sometimes puts a toe over the line into mawkishness, but this is beside the point. It is enchanting, magical, delicate and beautiful. Please do go and see it.

Jon Andrews

Skates

ADC

Dir: Cat Gerrard

Theatre

★★★★★

something/nothing

Corpus Christi Playroom

Dir: Grace Jackson

Theatre

★★★★★

"Lots of things we think are opposites are actually the same". The world of Rory Mullarkey's new two-hander is one in which every word is minutely weighted and every gesture is gripped in the teeth of the dialogue and relentlessly gnawed at. Over four tragi-comic scenes in an airport departure lounge and a 19-year-old prostitute's bed, B and D and A and C (Alex Clatworthy and Tom Yarrow) discuss whether we can get something from nothing or nothing from something.

But Mullarkey's play is certainly more than a reductive word game writ large. Coupled

with Clatworthy and Yarrow's flawless and brilliantly humane characterisation, words here become supple enough to be both disturbing and lyrical. At many perfectly executed points of gesture and dialogue, actors and writer do succeed in bashing together contraries and finding something unusual and thrilling. Yarrow as 'David' describes a dismembered prostitute – "she had been stabbed and fucked so many times you couldn't tell what was a stab and what was a fuck". He questions all of this seamlessly in his delicate delivery, contrasted

by Clatworthy's ranting tenaciousness as B and apathetic ("that's almost the same as pathetic") fragility as D.

This subtle process of mirroring and examination breaks down only at the very end. 'You're nothing but a cunt to me...' strikes a crude wrong note and the balance is broken in favour of a shock which doesn't quite come off. 'something/nothing' is not a great play yet, but it is an example of superb and innovative writing and acting, and is laden with serious potential.

Isabel Taylor



JOE GOSDEN

I Was A Cub Scout I Want You to Know That There Is Always Hope

Album
★★★★★

Saying you ‘like’ an album covers a huge range of possibilities. Some albums can sound amazing straight from the first listen but then get tiresome very quickly (I couldn’t get enough of the last Bloc Party album but it got really annoying after a week), but then some albums take forever to get in to (I didn’t really like the Elliott Smith album Either/Or until one night when I was walking home, feeling a little bit drunk and melancholic, Say Yes came on my iPod, and something clicked). Clearly a lot of what you ‘like’ about an album is down to technicalities such as production style, or things like rhythm and harmony. But an equally massive component has to be the context in which you hear it. Films, for instance, can heighten the effect of songs by putting them in some ready-made emotional context. But in real life too, music, time and place can sometimes all slot together and give a song some ethereal significance. All those songs that you like because they remind you of some youthful romance you had might be awful, but you still ‘like’ them. The point I’m trying to make

is this; assuming an album isn’t substandard or derivative (and doesn’t make your ears bleed or make you shit yourself or something) it is essentially impossible to say whether you like it or not if you’ve only had it a week. And I feel this particularly strongly with respect to the new I Was A Cub Scout album. It is definitely not bad. In fact it’s pretty good. It has a fairly original sound (a nice mix of synths, clean drums and soaring guitars) and it has some infectious melodies. It combines some good aspects of electro, emo and nu-rave to create kind of sparse yet epic sound. It’s precisely the sort of thing I have a fondness for, but for some reason it hasn’t clicked. I’ve tried listening to it everywhere; whilst at my computer and whilst running; during the day and at night, but I haven’t found its niche. Even though I’m pretty sure it has one. I’ll give it three stars for not being crap but such a rating is essentially meaningless. But then what the hell does it matter what I think? Music is about personal response so you are almost certainly better off



finding out for yourself. Go get yourself a copy of the album and make up your own mind. In fact, what is the point of any review? You should probably just ignore everything on this page. In fact why not just set your copy of Varsity alight and use it to trigger the smoke alarms? Then take off all your clothes and run wildly around college listening to the I Was A Cub Scout album. Then it will always remind you of that time you did something foolish because someone in a newspaper told you to. Maybe that would be its niche. And maybe you would like it.

Oli Robinson

Fuck Buttons The Graduate

Gig
★★★★★

Fuck Buttons, it must be said from the outset, do not have a way with words. First of all, there’s the needlessly confrontational but nevertheless resoundingly uncontroversial name. Second, and perhaps worse, their biography reads as follows: “The two Fuck Buttons are attempting some kind of transcendence between the listener and the Universe itself; one could easily envisage one’s psyches being shaken by the very rumbles of the earth’s motions”. It is wank of the highest order. Thank God, then, that Fuck Buttons’ music is, almost without exception, instrumental. When Benjamin Power screams into his Tomy baby monitor microphone on Sweet Love For Planet Earth, the effect is one of texture, not lyricism; an overdriven humanity riding over a cold, electronic backdrop. There may be words embedded deep within the static, there may not. It doesn’t really matter. The vocals that pop up

now and again throughout Fuck Buttons’ set all have one thing in common: they are heavily treated, mangled beyond recognition by overdrive or delay, part of the instrumental surroundings rather than a bearer of melody. The music is driven instead by the almost ever-present bass, a ring-modulated, shit-yourself roar that simply becomes bigger. and bigger. It’s the sort of noise Aphex Twin or Autechre would be proud of, but within context – there are no absurd drill ‘n’ bass beats (indeed, there are frequently no drums at all) and little arrhythmic twitchiness – it produces an effect more akin to a rave than to a chin-stroking seriousness. The four-to-the-floor Bright Tomorrow in particular sets the frail, pale and overwhelmingly male feet of the Graduate’s clientele awkwardly tapping, its synths straight out of an old 80s Chicago house record. Indeed, it’s the whole fun of Fuck Buttons that takes one



aback. Po-faced techno arsery quite simply isn’t supposed to be this visceral and vital, nor quite so curiously danceable. The name the pair have taken for themselves was presumably chosen on the basis that

their music had already ostracised them from the mainstream before they’d started. On this evidence, that may prove to be a slightly hasty assumption.

Ali Wedderburn

I’m not usually a fan of in-house bands. The phrase conjures uncomfortable images of 4 Poofs and Piano, or a drunken Gloria Estefan look-alike slugging back Martinis and singing Copacabana. It’s a rocky path, and on Tuesday night Footlights took its first steps on it, introducing a musical duo at the back of the stage throughout the show. Despite a quiet start, the pair remained the most intriguing element of the performance, which adopted a musical theme. Pete Riley was one of the few performers who

took advantage of their presence. In his sketch with Jack Gordon-Brown, coming over like the bitter and retarded cousins of Simon and Garfunkel, he resorted to calling them cunts in a bid to deflect attention from the deadpan failure of songs called ‘My Existential Angst’. The night’s standouts paid little attention to their new companions. These included a Flight of the Conchords-esque ‘100 guys I’d go gay for’; and a sketch in the dark from Rob Carter and Tom Evans, getting considerable comic mileage

from the flash of a disposable camera and pervy voyeurism. Yet on the whole sketches suffered from being overlong or fell into the trap of: create quiet awkward situation, shout something like RAPE, wait for laughter. It was at these moments that the on-stage band often provided moments of respite. If they can be more integrated into the sketches, rather than sitting forlornly at the back until their brief interludes, Cambridge’s funny boys and girls might be on to something.

