



## Interview

Rob Brydon goes back to his roots  
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## The Great Varsity BAND HUNT

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# VARSLITY

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

# Class A Cambridge

- » Varsity investigation uncovers evidence of cocaine use at Cambridge colleges, nightclubs, and pubs
- » Undercover reporters infiltrate Cambridge's elite private members' clubs



## VARSLITY NEWS TEAM

A Varsity investigation has revealed widespread cocaine use across Cambridge.

Probable traces of the Class A drug were detected at eight Cambridge colleges including Trinity, St. John's and King's. Three other prominent student venues - the Cambridge Union Society, the ADC Theatre and the University Pitt Club - also tested positive, as well as several clubs and bars popular with students.

Tests were conducted in 31 locations frequented by students

around Cambridge including colleges, pubs and clubs. Samples were taken from the toilet lids, cisterns and other flat surfaces in the cubicles of both male and female toilets. They were tested using cocaine identification swabs commercially available from NIK. The swabs, which are also used by police forces worldwide, detect traces of cocaine, crack cocaine, and free-base (the base form of cocaine). When wiped across a surface on which these traces are present, the swabs change colour.

The swabs, which contain the compound cobalt thiocyanate, would also show positive results in

the presence of a number of other substances including off-the-shelf antihistamine medication and the anaesthetic procaine. However, a

## "Eight colleges tested positive"

spokesperson from BAE Systems, the company which manufactures the NIK swabs, has told Varsity that it is widely accepted that a positive result suggests the pres-

ence of cocaine, even though further laboratory tests are required for absolute confirmation. He also confirmed "several police departments in the UK use these tests."

Overall, eight colleges tested positive for probable traces of the illegal drug. These colleges - King's, St John's, Trinity, Peterhouse, Pembroke, Christ's, St Catherines and Jesus - issued a unified statement to Varsity in response to the findings of the investigation.

A spokesperson said, "The colleges take this matter very seriously and we are aware of our broader responsibilities for the health and welfare of our students

and staff."

Probable traces of cocaine were found at the Cambridge Union Society in the girls toilets during a club night held there. In response to the investigation's findings, a spokesperson said, "The Union Society is disappointed to hear of the possibility of drug use on Society premises. We unequivocally condemn the use of drugs in all forms. It is an unfortunate reality of student life that some drug use will take place, but we should always seek to prevent this where possible."

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## Debate

Should immigrants have to conform to 'British values'?

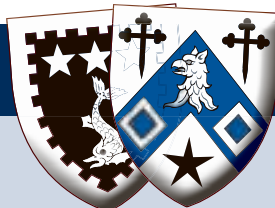
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## Face Off

It's girl wars as Newnham take on New Hall

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## Fashion

High street fashion goddess Jane Shepherdson shares her wisdom

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## In Brief

### Did the earth move for you?

Hundreds of Cambridge residents woke with a scare in the early hours of Wednesday morning as the UK was hit by an earthquake. The earthquake, which began just before 1am, was one of the biggest to be recorded in the UK in recent years. The British Geological Survey (BGS) initially gave the magnitude for the earthquake as 5.3 on the Richter scale but later said it was closer to 5.2. Its epicentre was near Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, but the tremor was felt across the country, as far away as Bangor in Northern Ireland in the west and Edinburgh in the north. Many Cambridge students felt the quake. One final year classicist, who was lying awake listening to Radio 4 at the time, was very disturbed by the tremor "All my stuff was shaking on the shelves, it was very bizarre. I thought an animal had got into my room or something."

Isabel Shapiro

### Chef of the Year winner

A Cambridge chef has won the prestigious Chef of the Year event run by the University Caterers' Association. Stephen Mather beat chefs from eight other universities to take the gold medal in the event with his menu of scallop, courgette and lemon risotto, rack of lamb in herb and honey glaze, and apple soufflé with scrumpy cider yoghurt ice cream. The competition was judged by a panel of celebrity chefs including former Chef of the Year Kevin Viner. Stephen said, "It was a gruelling day which started at 4am, when we picked herbs from the college gardens. We faced some really strong competition but fortunately our menu came out on top. 'The Chairman of the Cambridge College Catering Managers Kevin Keohane said, 'Stephen has turned in an awesome performance - it's great news for the Cambridge colleges, and Sidney Sussex in particular.'"

Clementine Dowley

### Heart breaker

A University study has shown that thousands more people could die from heart attacks if more banks suffer a crisis like Northern Rock. Cambridge researchers found that a nationwide banking crisis could prompt as many as 5000 more fatal heart attacks annually. The team found that when a financial crisis hit a developed country heart attacks rose by 6.4%, and that cardiac related deaths surged "briefly and regularly" every time there was a systemic bank failure.

Isabel Shapiro



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# Hezbollah here to stay

MICHAEL STOTHARD  
AND RICHARD POWER SAYEED

Ibrahim Mousawi, a senior member of Hezbollah, will speak at a Stop the War Coalition (StWC) rally in Cambridge on Sunday after an emergency motion to add the organization to CUSU's "No Platform" policy failed at CUSU Council on Wednesday.

Corpus Christi College, which was to host the rally featuring Mousawi, the President of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Workers Union Hassan Juma'a, and StWC Chair Andrew Murray, has cancelled the booking. However, Stop the War, which has organized rallies across the country this week, said that the event would still take place at either King's College or the Union.

A spokesperson for Corpus Christi College said that the decision to cancel the booking "wasn't personal" but was made for "largely logistical" reasons, and that the College "didn't know there was a booking at all until a few days ago."

CUSU's "No Platform" policy states that, "CUSU will campaign against attempts by any organisation within Cambridge University to provide a platform to, or actively promote, an individual, or a member of any group or organisation deemed to pose a very real threat to the welfare or security of our members".

Wednesday's motion demanded that CUSU enact the No Platform policy against Hezbollah and Dr Mousawi, who edits Al Intiqad, a journal associated with Hezbollah.

Mark Wolfson, Cambridge University Jewish Society External Officer, who proposed the failed motion, said that "the decision by the Stop the War Coalition to invite advocates of prejudice and fanaticism was a mortifying move. It undermined the honourable intentions of many who genuinely wish to stop the war." After the motion failed, Wolfson said, "I am really disappointed that officers failed to protect the welfare of all students at Cambridge."

David Cameron has already demanded that the government ban Dr Mousawi from entering the country, calling him a "vicious anti-Semite." He said "People like al-Qaradawi and Mousawi are dangerous and divisive and should not be allowed in this country."

Wolfson told Council that Hezbollah was a terrorist organization, and that it was racist, sexist, and homophobic. He argued that their ideology "would be legitimised by being represented in Cambridge."

Hezbollah, or parts of it, is considered a terrorist organization by the UK, America, Canada, the Netherlands, Israel and Australia. It receives support from Syria and was formed primarily in response to Israeli occupation.

Owen Holland of St Catherine's College, who opposed the motion, quoted veteran Middle East journalist Charles Glass at length in defence of Hezbollah. Holland argued that Hezbollah are neither anti-Semitic, nor a terrorist organization. In a Stop the War statement, Mousawi said, "I have nothing



Controversial journalist Ibrahim Mousawi is scheduled to speak at Cambridge

against Jews. I have nothing against any human being, whether because of religion, gender or political affiliation." He said that Hezbollah is a resistance group, authorized by article 51 of the UN Charter. However, since 2004 the UN has passed two resolutions calling for the disarmament of Lebanese militias including Hezbollah.

David Wilson, of the Stop the War Coalition, said that "Wednesday night's vote was a vote for democracy and, given the venue, also for academic freedom... The representative of a legal political movement with popular support in its country and -with a record of opposition to invasion and occupation strikes us as someone who should be

heard in the interests of both an open debate and peace and security."