Lowri Jenkins

Footlights Smoker ADC

Comedy
★★★★★

albums every right-minded person should own



Computer World Kraftwerk

It is easy to present Kraftwerk as being a bit of a joke – even they would surely plead guilty – but they are also one of the most visionary and influential bands of modern music. Computer World marks the culmination of their seminal run of albums, beginning with Autobahn and followed by Radioactivity, The Man Machine and Trans Europe Express, in which they defined electronic music. It’s not just about the concept with this band though. Computer World’s beats are seriously heavy, and when Numbers kicks in, the synth line cuts in and out of the huge kick drum line in a way that Timbaland could never imitate, while a cacophony of processed voices counts to five in a dozen languages languages. Computer World and It’s More Fun to Compute were a true portent of things to come, when in 1981 home computers were but a twinkle in Alan Sugar’s imagination. Each song on this album is hauntingly beautiful, its crisp synth lines enveloping you in the warm analogue glow of their Kling Klang studios where the band hid away for months to kraft (ha) this perfect record. The centrepiece of the album is Computer Love, the lead line of which Coldplay pilfered for their song Talk. The song is compulsive, its drums beating like a love sick teenager’s heart. If it’s possible to be emo over computers, this is the nearest we get. The song’s melodies are tender and brittle, fading in and out of life, some cutting hard, others sweeping up behind to fill in the gaps. The rounded bass notes drive the song onwards and upwards, propping up the tragically weak chord sequence processed on the most beloved bass synthesiser there has ever been. But six minutes in and the song is over; and CompScis across the world shed a tear. The album still has a whole side to go but it’s almost too much to bear. The age of the computer is with us, and there is no better expression of the connection between Man and Machine than on this album. It’s a hilarious concept, and Kraftwerk keep their metallic tongues in their cyborg cheeks; yet this delicate balance is maintained throughout all of their work, reaching its pinnacle in this album. Everyone should embrace this Computer World.

Tom Hamilton

NICK KNOWS



Dear Nick,

I am concerned about the shape of my new boyfriend's penis. The first time we went to "third base" I noticed that it bends to the right when erect. I've never seen anything like it and I'm worried that it will hurt at least one of us when we have sex. Is it something I should talk to him about?

Anon., via email

RESIDENT MEDIC NICK CULSHAW TELLS YOU HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR BENDY BOYFRIEND

Dear bendy-member recipient,

Your boyfriend's penis could be bent for a number of reasons, many of which are no cause for alarm. Many men have a natural curvature to one side or the other when erect and this is considered normal. Men can also be born with one side of the penis shorter than the other, causing a bend towards the shorter side.

Peyronie's disease is the most common cause of an abnormally bent penis, affecting around 1% of guys though usually not until their forties. Its caused by a plaque of scar tissue under the skin and as the penis fills with blood it bends around the plaque. Peyronie's disease can cause intercourse to be very painful, though this is not always the case, and please note the disease has nothing to do with cancer nor is it infectious.

As for whether or not you should bring it up with your boyfriend, that's a hard one. Guys are very sensitive about their penises and your boyfriend definitely won't thank you if you bring it up over dinner. Personally, my advice would be to wait until you actually have sex - if it hurts you, or it looks like he's in pain, you have

the perfect opportunity to bring it up.

If it is congenital then your boyfriend will most likely be used to it, but could also be self conscious about it. No-one's perfect and if it causes you no pain during sex then you'll get used to it in no time. If, however, you notice any sort of lump, or the curvature gets worse, you should definitely suggest that he sees a doctor as soon as possible.

On that note, if either you or your boyfriend have had other sexual partners, then you should head down to the Laurels for an STI check before having unprotected sex - a bent penis is nothing compared to gonorrhoea.

Oh, and whatever you do, try not to bend it back during foreplay as this will hurt like hell, could cause penile fracture and will definitely bring a swift end to your fun.

Got a problem? Medic and CUSU HIV and sexual health rep Nick will happily answer any questions you may have. Send them in to lifestyle@varsity.co.uk

Restaurant Review James Quaife

Havanabana

13, Regent's Parade



James is the winner of Tom Evans' "Take me to dinner" competition



JAMES QUaIFE

Now I haven't written a restaurant review before, but bear with me - I'm going to give it my best shot! Contemporary Cuban cuisine is hardly ubiquitous in Cambridge's restaurant scene, but Mr Culajo, proprietor of new Cuban bistro Havanabana, is determined to make his mark.

It was with mild trepidation that Tom (the regular Varsity restaurant reviewer) and I braved a crisp February evening, but the welcome at Havanabana warmed our cold hands. The dining room was homely and red, walls decked out with sombreros and other cool Communist propaganda, which gave the place a real authentic vibe of a bygone era. Our friendly waitress, dressed in traditional Cuban salsa garb, handed us our leatherbound menus, and we knew from that moment on that it was going to be a very special evening indeed.

Tom (an intrepid gastronaut, always one for making funky food choices!) plumped for the cinnamon-spiced pork belly strips with a plantain marmalade (!). I went for the seafood, which turned out to be a veritable assortment of maritime delights, swimming in a most delicious herb-stuffed broth. Tom's pork was crispy and creamy at the same time, and the marmalade was surprisingly zesty.

Then we entered the realm of the main courses. Mr Culajo recommended the Cuban lamb shanklets with banana mash, and I wasn't going to disagree with him! Tom plotted his own fishy

course, opting for the flash-fried Dover sole served on a bed of garlic-infused polenta drizzled lovingly with a white chocolate relish (I am yet to be entirely convinced!). The browned flesh turned out to be incredibly tender, however, and the 'wacky' sauce complemented it perfectly.

Next up, the best bit of any meal - pudding! We were both more bloated than a balloon by this stage, so we plumped for one between two: a tremendous hunk of quivering dark chocolate, mango, pineapple, lychee and saffron cheesecake served up with a sizeable dollop of licquorice ice cream. Nice cream, more like - it was delicious! Quite simply one of the most indulgent puds I've ever had the good fortune to pop into my mouth.

But *bloody* good grub does *not* come cheap. The 3-course a la carte will set you back a substantial £27.50, and don't go thinking you'll wangle a bottle of decent plonk for under fifteen smackers. Still, Mr Culajo and his team do a damn fine job at Havanabana. The food is extremely nice - my thanks go out to Tom for letting me come with him.

By way of concluding this review: if you're an aficionado of contemporary Cuban cuisine, what on earth are you waiting for? Get down to Havanabana ASAP, before Mr Culajo moves on to bigger and better things. It might not be the cheapest place in Cambridge, but it's VERY good; although it is expensive, it's damned nice.