The "No Platform" policy will not be effective as of the new academic year, although Wolfson said he hoped "that when the renewal of the No Platform policy comes before the council those elected to protect students do not fail in their duty once again." However, Junior Penge Juma, CUSU Black Students Campaigns Officer, received a loud round of applause at Wednesday's Council when he criticised "No Platform". He argued that "dialogue" was necessary to improve understanding between opposing groups, and said that even Adolf Hitler should have been allowed to visit Cambridge.

## Cambridge scientists invent 'bendy' phone

ROBERT CRAIG

Cambridge scientists have unveiled a blueprint for a new generation of flexible mobile phones.

'Morph', a concept designed in a partnership between the University and the Nokia Research Centre in Cambridge (NRC), promises to allow users to bend and stretch their waterproof phones into completely different shapes for ease of use and transport.

The breakthrough in nanotechnology, launched as part of the Design and the Elastic Mind exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is the product of a long-term collaboration between the Department of Engineering's Nanoscience Group and the NRC Cambridge laboratory, which was announced in March 2007.

Professor Mark Welland, Head of the Group, highlighted the importance of this technology in light of current research in nanotechnology. "All of the elements of the phone are reflected in real projects that are going on here", he commented, highlighting both the development of flexible electronics and the engineering of materials to "sense" their surroundings.

Dr Tapani Ryhanen, Head of the NRC, in turn underlined the scientific relevance of these developments, claiming that the Morph represented more

than merely a piece of "aspirational design". "We hope that this combination of art and science will showcase the potential of nanoscience to a wider audience", he said. "The techniques we are developing might one day mean new possibilities in terms of the design and function of mobile devices".



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The Cambridge Union, March 4th 2008, 5.30pm.

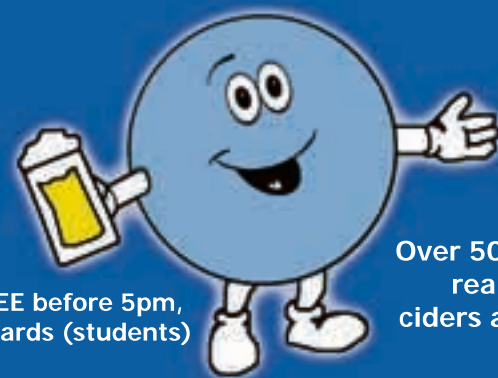
See Union Termcards, email bulletins and The Globalist website for more information.

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Please note that membership of The Union is not required for this event.

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# The race for the presidency

**Joe Gosden** talks to the CUSU presidential candidates about services, top up fees and non-alcoholic ents

Last year Varsity lambasted presidential hopeful Tom Howard for having arrived slightly late for his interview. This time Churchill mathematician Guolong Li didn't even bother turning up; perhaps not surprising for a candidate regarded by many as a bit of a joke. Despite a moving hustings performance on the problems of international student integration, Li's manifesto simply informs electors that, "I love pizza and I will be the best president of CUSU". Believing that every candidate should be given a fair chance, Varsity conducted a swift telephone survey of Cambridge Italian restaurants and takeaway establishments but, even after Pizza Hut were persuaded to check their storeroom, no sign of the mysterious candidate could be found. Later, minutes before we went to press, Li announced that he had withdrawn his nomination.

Once down to business it became quickly apparent that four more diverse candidates had never been placed in the same room. Basit Kirmani, the "revolutionary evolution" candidate, with a fierce rhetoric for not changing much but listening to the student body in the process, locked horns with Hugh Hadlow, a man whose manifesto mentioned the word "profit" more times than a hedge fund's end of year dividend report, while Richard Braude gave a speech on "solidarity" that would have put Lenin to shame. Fletcher, the experienced manager and elder statesmen, took a more relaxed tone but was quick to kick the others' theoretical plans for changing CUSU into touch when they forgot that they were running a student union and not the Labour party, or possibly UKIP in Hadlow's case. Indeed, Hadlow's plans attracted the most criticism from the other candidates. His proposals to abolish pretty much everything in sight in order to "stop wasting taxpayers' money", to strip CUSU of its Student Union Building campaign, its Awareness campaigns, its Black Students campaign and its Green campaign (which would, apparently, be able to "function just as effectively" if made independent and stripped of their funding and premises) brought both hysterical laughs and cries of despair. Hadlow repeatedly claimed that he "stood for the 80% of students who didn't turn out to vote last year" although seemed somewhat short on ideas for getting them to back him this time around. Despite not endorsing the metaphor, Hadlow seemed to see himself as a Thatcher figure about to lead CUSU out of its strike-ridden winter of discontent. Given the high levels of CUCA and Union membership on his slate such sentiments are, perhaps, not surprising.

Sticking with the metaphor, the Michael Foot principled opposition post was taken by Braude, a man with a history of involvement in the Cambridge left almost as long as his sideburns used to be. Given his KCSU, CUSU and various campaign body experiences, it was to be expected that Braude would articulate his views very effectively. Yet it was almost as if some great Cambridge Comintern had told him to avoid being drawn on anything that might seem overly lefty. Braude stopped well short of the extreme rhetoric of the socialist slate that ran last year, perhaps remembering that any member of it who faced opposition for their seat was resoundingly defeated. Throughout, Braude was very strong

on the theoretical side of policy and had, undoubtedly, put a great deal of thought into his manifesto. Despite this, he occasionally appeared somewhat naïve in the face of Fletcher and Kirmani's practical experience. His emphasis on "student solidarity", free education for all and cutting fees for international students seemed somewhat at odds with a political situation in which the "battle against top-up fees has already been lost" (Fletcher) and few students still view a university degree as a way of "expanding their academic horizons" (Braude) rather than just a short cut to a higher paid job.

## "a speech on solidarity that would have shamed Lenin"

Much of the serious discussion was conducted by Kirmani and Fletcher, although Kirmani occasionally let his inexperience show in his belief that CUSU could realistically have a foreign policy and his incoherence on student representation. Despite their apparent dominance in debate, it is worth remembering that they will be up against Hadlow's strong CUCA following Braude's status as the darling of the left. In comparison, Fletcher's Jesus power base is on the wane a year after graduation and Kirmani is a virtual unknown. Fletcher insisted repeatedly that a second term would "not leave [him] too far removed from normal students to be in touch" and, not disputing that he was a "safe pair of hands", advocated a strategy of building on the "huge achievements" of his first year. Both Fletcher and Kirmani voiced opinions in favour of non-alcohol CUSUents nights to allow those marginalised by the current Cindies/Life line up to feel more involved, and both wanted to build on the current access program. Fletcher's manifesto demonstrated his impressive grasp of the intricacies of University politics with commitments to campaigning for anonymous class lists nestling alongside plans to improve student public transport discounts.

Kirmani has spent the last year turning around the University's ailing Pakistan Society as well as setting up a National Union of Pakistani Students and aims to continue with the firebrand politics - inspired by Malcolm X - that have seen him grab serious media coverage in the last year, although if the number of exclamation marks he managed to slip into his manifesto are anything to go by then his press statements will make interesting reading. In terms of drive and political nous there is probably little to choose between Fletcher and Kirmani; their politics are similarly central, their aims moderate and it is unlikely that they will make any serious errors, certainly if their impressive interview performances are anything to go by. Yet, Kirmani's status as an unknown outside the Islamic world may be his great undoing. Fletcher appeared confident that a (historic) second term is what CUSU and Cambridge need, and whether he convinces the student body of this will depend largely on whether Kirmani's Asian-centred experience makes him seem too marginal and whether protest votes pull the peripheral candidates into contention.