Tom Evans returns next week

BOTTOMS UP

To the Cambridge Wine Merchants to sup upon various heavenly nectars and divine ambrosias. At a wine tasting there are two clear imperatives: to drink as much as possible and to eulogise as imaginatively as possible on the sensory pleasure. The in vino veritas principle assures the drinker that the former imperative should aid the latter immeasurably.

The wine taster's modus operandi will soon expose him as an expert. One should preferably wear a loud bow-tie and sport a limp attributed to a surfeit of good-living and fine port. Furthermore, if not already possessed of a suitably corpulent visage, then apply blusher liberally across the nose and cheeks. In order to convey an impression of well-watered experience adopt an international approach to toasts. Replace 'cheers!' with a more exotic interjection, such as the Russian 'na zdorovye!' or the Chinese 'ganbei!' which may then be explained away with years spent drinking shots of vodka or pints of snake's blood. Finally, it is considered the height of bad manners not to drain the proffered glass of its entire contents, whilst spitting the wine out into a bucket is practiced only by peasants on the continent.

The more enthusiastic guests at the wine tasting often smell

the wine, but this is embarrassing and perilous. Instead one should bide one's time with mouth exercises. Fletcherism was the cult of excessive mastication that prompted Gladstone to advise children that they should chew their food thirty two times at least, to give each

"One should preferably wear a loud bow-tie and sport a limp attributed to a surfeit of good-living and fine port"

of one's thirty two teeth some exercise. Similarly one should swill one's mouthful around at least five times, to allow for each of the basic tastes a chance to appreciate the grape juice, with further sluicing to aid in the evaluation of temperature, astringency and kokumi (the Japanese tradition of 'mouthfulness').

A wine critic who actually knows about wine is roughly as rare as a dodo egg omelette or a

jeroboam of Black Velvet. They are chosen instead on thirst, capacity to slur, and an inventiveness with similes that would make most ambitious of poets jealous. The more eccentric or abstract the comparison, the better. Experts in the field are well known to dine extensively on bark, polystyrene and sunshine-on-a-a-rainy-day in order to improve their receptory faculties. Moreover the quantifying and qualifying process should suggest every state of matter except liquid: 'bursting with oodles of summer berries' or 'suffocating in woodsmoke'. If really wishing to impress offer impressions utterly at random and enjoy the earnest and approving nods of your fellow tasters as they struggle to identify the smell of a poppy seed and pelican pie, the colour of a well-used medieval football, or the taste of a hand-held powertool acquired from B&Q.

At no point should one present any useful judgement on the wine. Instead smack your lips loudly and announce 'scrummy'. One will invariably become too squiffy to remember which wines were enjoyable or to recommend any to others, thus select the most costly and rely on the time-honoured attitude that the more expensive a wine is, the superior its quality.

Guy Stagg


The set menu costs £27.50
The wine list starts at £ 10.99

	film	theatre	music	other	going out
<div><div><div>pick of the week</div><div>friday 15</div><div>saturday 16</div><div>sunday 17</div><div>monday 18</div><div>tuesday 19</div><div>wednesday 20</div><div>thursday 21</div></div></div>	Kika Thurs 21st Feb, Arts Picturehouse, 17.00  A warning comes with this film, that it “contains graphic scenes which may offend”; of course it does, it’s by Almodóvar. Expect a beautician, an American novelist, his reincarnated photographer step-son, a predatory TV reporter, a lesbian maid and ex-porn star con. Excellent.	The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) Wed 20th - Sat 23rd Feb, ADC Theatre, 23.00 (Sat 23rd Feb, matinee, 14.30) If you’re an English student you probably won’t want to see this (though bear in mind that it could be useful for your ‘Shakespeare in performance’ exam question...). However, we’ve been promised cross-dressing, bad dancing, curious accents, and even a banjo. Frankly, it’s not those things that intrigue me, it’s how they’re going to get all of the bard’s works, albeit abridged, into one hour.	Caribou Sat 16th, The Graduate, 19.30, £8 Dan Snaith makes laidback sounding psychedelic tinged electronica which has the potential to sound really great live. Like all the cool kids he has PhD in Mathematics. He got it at Imperial College London. That’s the way it is these days. All aspiring musicians must have at least seven years worth of hardcore academic study behind them and the title ‘Dr’ before the music business will consider them. Even Amy Winehouse has a doctorate in Medieval History. Pete Doherty is a fully qualified Medic.	Don Giovanni Wed 20th - Sat 23rd Feb, West Road Concert Hall, 19.45, £6 for students The team that brought you Les Incas du Perous returns with this production of one of Mozart’s most popular operas. Taking inspiration from the quote: “The only rule is don’t be boring” (Paris Hilton), it claims to be bold and exciting, and looks likely to be one of the major musical or theatrical events of the year. It even has its own website: www.dongiovanni2008.com	Carnaval Wed 20th, Soul Tree, 22.00-03.00, £3/£4/£5  This ought to provide the 5th week escapism. There will be Brazilian DJs and dancers, music from all over the world, and prizes for best fancy dress.
	Jumper Vue, 10.00. 12.10, 14.20, 16.40, 18.50, 21.10, 23.30 There Will Be Blood Arts Picturehouse, 14.00, 17.15, 20.30	Something/Nothing Corpus Playrooms, 21.30 Rope Pembroke New Cellars, 22.00 White Devil ADC Theatre, 19.45	Winter Kings The Graduate, 19.30, £tbc Melancholic introspective rock. Yep, life is shit and no one does, in fact, love you. Stand on a precipice and weep.	Oliver Letwin: ‘Serendipity in Political Life’ Lady Mitchell Hall, 17.30-18.30 Letwin continues the Darwin College Lecture series on serendipity.	Heduction Clare Cellars, 21.00, £4 The Heduction crew bring hip-hop, funk, breaks, drum n bass, and impressive guests.
	The Cat in the Hat Arts Picturehouse, 11.00 Frankenstein Old Labs, Newnham, 20.00, free. The Bucket List Vue, 13.10, 15.40, 18.10, 20.40	The Vagina Monologues Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens’, 23.00 Skates ADC Theatre, 23.00 Rope Pembroke New Cellars, 22.00	Caribou The Graduate, 19.30, £8 See pick of the week	Momentary Momentum: animated drawings Kettle’s Yard, Castle Street, 11.30-17.00, free	I-Jambie & Technomaus King’s Cellar, 22.00-00.45 The Voodoo Rave crew visit King’s. I-Jambie will provide bass music, and Technomaus will play techno/house.
	The Witnesses Arts Picturehouse, 14.15 Juno Arts Picturehouse, 12.00, 16.50, 19.00, 21.10	If only Cindies were open.	Set Your Goals The Graduate, 19:30, £7 Californian ROCK! Don your Kurt Cobain Hoodie. ROCK! Devil Horns. Yeah! ROCK!	French Tapestry and Illustration Fitzwilliam Museum, 10.00-17.00, free	The Sunday Service Twenty Two, 22.00-03.00
	Cloverfield Vue, 12.40, 14.50, 17.10, 19.20, 21.30 There Will Be Blood Arts Picturehouse, 14.00, 17.15, 20.30	You could stay in?	Swing Jazz The Man on the Moon. They give no more details than the name. I imagine they will teach you how to do taxidermy.	This House would return the Parthenon Marbles to the New Acropolis Museum in Athens Chamber, Cambridge Union, 19.30-21.30, members RAG Stand Up Competition Downing Party Room, 19.30,£2	Fat Poppadaddys Fez, 22.00-03.30, £3 before 11, £4 after
	Kings of the Road (Until the End of Time) Arts Picturehouse, 14.30 Le Doulos Arts Picturehouse, 13.30	Entertaining Mr Sloane ADC Theatre, 19.45 Low Level Panic Corpus Playrooms, 21.00	The Bad Robots The Graduate, 19.30, £5 Ska punk rock. Ooh the naughty little machines. Stop being so bad and naughty.	Chinwe Chukuogo-Roy Chamber, Cambridge Union, 19.00-21.00, members RAG Stand Up Competition Clare Cellars, 19.30, £2	Ebonics Fez, 22.00-03.00, £2 before 11, £4 after
	Memoires d’immigres Arts Picturehouse, 14.30 Be Kind Rewind Vue, 13.30, 15.50, 18.20, 21.00 Le Doulos Arts Picturehouse, 11.00	Dangerous Liaisons Robinson College Auditorium, 19.30 The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged) ADC Theatre, 23.00	Don Giovanni West Road Concert Hall, 19.00, £9.50 They had this thing at Kambar featuring live strings and a DJ. Twas really rather good.	Don Giovanni Chamber, Cambridge Union, 19.00-21.00, members First night. CU Wine Society presents Falesco of Italy See www.cuws.co.uk.	Carnaval Soul Tree, 22.00-03.00, £3/£4/£5 See pick of the week
	Kika Arts Picturehouse, 17.00 Be Kind Rewind Vue, 13.30, 15.50, 18.20, 21.00 Juno Vue, 13.40, 16.10, 18.30, 20.50	Entertaining Mr Sloane ADC Theatre, 19.45 Low Level Panic Corpus Playrooms, 21.00 Dangerous Liaisons Robinson College Auditorium, 19.30	Amy McDonald The Junction, 19.00, £10.50 Pretty Scottish songstress, purveyor of music to eat cardboard to. She lists The Kooks and Razorlight as influences. Say no more.	This House believes that Britain’s children are being failed by the state Cambridge Union, 19.30-22.30 RAG Stand Up Competition Trinity Wolfson Party Room, 19.30, £2	The Priory: EDMX Fez, 22.00-03.00, £5/£7 Dance of different shapes and colours. Watch out for the trance.

More...


Music
Open Mic - Unheard of.
Sat 16th Feb
XVIII Jesus Lane,
19:00

They are doing some pretty cool stuff at ‘The Shop’. If you have been to the Edinburgh fringe, its a bit like the Forest Cafe they have there. Im sure this open mic night will be rather fun.



Theatre
Slag
15th and 16th Feb
Corpus Playroom,
19:00

From the description it sounds like this David Hare play is about promiscuous public school girls. What more could you possibly want from a night at the theatre?




Going Out
Retro Gaming All Stars
Wed 13th Feb
The Graduate,
19:30

You pay a pound and then get to play SNES and Megadrive games in a tournament. The winner takes it all. Like what you used to do when you were 12 but with hard cash and beer.



Free Stuff
Frankenstein
Free Film, Sat 16th, Newnham Old Labs 8pm

Are Friends Acoustic?
Free Music, Sun 17th, The Graduate 2:30pm



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21.10 Fri/Sat Late 23.30

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Daily 13.10 15.40 18.10 20.40
Fri/Sat Late 23.00

NATIONAL TREASURE 2: BOOK OF SECRETS (PG) (2h25) (NFT)
Daily 11.10* (Fri/Sat Only) 14.00* 17.30*
(Not Tues) 20.30*

JUNO (12a) (1h55) (NFT)
Daily 11.20 (Fri/Sat/Sun Only) 13.40 16.10
18.30 20.50 Fri/Sat Late 23.10

DEFINITELY MAYBE (12a) (2h15) (NFT)
Daily 21.20

THE WATER HORSE (PG) (2h15) (NFT)
Daily 10.40 (Fri/Sat/Sun Only) 13.20 (Not Tues) 16.00 18.40 (Not Tues)

Friday 15 Feb – Thursday 21 Feb

CLOVERFIELD (15) (1h45)
Daily 10.30 (Fri/Sat/Sun Only) 12.40 14.50
17.10 19.20 21.30 Fri/Sat Late 23.40

PENELOPE (U) (1h50)
Daily 10.20 (Fri/Sat/Sun Only) 12.50 15.00

OVER HER DEAD BODY (12a) (1h55)
Fri-Tues 13.30 15.50 18.20 21.00 Fri/Sat Late 23.50

SWEENEY TODD – THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET (18) (2h20)
Daily 17.20 20.00 Fri/Sat Late 22.50

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (U) (1h55)
Fri/Sat/Sun Only 11.00

IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH (15) (2h25)
Fri/Sat Late 23.20

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20-23 FEBRUARY 2008 7.45PM WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL, CAMBRIDGE

Sports Round-up

Football Ladies out of cup

Cambridge University's League Cup run came to an end on Sunday at the quarter final stage at the hands of title chasing Norwich City.

On an unseasonably warm and sunny afternoon, it was Norwich who started the brighter, creating a number of good half-chances in the opening 15 minutes, only kept at bay by a combination of solid defensive play, led by sweeper Claire Hollingsworth and assured goalkeeping by Lisa O'Dea.

Having weathered this early storm, Cambridge started to have more of the ball, but as the game became more even, it was Norwich who seized the initiative, taking the lead shortly before half time.

The second half began much like the first, with Norwich on top, doubling their lead on the hour. Cambridge seemed spurred on by this second goal and began pressing hard for a way back into this game. This soon came from the penalty spot, Mandy Wainwright converting a penalty she herself had won following good interplay with Felicity Hughes on the left.

The game then opened up as Norwich looked for a third goal to kill off the game and Cambridge pressed for an equalizer to force extra time. And in injury time, it was Norwich who found the decisive goal, scoring from a corner to make the final score 3-1.

Lee McGill

Down-ing and out

The first major upset of this year's Cuppers competition saw Queens', second in division three, knock out Downing, third in division one.

From the start, Queens' were competitive, but the superior pace and coherence from the Downing pack in particular led them to dominate territory and possession. Despite some exceptional Queens' defence, Downing pressure did eventually lead to a try, were unable to kill off the match.

The second half saw a complete reverse, with the Queens' pack rising to the occasion. With time running out Tom Ding broke through the fringes and found support from Thorne, who managed to drive his way over. White provided the conversion to put Queens' in front, and after that they never looked like losing.