MICHAEL DREINER

### Mark Fletcher



**Land Economy, Sabbatical, 2.i**

**Experience:** CUSU President 2007-8, Jesus JCR President 2006-7, Jesus May Ball President 2007, JCSU Welfare Officer 2005

**Key policies:** to improve communication between CUSU and students, to strengthen graduate representation, to fight rent increases in Cambridge colleges, to campaign for anonymous class lists, to employ a General Manager and a full time case worker to improve welfare support, to lobby the University for a block grant for CUSU

### Hugh Hadlow



**Computer Science, 2nd Year, 2.ii**

**Experience:** Secretary of the Cambridge University Conservative Association, Director of Communications for the Cambridge Union Society

**Key policies:** to abolish the CUSU Black Students' Campaign, to make the Women's Union, LGBT campaign and CUSU International independent and remove their CUSU funding, to scrap the Ethical Affairs Team, to make CUSU membership for students optional, to disaffiliate from the NUS

### Richard Braude



**History of Art, 3rd Year, 2.i**

**Experience:** CUSU Higher Education Funding Officer 2007-8, KCSU Governing Body Representative 2007, History of Art 3rd Year Representative 2007-8

**Key policies:** to provide more culturally diverse Ents, to campaign against fees and lobby the University to oppose higher tuition fees, to support JCR's and MCR's ethical campaigns, to make CUSU's NUS affiliation dependent on NUS's improvement to campaign on issues that unite students such as human rights

### Basit Kirmani



**Management Studies, 2nd Year**

**Experience:** CU Pakistan Society President 2007, Founder of National Union of Pakistani students, Queens' College Cricket Captain

**Key policies:** to increase student involvement in CUSU, to campaign for a CUSU building for social, political and charitable events, to provide alcohol-free Ents, to ensure that ethnic minority students feel comfortable in Cambridge, to tackle the University's 'elitist reputation', to take action to preserve the environment



# The Varsity Cocaine

## How do the swabs work?

This investigation was conducted using cocaine identification swabs commercially available from NIK, a company based in Florida. The active reagent in the swabs is cobalt thiocyanate, a compound that changes colour in the presence of cocaine. Studies have shown that cobalt thiocyanate gives a positive result in the presence of some common substances, including diphenhydramine, which is found in off-the-shelf antihistamine medication, and the anaesthetic procaine. By strict field-testing standards, the swabs are not definitive test due to the potential for false positives. However, if a negative result is observed, then cocaine is conclusively absent at the testing site. Follow-up testing would use a more sensitive technique for separating mixtures, such as gas chromatography, in order to isolate cocaine from other contaminants.

Kevin Koo



## It's not the first time drugs have hit the headlines

Varsity made its first foray into drugs in 1952, when an investigation revealed that 20 students in the University regularly smoked hashish and that “four out of those 20 were probably addicted to it.” During the sixties, drugs became a regular feature in Varsity. An investigation in 1966 estimated that between 5% and 10% of undergraduates took hard drugs and discovered 40 heroin users within the university. Varsity’s findings led to a huge police crack-down on drug taking and trafficking in Cambridge. In 1979, ‘Stop Press with Varsity’ discovered that several fellows were heavily implicated in supplying hard drugs to undergraduates. The front page story ‘Dons linked with drugs’ revealed “students are first drawn into a tightly knit circle and then initiated into the use of dangerous drugs, predominately cocaine, amphetamines and LSD.” Varsity’s scandalous findings led to a police investigation into the allegations.

Isabel Shapiro



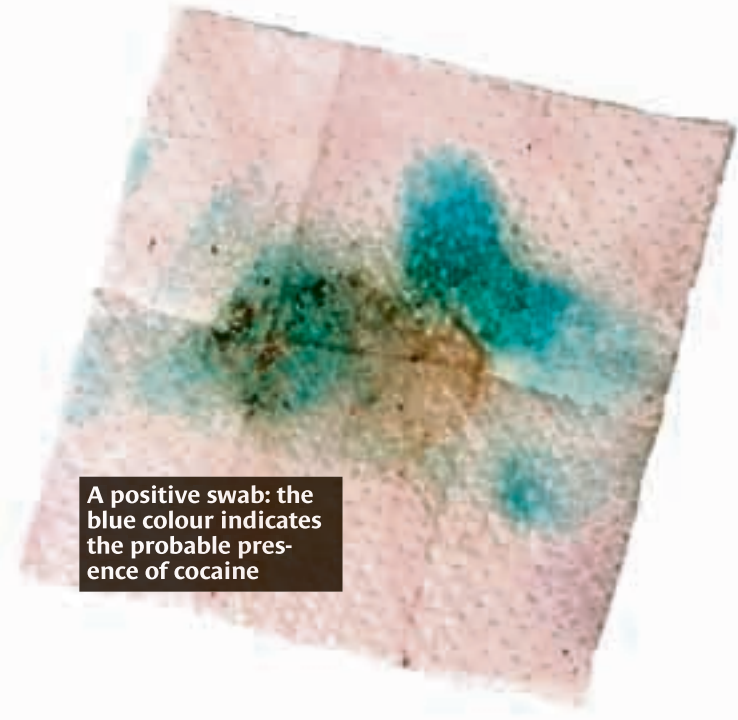
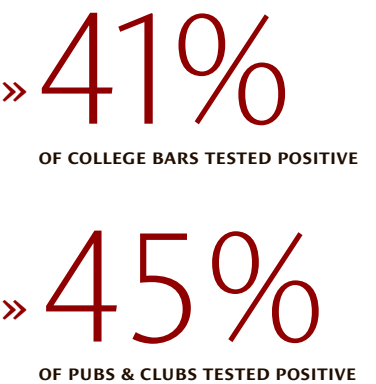
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When informed of the positive result obtained in the public toilets of the ADC Theatre, Theatre Manager James Baggaley said, “The ADC operates a zero-tolerance policy towards drug use, and will be investigating Varsity’s findings. We do not believe there is a drug-use problem within the Theatre community, but with a large number of people passing through the Theatre every day, we cannot take responsibility for the actions of a small minority.” He also emphasised that “Through appropriate supervision of the premises, and collaboration with the University, the Licensing Authority and the Police, the ADC

**“We generally run rock and indie nights, and you would usually associate drugs with the R’n’B scene. I’m just surprised.”**

Theatre aims to create a safe and welcoming environment for all its patrons.” The University Pitt Club, an exclusive private members’ club, also tested positive. Our undercover reporter took the swab from a flat surface in the main reception room. The club often holds parties with many non-members invited as guests. The Pitt Club declined to comment. Off University premises, the swabs tested positive in many of the most popular student drinking haunts. The Bath House, The Maypole, The Baron of Beef and the Pickerel all tested positive. Traces of cocaine were also found at Kambar, Cambridge’s self-proclaimed “alternative clubbing venue.” But of the four nightclubs infiltrated by reporters, Kambar was the only venue which tested positive. Vodka Revolutions Bar, Fez, and Ballare – known to students as Cindies – all showed negative results. Owner of Kambar Richard Reynolds told Varsity, “That’s terrible. I’m shocked to think that Cambridge University students would be doing anything like that, especially after they’ve worked so

hard to get here.” He added, “I’ve been at Kambar since 1972. A lot of our nights are strictly for students only. We’ve never had a reputation for people coming and taking drugs here. We generally run rock and indie nights, and you would usually associate drugs with the R’n’B scene. I’m just surprised.” In response to evidence of probable cocaine use in the toilets of the Baron of Beef, the pub’s manager Gemma Wheeler said, “We will definitely be looking into this. We have a zero tolerance policy towards drug use in our pubs.” Following the investigation, the University has been in contact with the police and are considering further action in response to the findings. A spokesperson said, “We have contacted Parkside Police Station concerning the investigation. We now urge Varsity to supply the police with more precise information as to which surfaces in which public rooms were subjected to swab tests, and details of the methodology followed. The colleges will then cooperate fully with the police on any appropriate further action.” At the request of the University, the police contacted Varsity to discuss the findings of the investigation. University Liaison Officer PC Langton said, “Cocaine possession is an arrestable offence and it goes to the Crown Prosecution Service.” The University emphasised that the Colleges and the University have support systems in place to deal with drug related issues and provide both medical and counselling support. A spokesperson said, “Students may turn to their Tutors, Dean, or the College Nurse for confidential help or advice. Confidential advice and assistance can also be obtained from GPs and the University Counselling Service.”