Rugby League hopefuls were given a tough lesson by Harlequins losing 48-2



Women's rugby compete against Nottingham Trent in a match they eventually lost 26-15.

Mixed fortunes in BUSA

In the first round of the BUSA Cup tournaments, Cambridge teams had mixed fortunes. Although both women's Lacrosse teams and their hockey and badminton counterparts are safely through, with the hockey girls recording a stunning 2-1 victory over an Exeter side that finished second, the netball and tennis teams were both narrowly defeated.

Men's tennis, Rugby League and badminton sides all recorded convincing victories, but the Blue fencing and basketball teams are both out after closely fought fixtures with Manchester Metropolitan and King's London respectively.

CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

caught still fresh to the game, a wayward bounce eluded keeper Fran Stubbins, and gave the Oxford Monkeys the upper hand. Although a mid-point goal from impressive Sarah Baggs took the Nomads to 2-1, it was nevertheless the Monkeys who were able to capitalise on their home ground and nervous opposition, forcing five goals through the Cambridge back line. But determined work from forwards Helen Smyth and Captain Nuala Tumelty was not enough to resurrect the game.

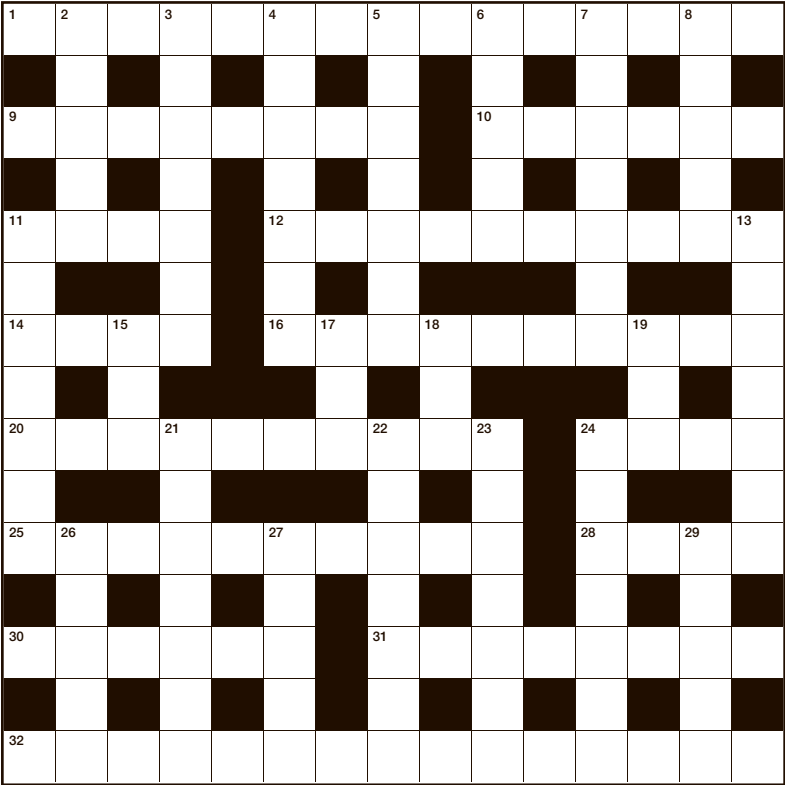
The final game of the day saw the Second team Wanderers attack Oxford with unstoppable drives up the line and intricate ball work around the top of the circle, particularly from Nikolai Bode. The Oxford Occasionals were forced into defence from the off and it was not long before Johnny Knight secured an early lead with a deflection from a defending foot. Entirely against the run of play the Dark blues snatched an equalizer before half time. The second half once again saw Cambridge determined on the attack, Jack Yelland beating an agile keeper to take the Wanders once again into the lead. Despite keeper Chris Robinson's best efforts, the game ended in an unexpected draw when an Oxford converted a sort corner against the run of play.

The day ended on equal footing, a win, a loss and two draws apiece, but Cambridge were undeniably the winning support, out-cheering

Games & puzzles



Varsity crossword no. 481



- Across**
- 1 Inevitable slur I alter for weaknesses. (15)
9 Mess in lab can create man-eater. (8)
10 Some Queen's teeth. (6)
11 Ground grains for lunch perhaps. (4)
- 12 Manage company or detain mess. (10)
14 Cut needles back. (4)
16 Threatening silver guinea about boat I have. (10)
20 Ass sees red, goes berserk and is re-evaluated. (10)
24 Inside unfortunate fish. (4)
25 Time to fight packs a lot. (10)

- 28 Be careful of brain. (4)
30 Small amount of time. (6)
31 Ok loot us, destroy the watch-towers. (8)
32 Twin flags give two sets of rules. (6,9)
- Down**
- 2 Custom of American era. (5)
3 Sticky point on leaf. (7)
4 The heads of Roman Empire botched everything causing catastrophic anger for Isaac's Wife. (7)
5 Dried meat is odd, be it late or high. (7)
7 Aunt set off infectious disease. (7)
8 Bird regrets losing its head and its tail. (5)
11 Must ark crash for a smelly rodent? (7)
13 Green and red meal digested. (7)
15 Iraq loses bottom terrorist organisation. (3)
17 Georgia's flatulence. (3)
18 Every evening has whisky in it. (3)
19 One-Nil, apparently you give acknowledgment of debt. (3)
21 Give in and bum us silly with two clubs. (7)
22 Red vehicle allowed after a second. (7)
23 Dijon is free and separate. (7)
24 Grave has nothing before the French raffle. (7)
26 First real greeting meets with refusal for African mammal. (5)
27 Feudal Lord even claimed glen. (5)
29 Isn't Edward renowned. (5)

Set by Ed Thornton

Answers to last week's crossword (no. 480)

Across: (1) vulnerabilities, (9) cannibal, (10) biters, (11) meal, (12) coordinate, (14) snip, (16) aggressive, (20) reassessed, (24) tuna, (25) truckloads, (28) mind, (30) minute, (31) lookouts, (32) double standards.

Down: (2) usage, (3) nonslip, (4) Rebecca, (5) biltong, (6) lobed, (7) tetanus, (8) egret, (11) muskrat, (13) emerald, (15) IRA, (17) gas, (18) rye, (19) IOU, (21) succumb, (22) scarlet, (23) disjoin, (24) tombola, (26) rhino, (27) liege, (29) noted.

rotations

COMPETITION

Win a bottle of wine from our friends at Cambridge Wine Merchants.

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

Seas

Sudoku

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

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

Kakuro

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

Hitori

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

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

Last issue's solutions

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NIAL RAFFERTY

It's now week five and so far our running total hasn't changed by more than £3 in a single week. We're starting to resemble the classic Premiership side that, despite high aspirations and bold promises, draws week in, week out and ends up adrift from the big boys come May. But unlike Liverpool, who look destined to clinch this honour in 2008, we reckon we've still got some tricks left up our sleeves.

This week our banker travels to Deepdale in the fifth round of the FA Cup, where a struggling Preston play host to Portsmouth. The last time Portsmouth went to Deepdale, they conceded a late equaliser that briefly checked their march towards the 2002/03 Championship title. Preston have paid the price for not following them up last season, and there is now a massive gulf between the teams. Whilst Portsmouth look like genuine European contenders, Preston have been in and around the relegation zone all season. Despite beating Derby in the fourth round, a loss to bottom of-the-table Colchester on Tuesday night revealed their fragility. With the recent acquisition of Defoe, and the return of half of their squad from the African Cup of Nations, wise money is on Portsmouth to triumph.

On Monday night, the televised tie on Setanta features two surprise contenders in the Championship promotion race. Bristol City and Crystal Palace go head to head at Ashton Gate but both may see their Premier League dreams fade a little here. City are in the mix for automatic promotion while Palace are among 13 sides hoping to surge into a Play-Off place: just seven points separate sixth-placed Ipswich from 18th-placed Southampton. A lack of goals has held these two back; their respective league tallies of 38 and 37 are lower than every other team in the top seven. Neither side is likely to adopt a gung-ho approach, so a low-scoring draw could well be the outcome.

The build up to the Cheltenham Festival continues with the Red Square Vodka Gold Cup on Saturday. The Haydock contest doesn't look particularly enticing for punters, especially given that the last 5 winners of the race have been rank outsiders. But we think Miko De Beauchene has got a great opportunity to notch up his second success of the season. He won the Welsh National in December in impressive style and beat a number of Saturday's rivals in the process. With a top-class jockey booked for the ride this weekend, the 5-1 being offered by PaddyPower looks pretty generous.

THE BANKER	5-6
PORTSMOUTH TO BEAT PRESTON	£4
PREDICTION	9-4
BRISTOL CITY AND CRYSTAL PALACE TO DRAW	£3
THE LONG SHOT	5-1
MIKO DE BEAUCHENE TO WIN RED SQUARE VODKA	£1.5 e/w
RUNNING TOTAL: £29.30	

Game of mist opportunities

» Apocalyptic fog prematurely ends an enthralling encounter



Dean makes a crucial penalty save to keep the Blues in the game

CAMBRIDGE
GOALS: GETHIN

ARTHURIAN LEAGUE

Match Abandoned due to fog

1
1ANDREW ROBSON
Sports Reporter

It was on Parker's Piece some 160 years ago that alumni from the likes of Harrow, Eton and Winchester contested the first recorded game of football. And on a murky evening one mile away on Grange Road on Tuesday evening, Old Boys from those very schools humbled the Light Blues, still in search of genuine momentum in their preparations for the crucial Varsity match at Craven Cottage on March 29th.

The Light Blues made a noticeably subdued start; Cambridge goalkeeper James Dean was forced into an outstanding save on the ten minute mark, tipping over a fine effort when a corner was half-cleared by Chris Turnbull. The Arthuriens continued to make more of an impression on the game and their performance was duly rewarded when Ali Hakimi's missed header led to a clear penalty being awarded for a trip by Turnbull. Blues' keeper Dean showed his class one again, however, producing a fine save to his left to deny the Arthuriens what

would have been a deserved lead.

The penalty save failed to galvanise the home side though, and they were lucky not to be punished when two free headers from set pieces were steered wide of Dean's left upright. Cambridge were lacking any fluidity or genuine width despite a real captain's performance from left-back Anthony Murphy whose tough tackling and genuine work ethic shone through what was becoming an increasingly misty encounter. Up to this point, strikers Mattie Gethin and Mike Johnson had seen very little possession whatsoever; their attempts to drop deeper proved unsuccessful as the Arthuriens continued to dominate the opening exchanges and they took a deserved lead on the half-hour mark. Their fourth corner of the game was excellently delivered and met by towering centre-half Molloy who headed past Dean with little-to-no challenge from a Blue. Cambridge will be rightly disappointed with their defending but the goal came clearly with the run of play.

Such a soft goal required a response from the Light Blues, and a massive positive that Murphy's side can take out of this game is their reaction to going behind. Within a minute of conceding, Mike Johnson spurned a good opportunity to get back on level terms, miscontrolling into the arms of the grateful Arthu-

rian goalkeeper. But not long after, fine work from Johnson and right winger Luke Pendlebury provided Gethin with the simple task of slotting home from within the six-yard

Cambridge looked menacing on the break with a number of dynamic assaults on the Exeter defence

box. It was the first time that Cambridge had managed any real width, and the equaliser was genuinely deserved. The Light Blues ended the half the stronger with the tireless Gethin and the aggressive Murphy clearly rattling the Arthuriens.

Having been under pressure for the majority of the first half, it was Cambridge who brought their late first-half momentum into the second period; almost straight from the kick-off they moved the ball as quickly and as efficiently as they would all game with Dave Mills' finish failing to match the build-up. They could not sustain their dominance, however, and a real midfield battle emerged. The presence of the lofty Mills in a deep midfield role ensured much of the aerial competition in the middle of the park was

commanded by the Blues, and their increasing possession mustered an excellent chance on the in the 57th minute with Mike Johnson's excellent through ball releasing Luke Pendlebury only for him to drag his finish well-wide of the left-hand post. The Arthuriens came even closer to grabbing the lead soon after when they smashed the crossbar just after the hour-mark. Most of Cambridge's play was by this point coming through right-back Nik Pantelides, with the defender providing a number of incisive passes into the front line but as the game wore on, the visibility became increasingly farcical. It became clear when the referee could not physically see promising fresher Matt Amos ready to come on from the far touchline that the conditions had rendered the match unplayable. The captains were called and a tightly contested affair ended in a fair 1-1 draw some quarter of an hour premature of the 90 minute mark.

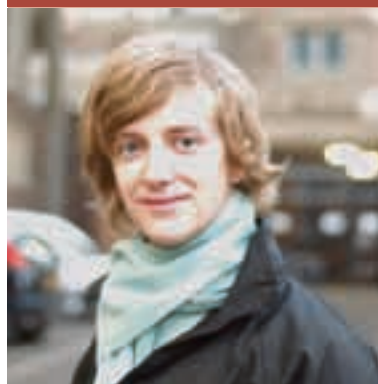
Fog rolls in over Grange Road



Captain's Corner

Athletics

Humphrey Waddington



So, athletics then?

Yes, it's not a sport that many people have ever taken seriously before coming to Cambridge. I was lucky in that I lived quite near an Athletics track in my home town of Kingston, but there are lots of sportsmen, especially from rugby and football, who come over and end up getting their blue in athletics. Although there is a fair amount of technique involved, the natural ability needs to be there first.

Tell us about your season?

This year for the first time we've got three Varsity matches. The Fresher's Varsity was held in Michaelmas – we won the women's but narrowly lost overall in the men's category, although we did find many new faces to bolster

the Blues squad. Next week we've got the inaugural Indoor Relays and Field Events Varsity match, which is being held at the Pickett's Lock track in London, the site for of the warm up events for the 2012 Olympics, before the traditional Varsity match held on the 17th of May in Oxford. We also compete regularly at other meetings, and are currently warming down from a really encouraging performance at the RAF invitational in Sheffield.