A positive swab: the blue colour indicates the probable presence of cocaine



| Colleges      | Our NIK swabs tested |
|---------------|----------------------|
| King’s        | Positive             |
| Queens’       | Negative             |
| Trinity       | Positive             |
| Trinity Hall  | Negative             |
| St John’s     | Positive             |
| Emma          | Negative             |
| Jesus         | Positive             |
| Clare         | Negative             |
| Christ’s      | Positive             |
| Pembroke      | Positive             |
| Sidney Sussex | Negative             |
| Caius         | Negative             |
| Homerton      | Negative             |
| St Catz       | Positive             |
| New Hall      | Negative             |
| Downing       | Negative             |
| Fitzwilliam   | Negative             |
| Peterhouse    | Positive             |

| Pubs & Clubs  | Our NIK swabs tested |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Kambar        | Positive             |
| Cindies       | Negative             |
| Fez           | Negative             |
| Vodka Revs    | Negative             |
| Bath House    | Positive             |
| Eagle         | Negative             |
| Maypole       | Positive             |
| Mitre         | Negative             |
| Baron of Beef | Positive             |
| Pickerel      | Positive             |

| Institutions         | Our NIK swabs tested |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| ADC Theatre          | Positive             |
| Hawks’               | Negative             |
| University Pitt Club | Positive             |
| Union                | Positive             |



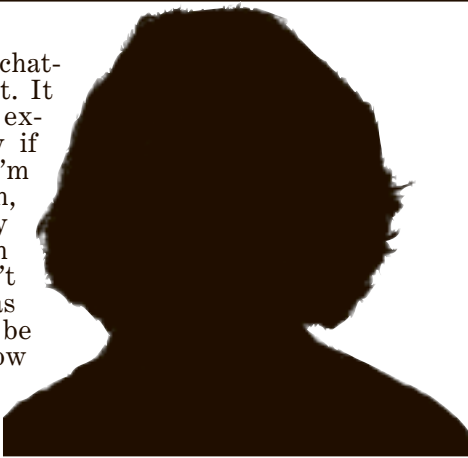
# Investigation 2008

## Daniel, Trinity, 3rd Year

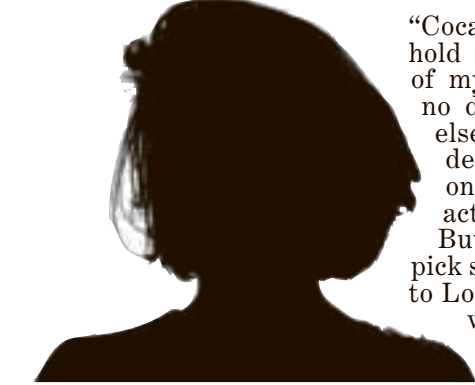
“I started taking coke when I was 17 or so. There were a bunch of guys in my school who took it now and then and I eventually joined them. I normally take coke once or twice a week when I’m in Cambridge, more often in the holidays when it’s easier to get. I head back to London to get it – I know people I can trust there, and it’s always good quality. To be honest, I think it’s a lot safer than alcohol – I know loads more people from Cambridge who’ve ended up in hospital

because they were too drunk than people who got into accidents after taking drugs. It is expensive, but I don’t smoke cigarettes or weed and I don’t go out many times a week, so I get by – it’s just a part of my weekly budget. It’s got a bad name because it’s always associated with rich people, but I wouldn’t consider myself any richer than anyone else. The human cost? I don’t really think about that much, to be honest. It seems too distant for what I’m doing to be mak-

ing a difference.  
Coke makes you more chat-ty, friendly and confident. It turns average nights into ex-cel-lent nights, especially if there’s a bunch of you. I’m not a naturally shy person, but I do find that I enjoy myself more with it than without. Also, it doesn’t seem as bad for you as other drugs, though to be honest I don’t really know whether it is or not. For my lifestyle, it’s what works best.”



## Annabelle, Homerton, 4th Year



“Cocaine is really easy to get hold of in Cambridge - loads of my friends do it, and it’s no different from anywhere else. A few people have local dealers who they can rely on for a quick deal, and it’s actually a bit cheaper here. But usually one of us will pick some up when we go back to London and share it around when we’re back in Cam-bridge. Within the Uni-versity, cocaine is defi-

nately the drug of choice and

**“I’d say it’s the posher circles that use it most”**

I’d say it’s the ‘posher’ circles that use it most; all the pub-lic school boys seem to be at

it. I’m not at all surprised that there’s so much of it about, but I’m not sure why so much was found in college toilets - why bother when you could just stay in your room or take it straight out of the wrap? Per-sonally I think cocaine should be legalized. I feel a hell of a lot better the morning after a few lines than after a night out binge drinking. In my opinion, alcohol is a much more de-structive drug.”

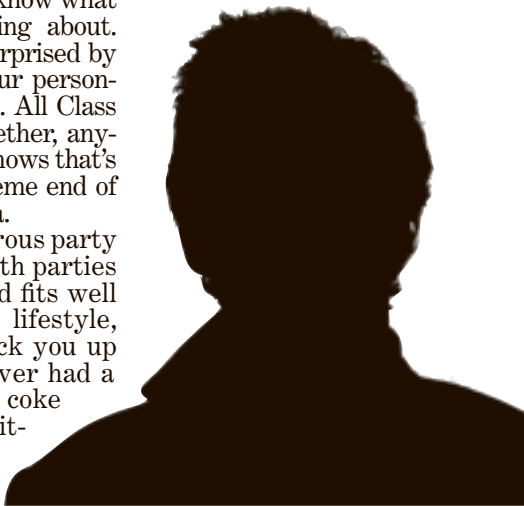
## Tom, Christ’s, 2nd Year

“I was interested in coke at school, but people responded to it in a really immature way – it makes people into such absolute arseholes. I just think it’s quite a dangerous drug, as you can do stupid things, and I was glad that didn’t try it until I’d tried quite a lot of other drugs. I gave one of my friends coke for the first time at her birthday recently. She was pretty drunk and bit worn out and she really enjoyed it. It just perked her up.

It makes you lucid and alive and awake and in control. The night melts away, and you find you’ve been talking about sandwiches for the last three hours. You snort

it so it’s easier to control than al-co-hol unless you do a superline. It’s an instantaneous hit so you’re aware of how much you’ve had.  
I do coke maybe once or twice a term, but probably three times a month during the holidays. I get it off my dealer at home and bring it here. In Cambridge I’ve done coke in college bars, at friends’ parties, and at May balls.  
In Cambridge I think there’s quite a sharp divide between most people, who think coke is awful but that it doesn’t exist here, and a smaller group who know about drug culture and are aware peo-ple use it. Like at the Smoker last night, someone confused crack

and coke; people don’t know what the fuck they’re talking about. Non-users might be surprised by how little it affects your per-son-ality and your evening. All Class A’s are so lumped together, any-one who’s used them knows that’s rubbish, only the extreme end of it is shown in the media.  
Coke is a fun glamorous party drug, and it’s good with parties and with drinking and fits well into the Cambridge lifestyle, because it doesn’t fuck you up the next day. I’ve never had a shitty experience on coke and I’ve had many shit-ty experiences on other drugs.”



## NEWS COMMENT

Tracing cocaine’s journey from Columbia to Cambridge, **Benjamin Jaglom** calculates the human cost of the drug trade

Glamorised by celebrities and pop-ular amongst professionals, cocaine now has an air of respectability about it. Ten years ago if someone used coke it was shocking. To many people nowadays, using cocaine is about as shocking as shopping at Asda. On the supply side, rappers popular with middle-class hipsters such as The Clipse and Ghostface Killah have composed critically acclaimed albums that discuss the life of a cocaine dealer. Yet from every brick of coke trails a line of murders and corruption that starts in Colombia, continues in West Af-rica and arrives at the dinner ta-bles and cisterns of Islington and Cambridge.  
The cocaine used in Britain starts life as a coca plant grown on a Colombian farm. For thousands of years indigenous peoples grew coca, but following the discovery of cocaine by Europeans and the iso-lation of its alkaloid, cocaine was medicalized and recommended as a

treatment for problems like tooth ache and flatulence. Even Freud was a keen proponent of this ‘mag-ical drug’. However, at the begin-ning of the twentieth century co-caine was made illegal in most of the Western world, initiating the development of large criminal en-terprises involved in its creation and distribution.  
From the cocaine factories run by large criminal gangs and their para-military distributors runs a long trail of blood. In Colombia last year there were 18,000 murders; 39.3 murders per 100,000 people. However, this was considered unusually low. In 2001 there were 64.6 murders per 100,000. By comparison, in the UK last year there were 1.62 murders per 100,000. Those Colombians murdered include rival drug traffickers and numerous civilians caught up in fight between paramilitaries, such as FARC and their right-wing coun-terparts like the AUC, the Russian Mafia and even Hezbollah.

The Colombian security forces and government are also frequent-ly involved in human rights abuses and the sale and trafficking of co-caine. Journalists, human rights activists and politicians, as well as ordinary people in no way involved in the drugs trade are frequently the targets of violence by these groups warring over the control of the lucrative cocaine trade.  
Having started life as a humble coca plant, and after fuelling war and murder in Colombia, cocaine now stops off on the west coast of Africa at Guinea Bissau, a country

of 1.6 million with 70 police officers and not a single prison. Cocaine traffickers find easy pickings in a country where rampant corruption is rife. The president of Guinea-Bissau has asked for the help of rich countries in tackling the prob-lem, saying “nobody here makes or consumes it and we are too weak to fight the problem alone.” Huge quantities of cocaine pass through the country, which had never en-counterred cocaine previously, and the number of people suffering from crack cocaine addiction is growing rapidly.  
Having killed thousands of Co-lombia, and destroyed the lives of Guinea-Bissau’s cocaine concludes its journey in Britain, but the vi-olence does not stop here. Once in the UK, cocaine often is sold by dealers who also often push crack cocaine, a drug which disproportionately af-fects the poorest members of soci-ety, many from African Caribbean communities. In 2004 a seven year

old schoolgirl Toni Ann Byfield was murdered by a group of Jamaican crack cocaine dealers over a dis-pute with her father in a case that shocked the nation. Of course, we cannot forget the impact that co-caine has on users themselves.  
So I ask you to consider the ef-fect of the seemingly ‘harmless’ usage of cocaine. Many argue they should be free to do what they to their bodies, but cocaine doesn’t just kill users: innocents uncon-nected to cocaine, drugs mules and gangsters in Colombia and Guinea-Bissau pay the price for a night’s entertainment of some middle-class dropout who peddles the stuff to his ‘friends’ in bank-ing and law. Cocaine has travelled thousands of miles and the cost for many people is deadly. It involves the murder of children and the exploitation of some of the poor-est people on earth. Something to think about next time someone of-fers you a line.

## SCIENCE

**Kevin Koo explains the chemical process behind a highly addictive drug**

Cocaine is derived from the leaves of the shrub *Erythroxylon coca*, a plant native to equatorial regions of South America. Native Peruvians first cul-tivated the plant for its medicinal uses as a local anaesthetic. When abused, cocaine produces sudden, in-tense waves of energy, euphoria, and self-confidence. Physiologically, the effects of cocaine are felt almost im-mediate-ly after administration. The drug has one of the most rapid onset times of any abused substance.  
Cocaine produces powerful highs by acting directly at dopamine syn-apses, the connection between brain cells that releases a neurochemical called dopamine. This compound is responsible for producing feelings of pleasure and reward. Brain cells nor-mally communicate by sending these chemicals to each other in a process known as synaptic transmission. When dopamine is released, it binds to receptor proteins on the recipient brain cell and the biochemical “mes-sage” for feelings of pleasure is deliv-ered. Once this occurs, the dopamine molecules are no longer needed and are removed from the synapse by a molecular pump called a reuptake transporter. The dopamine is recy-cled and prepared for future use.

When cocaine is present in the syn-apse, reuptake of dopamine is severe-ly inhibited. The action of cocaine lies in its ability to bind the transporter protein more strongly than dopamine, allowing the drug to stick to the trans-porter preferentially, thus effectively blocking the reuptake of dopamine. The dopamine already present in the synapse continues to bind the recep-tors on the recipient brain cell. As dopamine accumulates in the syn-apse, the duration and intensity of pleasurable feelings increase, leading to the drug high.  
The cocaine molecules eventually separate from the transporter and the dopamine is cleared from the synapse. The large decline in blood cocaine levels precipitates irresistible cravings, fuelling subsequent admin-istrations of the drug.



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# Fundraising fever hits Cambridge

OLLY WEST

The “biggest Rag Week in living memory” hopes to break fund-raising records for the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services.

Festivities began on Saturday, when over 200 students took to the streets for a street carnival.

The event was preceded by a “Get Spotted” competition, in which participants attempted to have themselves photographed in the wackiest and most unusual situations wearing their RAG week blue spots. Entries, as usual, demonstrated the most creative and outrageous side of the student body; anyone puzzled at the presence of an azure-spotted stalker in the darkest depths of the University Library may rest assured that there was no cause for alarm.

As part of the carnival, 500 rubber ducks competed for a race on the Cam. One observer noted that the competitors “relished the challenge, taking to it like, well, ducks to water.” The duck race was followed by a Cambridge University Brass Band concert at the Wesley Methodist Church on Saturday evening.

The RAG Fashion Show took place on Monday evening. This black-tie event, with various musical entertainments and a cocktail bar, happened at the Union, showcasing collections from various high street shops, Cambridge’s finest boutiques and the nation’s best student fashion, including designs by Cambridge designer Bethan Bide.

Greg Caterer, a John’s second-year who modelled at the event, said, “It was a great night. I got to prance around in clothes ranging from the stunning to the ridiculous, and we raised loads of money.”

Cambridge RAG raises money for 80 local, national and international

charities. All proceeds from RAG Week 2008 will go to the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services, an umbrella group for local charities.

This year’s RAG Week coordinator, Jon Crookes, said, “Rag Week has taken the best part of 6 months planning, and it’s great to see things com-

ing together. This is by far the most action-packed Cambridge RAG Week in living memory – the Fashion Show and Duck Race are both new events – so we’re hoping to significantly raise RAG awareness and of course convert the abundance of events into an abundance of money for our charity.”