How's it looking for Varsity?

We caned them in the men's last year and only narrowly lost in the women's. Although they have a couple of stand-out athletes, Oxford really can't compete against our strength in depth – our middle distance and

jump squads especially are looking out of this world.

What's the training like?

There are four compulsory sessions a week, as well as extra technique and weights sessions. It is certainly possible to do ten, which leaves little time for anything else. Now we've got permission to use floodlights at our track at Wilberforce Road, things should start to get a little more flexible. I cannot emphasise how vital they will be to our future success as a club, and how well run the campaign was to get them up.

The first annual Indoor Varsity Field Events and Relays Championships will be held at Pickett's Lock in London on Sunday

That's why we're champions

» Women's Blues show their class with a convincing win

CAMBRIDGE	3
LETCWORTH	0

BECKS LANGTON
Sports Reporter

With the BUSA top-spot secured, the Cambridge women's Blues Hockey team turned their attention to the East Premier League and bottom of the table Letchworth. A beautifully sunny day at Wilberforce road drew out the support for Cambridge and the Blues were raring to go, determined to secure a further three points and maintain their top three position in the table.

Letchworth were unexpectedly strong from the start, linking quick passes through the middle of the pitch and forcing Cambridge into last quarter defending. A number of penalty corners were conceded and it was only through sheer determination and consistently strong tackling from the back line that the Blues were able to avoid conceding the first goal.

Determined to make their mark on a technically weaker team, the Blues forced the opposition into their own half with Tash Close picking up any stray balls at the back and Lisa Noble injecting some much needed pace into the midfield. Cambridge established a strong press around the circle, retrieving loose passes and forcing the opposition into basic errors. It was only a first rate performance from the Letchworth keeper that kept the score line even and the Blues from consolidating on this pressure.

The inevitable first goal arrived late in the first half when a complex short corner paid off for the Blues. Tash Barnes, once again showing her innate goal scoring flair, sent the ball ricocheting off the goal keeper's pads and into the back of the net. This advantage seemed



Blues defence remained solid through some early short-corners

to give the home team the motivation they needed to really step up the pace and searing drives up the pitch from Jenny Stevens and Anna Stanley saw ingeniously worked passing play foiled only by the athletic Letchworth keeper and the post. The first half ended with a green card for Sarah Baggs following a particularly cynical tackle to foil a Letchworth break, the first year defender lucky not to be shown a yellow.

A reinvigorated Cambridge side returned to the pitch keen to finish off the game and profit on their hard won advantage. Letchworth also seemed eager to make their mark, albeit with physicality over skill. Strong defensive work from the Blues with damning tackles from Alex Workman, and blazing balls up the line from Captain Tash Fowlie, kept Letchworth at bay, although their frustration was clear as swinging tackles arrived at every angle, threatening not only the quality of the game but also Blue shins on a number of occa-

sions. Undeterred by the increasingly village nature of the Letchworth play, Cambridge ability was rewarded by a show-ground goal. An unwavering tackle from Sarah Baggs turned the opposition onto the back foot and, following an inspired set of passes as Alex Workman and Lisa Noble left Letchworth for dust, Tash Barnes seized her chance, placing a cool second past the keeper.

"We got the result we came for, although the game may have been functional, not pretty"

Cambridge then maintained this pressure. Switches around the back were strong, Rosie Evans indefatigable and Flick Hughes tenacious in the tackle, meaning that the Blues were able to dictate the game from the back. Letchworth

demonstrated their growing frustration when some hippo sailed into the back of Captain Fowlie. the opposition player justified her two-footed tackle with the shoddy excuse of 'but she's taller than me.' Cambridge, however were unrelenting in their pressure, working tight spaces to their advantage, and emphasizing their superiority with a third goal in the dying minutes and a hat-trick for striker Tash Barnes, her top of the circle strike deflected off a defensive stick.

The final score of 3-0 reflected well on Cambridge. Observer and Nomad coach, Nick McLaren commented on the 'clinical performance', remarking that 'we got the result we came for although the game may have been functional rather than pretty'. As Coach James Waters was keen to point out however, there were in fact 'moments of brilliance' in which Cambridge were clear in their dominance, and outclassed Letchworth in every corner of the pitch.

News from the River



Tuesday was the final physiological test of this Boat Race campaign. One last 5000 meter test, flat out, pitting every athlete against one another in a final bout of selection.

When I was young I always imagined these sorts of tests would get easier as talent improved, that experience would offer reprieve from the bleak misery that characterizes rowing pieces. But I have grown to realize this sentiment couldn't be further from the truth; as Tour de France champion Greg LeMond expertly summed up, "It never gets easier. You just go faster."

So it was with particular dread that I approached Tuesday's piece. I longed for the shower and dinner that would greet me upon its conclusion. Rather than looking forward to testing the limits of my ability, I found myself looking forward to the piece being over.

Yet as any endurance athlete can attest, the actual race, the conclusion of days or even weeks of anticipation, ends as quickly as it began, unceremoniously and without any of the aplomb such endeavor should afford. And now that it is over, rather than the expected emotions of relief and calm, it is nostalgia and a sort of ill-deserved sadness that accompanies the abrupt end.

We tested in two flights, and as a part of the first group to start, I had the opportunity to watch the second wave conduct their piece. Surveying the room after its completion, certain images are immediately apparent. In one corner of the gym are several guys passed out, one preferring the comfort of his side, while two more find solace on their backs. Richard Stutt still sits on his erg, a physio attending to a nosebleed he developed gasping for air in his final sprint. And in the center of it all is Ryan Monaghan, face down in remnants of lunch, his body contorting like a seal's in a rather pitiable attempt to get as far away from the stench of sick as possible.

Yet despite the misery endemic to everything I see, I immediately realize this scene is one of the moments I will miss most when I stop rowing. I will miss wanting something so much that I am willing to sacrifice my body to achieve it.

Above all else I will miss the camaraderie that can only be gained through a shared and mutual suffering. I can't imagine I will ever have as close of friends as guys like Ryan and Richard, guys who have shown me countless times this year what depths of hell they would walk through before yielding to Oxford on 29 March.

So despite the anxiousness I felt to finish the piece and put this chapter of life behind me, I am struck with pangs of regret rather than reprieve. I am reminded that I must revel in all the suffering I can find in these last six weeks, for it is sure to end too soon.

It has been one of the pleasures of my life to pursue this crazy dream with the members of this year's squad. Never again will I long for it to be over.

Spencer Griffin Hunsberger

Lacrosse girls thrash UCL

CAMBRIDGE	22
UCL	0

JAMIE PTASZYNSKI
Sports Reporter

Not many people know this, so keep it quiet: the game of lacrosse actually originated on the beaches of Devon and Cornwall, where kids used to sling dead guppies and seaweed at each other with colourful plastic fishing nets. Wikipedia would have you think that it was invented by North American Indians, and its various names meant 'men hit a rounded object' and 'bump hips'. But Wikipedia couldn't reliably tell you when fish-fingers were invented.