## Big Brother star backs freelance punters

MICHAEL STOTHARD

A former Big Brother star is campaigning to save Cambridge’s freelance punters who have been banned from mooring at Jesus Green this summer.

Before Spencer Smith became one of Britain’s first reality TV celebrities six years ago, he worked as a mobiler, the official name for the freelance punters in Cambridge. He is now attempting to save his former colleagues from a ban that would put many of them out of business. “I loved working on the river and I still love the Cam. It saddens me to hear about this ban,” he said.

Smith fears that the ban would give the punting company Scudamores, which has five mooring stations on the Cam, a monopoly on the lucrative tourist trade. This could lead to higher prices and lower quality service, he said.

Cambridge Council instigated the ban following forty complaints from members of the public last year regarding “aggressive tout-ing” by the mobilers, which is against the law.

The campaign boasts a rapidly growing following. Smith is only one of two hundred

people who have signed the “Save Independent Punting” petition in less than a week. The associated Facebook group has attracted more than eight hundred members since last Friday.

Smith said that the ban means that “Scudamores will have a virtual river monopoly and carte blanche to set prices and conditions on the river without effective competition. The council must protect, not destroy, the mobilers. They need to draw up business practice agreement which all punts staff – Scudamores and mobilers – must sign and adhere to. We need an even playing field.”

To compensate for the Jesus Green ban, a new station will be set up outside La Mimosa. But this will only be for a very limited number of registered punters. Anyone caught operating from elsewhere will be

### “Scudamores will have a virtual river monopoly”

prosecuted. The council has allocated £10,000 to enforce the new rule.

The general manager of Scudamores, Rob Ingersent, refuted the accusation that he was trying to wipe out independent punters. “We are in favour of the new scheme and are willing to relinquish the La Mimosa site to the new landing stage. It’s just a case of tying up the final details, but we hope the council can set up the new station quickly,” he said.

## Cambridge to expand the ‘Southern Fringe’

CRAIG HOGG

Extensive plans to build 1,200 new homes in the south of the city were given the go ahead this week.

Permission has been granted to the Trumpington Meadows Land Company (TMLC) by Cambridge-shire City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to build on the 72 acre site, which lies approximately 3.5km south of the city centre.

Taking in land either side of the M11 and running adjacent to the southern edge of the existing built-up area of Trumpington, the development will create four different housing “quarters”: Village, Gateway, Urban and Riverside. Each will be characterised by the design of buildings, their height, density and car parking.

The plans will also see the creation of a 60 hectare county park, a 360 place primary school and leisure facilities including a running track and football pitch.

This the first and largest scheme in a long term project targeted at the ‘Southern Fringe’. Developers aim to create 4,000 new homes to the south of the city in the next 14 years, with further plots at Clay Farm, South Trumpington and the Bayer Site, Hauxton already purchased with this target in mind.

Trumpington Meadows Land Company, a partnership between Universities Superannuation Scheme Ltd and the Casino and Property developer Grosvenor, acquired the former Monsanto site in August 2004. The plans were widely supported when first in-

troduced in 2006 for breathing life into an area of Cambridge known simply for allotment plots and bare fields.

The council’s approval has been met with widespread support from local residents and officials. Both

### The plans have been met with widespread support

have praised a number of planning decisions by the TMLC, such as the extensive use of Brownfield land and the ‘quad’ shape itself which, despite the vast area it covers, never encroaches closer than 2km on any recognised conservation sites.

However, the planned developments have also prompted concerns about the level of affordable housing, transport infrastructure and parking spaces proposed to meet the influx of residents.

A 30% affordable housing target set by planners has been condemned by councillors who want to see a 40% minimum. Despite the Trumpington Park and Ride scheme running through the site, predictions estimate 58% of residents’ journeys would be made by car. Speaking to the Cambridge News on the issue of parking provisions, County Councillor Nichola Harrison said: “If there is any question of any house being provided with three parking spaces, I’m dead against it.”



Trinity

### Marma-laden

An unfortunate fresher, pissed as a fart after a solid night at Cindies, was subject to an unfortunate prank by his so-called friends. For whatever reason, he thought it prudent to strip down to his bare bones, whereupon his industrious companions took up their towels and began whipping him on the buttocks. Being driven away from his pile of clothes, he was eventually forced into another accommodation block altogether, still in his birthday suit. Taking refuge in a kitchen, he barricaded himself in until his chums got bored of their games and headed back to bed. Having weathered the siege, our unfortunate protagonist realised the need to cover his ample manhood for the sizeable walk back to his room. And what did he use? A half-full jar of marmalade, of course, much to the delight of the late-night onlookers. So if you’re in Trinity and missing a jar of tangy orange paste, better to just forgive and forget, eh?

Magdelene

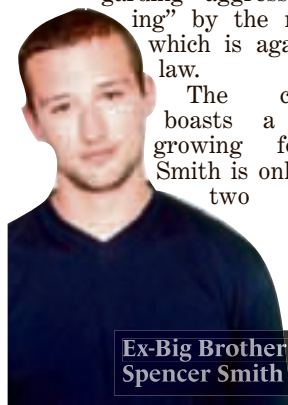
### Brotherly Love

A member of Cambridge’s hill-top convent received a visit from her brother last week. Her college sisters swooned when she paraded her dashing kin and his tree-trunk limbs through the gardens. Her young lover, a member of the boarding school monastery at the bottom of the hill, got the silly boy pissed on vino one night and offered his divan as a resting place, so very impressed had he been when he met the fraternal sportsman at dinner. Waking early to find herself alone in her lover’s bed, and desirous of some morning-time fornication, the lady was surprised to discover in the next room that her impressed beau was instead pressed into her bro.

Christ’s

### Self effacing

One student, just on the point of having sent off an internship application to a major London merchant bank, decided to show it to a friend who was enquiring as to the best style of communication. To his dismay, upon opening the application, he realised that one of his mischievous contemporaries had ‘Find and Replaced’ every mention of his name with the less than flattering term ‘Cockface’. Not one to own up to, we’d have thought...



Ex-Big Brother star  
Spencer Smith



# VARSITY

ISSUE 674, 29 FEBRUARY 2008

## Lines on coke

This week's cocaine investigation gave some indication of the extent of Class A drug use across the University, but the results were neither conclusive nor surprising.

The swabs, as has been emphasized, are not foolproof; there is a margin for error amplified by the fact that they react positively to a number of non-controlled substances, including certain anaesthetics and antihistamines.

However, even if we make the sizeable assumption that every positive swab test was indicative that cocaine had been taken at that location in recent history, and even if we imagine that every single place tested had come up positive, the situation is far from shocking.

Thousands of people go in and out of all the places tested each week. Even the ostensibly private institutions hold regular parties open to non-members; only one of these needs to indulge a habit to leave a tell-tale trace of cocaine. But it is futile to blame Cambridge residents for every positive result. Anyone who arrogantly assumes – especially those in positions of authority – that because students here are relatively insular they should be entirely free from the same vices that affect the rest of the world is utterly delusional.

Ultimately, the taking of cocaine is a personal choice, and the law brings consequences to those who are caught. What is most troubling, however, is the unseen damage it is doing outside of Cambridge, outside of this country and outside of this continent.

It is easy, with the almost casual and arbitrary condemnation of cocaine use so prevalent in the media, to forget the specific and despicable damage the drug does to those who are involved in its trafficking. Its journey, and not its overblown health-risks, is the greater cause for concern.

If cocaine use is as widespread as our investigation tentatively suggests, there are many students for whom drug use is part of a stable, normal life. And if prohibition means deaths and gang-warfare, the case for legalization is strong.

## Vote Fletcher

For the impending CUSU elections, the student body is encouraged to vote on something that should be incredibly important to them. In fact, it matters to few: last year's turnout stood at an unrepresentative 16%.

However, the positions up for grabs carry with them a considerable amount of power. CUSU controls a budget of £400,000 per year. If the wrong candidate gets in, the effects of an incompetent student union will be felt: access, support, and ents will suffer.

To make a positive impact is no small task. The successful candidate will either already have an understanding of the mechanics of CUSU, or will have to be an impossibly quick learner. Mark Fletcher has worked tirelessly for students, has achieved much, and deserves another term.

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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## LETTERS

letters@varsity.co.uk

### An amateur review...

Sir,

Varsity's attempt at reviewing Entertaining Mr Sloane puts the "amateur" back into student journalism (Issue 673). A review should present a considered, witty, and, yes, occasionally controversial critique of a production, rather than hurling a collection of mismatched insults at the fine work of a group of talented people. Despite professing to understand "the script's promise", your reviewer plainly lacks the subtlety to understand the range of possibilities for its direction. The element of farce in the play was astutely grasped by the production, but was completely missed by your reviewer, who called the performance "caricatured" and failed quite astonishingly to represent our opinions as audience members. We, and certainly the theatre-goers I spoke to, enjoyed a play that was beautifully acted and sensitively directed.

The review's attempt at giving biting criticism constituted an exhibition of ignorance more suited to a school playground than a Cambridge newspaper. It was simply inaccurate. Where in the production, for instance, was the "repeated pelvis thrusting", and where were the "amateurish sound cues"? Perhaps Varsity should carefully review the aptitude of its writers. This piece of writing was misguided and highly unprofessional; it failed even to be entertaining.

Yours faithfully,

**May Robertson  
Gonville and Caius**

### ... reviewed by our reviewer

Sir,

May Robertson's attempt at reviewing my review puts the "uninformed" back into opinion. Her attempt at giving biting criticism constitutes an exhibition of ignorance against which I would like to defend my right to criticise Entertaining Mr Sloane, and refute her implicit criticism of the theatre editor's capacity to select writers.

I have previously won the Theatre Record's Prize for theatre journalism, which is adjudicated by both the chief critics of the Financial Times' and Sunday Times' theatre sections. I have also been commissioned to write for the Financial Times. In addition, I have myself directed ten plays, of which one had a cast of 98 people and was selected to open the Sunday Times' National Student Drama Festival. At the risk of self-aggrandising, I hope that validates my right to an opinion.

In response to the particular attacks on my review, it was precisely because I love Orton's script and the range of possibilities for the play that I wrote about it as I did. Labelling the acting "caricatured" is not to mis-understand the potential for comedy in the play, but to recognise that the farce is intended to act as a counterpoint to tragedy. Keeping the production at the level of a caricature allows no space for the pathos of the old father's death, the loss of a child or unrequited love. The amateurish sound cues resulted from the fact that the sound was both unnaturally loud, in a production that was trying to be naturalistic, and several times was wrongly cued. The pelvic thrusting occurred repeatedly.

As for the specific criticism that I failed to "represent our opinions as an audience", I can only say that the audience on the night I attended was small and composed partly of family members and partly of the director's friends. Aware of the implications of writing a negative account and particularly concerned with representing accurately a general opinion of the production, I ran my copy by two other audience-members before filing it.

It's good to know May Robertson liked my opening and closing sentences at least. Let me end with the opinion of a playwright I hope we can both agree with - Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Yours faithfully,

**Imogen Walford  
King's**

### Hadlow is a horrid choice

Sir,

It was with great concern that I learnt of Hugo Hadlow's candidacy for CUSU President. His manifesto gives him away as the same callous, thoughtless individual who earlier this term seriously argued (in TCS) that child benefits should be abolished in order to dissuade people from poorer backgrounds from starting families. It is not surprising then that his manifesto promises to systematically abolish every ethical component of CUSU, only retaining those parts which, and these are his own words, "make a profit".

CUSU is a services Union, yet Mr Hadlow's politics are all about selfishness and greed. Candidates like Mark Fletcher work terrifically hard for Cambridge students. The very last thing we need is this grasping, self-serving snob.

Yours faithfully,

**Elliot Ross  
St John's**

### I am Sam

Sir,

It is rather sad Elizabeth Mitchell did not think it worth taking the time to first read either my or the original article properly ('Philistines!', Issue 672). My article merely pointed out that its predecessor at no point actually "engaged" with art. Instead, it deigned to inform students that art collecting was irrelevant to them. What I said was not that one must treat art with a sense of "awe and magesterium", but that such naïve philistinism only served to propound these outdated views.

In what sense was the original not "engaging" with art? Well, for an article whose explicit subject matter was "what commercial art looks like to the layman", one might



reasonably expect to find out what the art did actually look like! Only a single artwork was actually mentioned. Our reporter chose merely to relate the sculptor, size and price before dismissing it along with all galleries containing such works as "irrelevant to students". No descriptions of artworks were offered. The message was clear and ridiculous: these works are too expensive for students to own, and there's no point in talking about what we cannot own.

Suppose I write an article about Horace in which I chose not to analyse or even mention his individual works, or 'Art'. Instead, I discover his odes are only fully appreciated in Latin. Without reading the translations or learning some Latin myself, I dismiss him as irrelevant to most students. Have I tried to "engage" with something that I don't fully understand? Have I said anything of any interest at all?

I'm not suggesting that not being able to afford something is the same as a language barrier. Yet these are both examples of reductive arguments used to close down debate. Our author is using such a device because she herself has succumbed to the fetish of "art with a capital A". She is closing down the debate before it is even begun.

It is perfectly right that people write on topics about which they feel strongly and on which they are knowledgeable. Yet if you don't enjoy looking at or creating art, then why should you wish to express an opinion on such matters at all?

Yours faithfully,

**Sam Rose  
St John's**

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

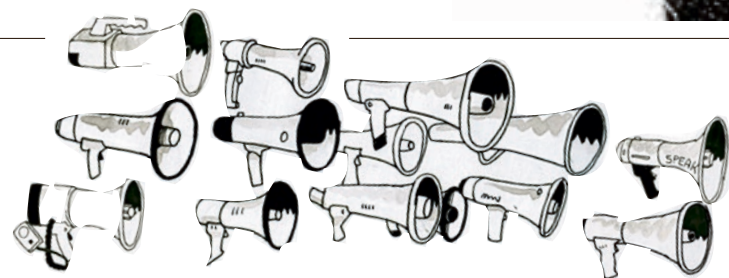


## DEBATE

# Contingent citizenship



Last week, Home Secretary Jacqui Smith presented a Green Paper outlining major citizenship reforms to ensure migrants conform to a “clear statement of British values”. The changes include requiring immigrants to learn English, demonstrate integration by “playing an active part in the community”, and withholding full social benefits for five years. Is it the right decision?



Hugh  
Burling



# YES

The division of humanity into regional factions is not an inherent good, but rather an accident of some of the worst aspects of our natures. If we were better people, then a society could be created where the word ‘immigrant’ is long forgotten because geographical movement to live or work would be a fully accepted tool for human flourishing. If I were a British politician faced with the so-called ‘immigration crisis’, I would do all I could to reconcile the good of international mobility with the practical limitations imposed by nation states, which exist to protect and advance the interests of those living within them.

The recently proposed immigration reforms attempt to support the ability of non-British people to live and work in Britain without either jeopardizing the safety and economic success of British people or capping immigration levels and thus denying the benefits of immigration to both immigrants and Britain.

in danger when language barriers create self-separating ‘communities’ with unique, potentially self-serving agendas. The third concern, is an extension of the same problem - how are immigrants to integrate themselves into a new and unfamiliar welfare state.