Judging by Wednesday's performance, many members of the Cambridge University women's lacrosse team harbour fond memories of breezy afternoons spent digging around rock pools with their siblings. Maybe it was the impossibly low temperature, maybe it was the alarmingly thick fog, or maybe it was the sporadic sounds of gunshots coming from over the hedge, but something spurred the girls on to one of the most

embarrassing walkovers I've ever witnessed. I would have been more comfortable watching Kate Middleton attempting to hold a conversation with Katie Price, so extreme was the difference in class.

As it happens, lacrosse is a very good spectator sport, particularly when played with such verve, fluidity and lethal proficiency as was displayed by the Cambridge girls. From the start their superior fitness and tactical aptitude was clear. The first UCL girl to be substituted came off after ten minutes with the words: 'God, I'm knackered! That little blonde one's really quick.' She could have been referring to either Emily Knight or Ellie Walshe, who bossed the midfield between them with almost aggressive grace.

Whilst captain and goalkeeper Alex Carnegie-Brown must have been wondering why she bothered to get out of bed in the morning, Kate Morland and her supporting cast at the far end had themselves a right shindig. Morland herself tossed in ten goals, reaching her personal target. Poor Alex, nose reddening from intense cold behind the metal grill of her helmet, probably couldn't even see far enough through the mist to

appreciate the utter dominance of her side's attacking play.

At times it resembled a training session, as the girls casually set up an offensive set-piece, encircling the UCL goal before passing the ball anticlockwise and setting off on a series of dummy runs. These runs peeled away the defenders from the goal area and left the target open to a darting attack by the ball carrier. I cannot pretend to understand every nuance of lacrosse but, as an appreciator of sport, this is one of the most aesthetically pleasing attacking moves I've seen in any

team ball game. It was also effective, yielding three scores in all.

The origins of the name lacrosse are unclear. My personal suspicion is that, having witnessed a younger brother take a faceful of sandy algae from his sister's net, passers-by could often be heard to say 'that lad's cross'. Cross is the word I would have used to describe the girls from UCL who had travelled up from cosy London to receive this humiliation: however as I walked past them on my way home they let off a cheer, apparently delighted to have won the coin toss.

A 'shindig' up front for Cambridge



SPORT



Football p30
Blues battle with gorillas in the mist

Blues send RAF flying

» RAF scramble to cope with rugby Blues once mist lifts

CAMBRIDGE 27

R.A.F. 13

GEORGE TOWERS
Sports Reporter

On a miserable, foggy Wednesday evening the Blues took on the RAF at Grange Road. Reeling from their 16-29 defeat at the hands of the Army the Blues wanted to put a solid win past the RAF in what can only be described as dire conditions. Despite the weather the match had special significance for seasoned flanker Richard Bartholomew, who won his fiftieth cap for the Blues.

The match started at a high tempo, unfortunately the fog obscured the crowd's view of the far side of the pitch, but shortly into the match the Blues were awarded a penalty, which Ross Broadfoot slotted for three points. Following on from the penalty the Blues renewed their attack, striking up the middle with Bartholomew who was playing at 8. In the mist the Blues battered forward, but an RAF turnover was rewarded moments later with a penalty for Corporal Ballman, who levelled the score at three all.

In the damp, misty conditions it was no surprise that handling errors characterised the match. Several promising Blues attacks broke down as the ball was spilled to the floor. The RAF missed their second penalty attempt, leaving Cambridge to respond with an attack up the right. The cheers of the crowd on the far side of the pitch heralded the awarding of a try, the scorer of which remains a mystery. Broadfoot again made his kick, building a lead of 10 points to 3 at half time.

Early in the second half Broadfoot missed his first penalty attempt. Having been relatively subdued for most of the game, the RAF really opened up. If it wasn't for a well worked turnover from John Blaikie then the score may



well have drawn to a level again; but as it was the Blues stood firm and held out in the mist.

With the fog just beginning to lift as the far stand slowly came into view, both sides opened up and the game's pace accelerated considerably. Broadfoot led the charge, cutting through the RAF defence then barrelling over to score the first of three second half Cambridge tries.

Despite a decent display of open running rugby, the Blues didn't fail to disappoint with regards

to dominance in the tight. They trundled a maul from 20m out to score what is becoming quite a staple Blues try. Amidst the gloom and the tangle of bodies no one knew who had scored, however the try was awarded to Bartholomew to mark his fiftieth cap.

Alfie Weston, an U21 development player, rounded off the game with a try on his debut for the Blues. Along with Weston a host of U21s came off the bench for some experience at the top level. The build up to December's Var-

sity Match is already well underway and competition for places is already set in the minds of those players still here next season.

The Blues won a convincing 27-13 victory against the RAF, the RAF fought well, but the fitness of the Blues told in the second half when a lift in the weather allowed the game to open up. The crowd, suffering in the cold and the mist, weren't disappointed; the Blues looked drilled and motivated and hopes for the future must be high in the Cambridge camp.

Honours shared in 2nds and 3rds Varsity Hockey

BECKS LANGTON
Sports Reporter

The culmination of almost five months of preparation arrived with four of the Cambridge Hockey teams traveling down to Oxford for the highlight of the second and third teams season. A long journey over to the 'dark side' and a night of team bonding saw the first team to play, the Bedouins arrive at the pitch determined to claim victory. Undefeated in the nine years of playing in Varsity, the pressure was fierce, and although the Bedouins dominated the game, with incredible drives up the pitch by Man of the Match Emily Bates and fierce tackles from Captain Clare Sibley the scores were level at thirty-five minutes. An impassioned half time talk from coaches James Waters and Philip Balbirnie gave the Bedouins the desire to consolidate on their dominance, and the team entered the second half keen to show the Oxford Hos their superiority. Within ten minutes a fantastically worked short corner gave Lucy Maxwell a chance at the back post, the defender becoming a surprise goal scorer and hero of the moment taking the Beds 1-0 up. Sarah Donaldson was distinguished in defense and initiating a string of clinical passes gave Catherine Davison a ball at the top of the circle that the centre forward was able to convert into a two-nil lead. The Beds were ecstatic to claim nine years no wins for the Oxford Hos.

The next game was the third team Squanders who took on the Oxford Infrequents.

Cheered on by an ever-growing Cambridge contingent, the light blue support outclassed the Oxford crowd entirely. It was clear that the pressure was affecting the dark blues as they conceded a goal within the first ten minutes. Strong defensive work from Captain Tom Bullock kept the Infrequents at bay, but the Squanderers were unfortunate as Oxford caught them on the break, leveling the scores at 1-1 and forcing a draw.

Following the Squanders, the Nomads, possibly the most unified team of the club, took to the pitch eager to continue the strong form of their season. Unlucky to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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