The details of each proposal show fairly common-sense attempts to limit the damage that criminality, division and political unfamiliarity can cause to British immigrants and their British-born compatriots.

The problem of ‘imported crime’ is dealt with in a humanitarian fashion. Immigrants are not ‘sent home’ for failing to obey laws which they may not have been conditioned to follow in their countries of origin. Rather, they are given an incentive to be lawful citizens: fuller enjoyment of the welfare state achieved at a more rapid rate. It may be argued that immigrants should be entitled to the same ‘rights’ as those born here, but if we look at the alternatives we can see this is the best idea that has arrived so far. If we were to give full citizenship on arrival, there would be no extra incentive for the criminally-inclined to be more law-abiding in Britain.

The second problem is also dealt with in a straightforward and manageable fashion by offering full citizenship to those who learn English. This basic integration can allow immigrants to understand their new country’s culture and people without forcing them to embrace that culture if they prefer theirs. Balance between cultural freedom and understanding is achieved both in the system and in practice by material incentives to learn English. Gordon Brown may speak about ‘British values’, but he very rarely says what he thinks this means. His catchphrase should cause no alarm. The reforms as proposed have no ways of forcing immigrants or their children to participate in some imagined British ‘culcha’ or else be socially penalized.

Really these two arguments demonstrate together how the reforms will be a step towards solving the third problem. The British public fought long and hard, for better or worse, for the modern welfare state. It is understood by many that paying taxes is only one part of a trinity of social responsibility that makes the welfare state work, along with lawfulness and sufficient mutual understanding to want to give up our earnings to help each other. The proposed reforms maintain the possibility of seeking a better life in Britain, in part by maintaining that better life.

Alamara  
Bettum



# No

Citizenship is not an abstract concept, or just access to a passport. I believe it is – and must be seen as – founded on shared values that define the character of our country.”

It’s a touching ‘Love Actually’ type moment - the Prime Minister’s heroic attempt to unite his audience in favour of change, romanticise the nature of that change and put a colourful spin on the vagaries of Home Secretary Jacqui Smith.

Only this time it is not fiction. This is the government’s new take on immigration reform: a three-route, three-stage, limited benefit access approach to immigration. For a country that struggles to reconcile the sources of divide and tension within it’s very nation – Muslim versus non-Muslim, private versus state, Blair versus blier – this sudden outburst of fidelity for the ‘shared values that define the character of our country’ seems a little exaggerated, not to mention premature.

There are few nations (with the exception, perhaps, of the odd dictatorship or despotic regime) that can boast of racial unity, social cohesion, ideological harmony. But then there are also few nations that suggest immigrants conform to a set of ideologies which, far from not even existing, have yet to be fulfilled within the nation itself. It’s all about proving their worth – they come, they are watched, they stay. Anything else and it’s the first boat back to no man’s land.

Except, how have we, the 60 odd million born in the UK proved our worth? I am fairly sure I have never assumed any worthy level of civic responsibility in my life, let alone been “active” in my local community. Hugh Grant’s definition of a Great Britain was one that was host to Winston Churchill, Harry Potter, David Beckham’s right foot, the Beatles. Gordon Brown’s definition is somewhat hazier.

Somehow, the notion that ‘the aspiring citizen should know and subscribe to a clear statement of British values’ means knowing where to find platform 9 and 3/4 or how to bend a ball like Beckham seems a little far-fetched even for our over-zealous prime minister.

What are these aspiring citizens meant to do with themselves when they get here? According to Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, it’s actually fairly simple. It’s really no more than a question of jumping through hoops, playing by the rules with the added fun of reduced access to social benefits, higher levies on the dependent population (children and the elderly) and all for the grand prize of temporary residence followed by a probationary period and finally the possibility of guaranteed citizenship.

It’s like playground fun only with higher taxes, bogus values, and no guarantee of

security at the end.

Besides, what values are we talking about anyway? The values that mean that these prospective immigrants, who haven’t even been promised citizenship yet, have already become scapegoats for government failures. If they were worried about fitting in before, there should be no cause for concern now.

These days, it would appear that you are

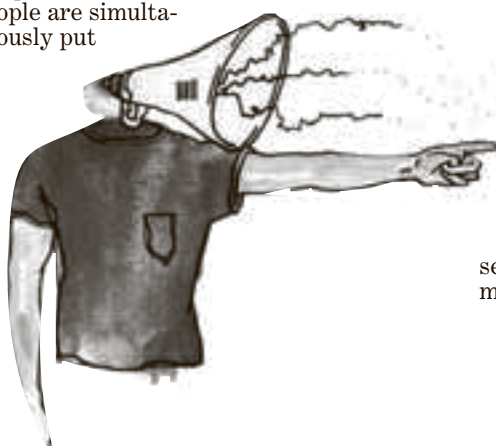
**“It’s like playground fun, only with higher taxes, bogus values and no guarantee of security at the end.”**

not really a fully-fledged Briton until you have been targeted by the Brown Army. It seems to me that basic civic requirements – that we remain law-abiding, socially aware individuals – have been dressed up in swathes of green paper to address a problem that starts way before the newcomers even reach the land of hope and glory.

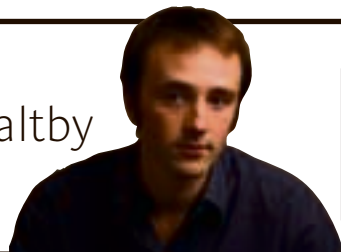
The result is more bureaucracy, more insecurity and even less social cohesion. Are we to struggle with ‘temporary’ immigrant minorities as well now? As for adhering to a set of British values, it is not really a question of prescribing to a set of as yet undefined values and more a question of learning to value what it is that Britain really has to offer – a place for everyone. If that is not the case, I suggest Gordon Brown close the door for a while and turn his hand at stirring the melting pot that is already overflowing.

**“Those people are simultaneously put in danger when language barriers create self-separating communities.”**

There are commonly understood dangers of immigration. Firstly, the possibility (and current actuality in many cases) of the migration of criminals whose behaviour is destructive to themselves and to whichever state they live in - this is an element of immigration government must do its best to limit. The second danger to consider is the danger to immigrants and Britain posed by a lack of minimal integration – non-English speakers in England are open to social and economic abuse by their new, Anglophone, compatriots. Those people are simultaneously put





Ed  
Maltby

# CUSU election crunch

2008 decisions will have long-term ramifications

Global overpopulation is perhaps the greatest danger that we are likely to face in the 21st Century. In fact, we hear an awful lot about it: the water shortages, famine, war over land, pollution, global warming and so on. So how could we possibly go about justifying having more children? If the world is so full, and we know this, then why do we think that it is ok to keep making it worse? Can we ethically defend childbirth in the West?

Perhaps this is a silly thing to ask. We like to think we have a right to have children, or something - just not too many. Those massive families over in India, they're the problem. Well, that reasoning would be fine if the majority of the world really knew what a mess we are in and didn't have powerful economic incentives, such as security in old age, to have a lot of children.

Instead, most people do not know what we know and they don't have social security and pension plans. Plus, the idea of a right is pointless: either an action is justified or it is not. If other people are producing more children then we personally have to take up the slack by producing exactly zero new human beings ourselves.

Of course, this is something that we have dealt with before. That's what the Green Revolution in the 60s was for, and we like to believe that if we distributed our resources more carefully then the problem would just disappear. Maybe, but putting the blame on the incompetence of the powers-that-be does not entail justification of personal actions.

We are slowly learning to accept this responsibility with regards to the environment but we still need to wake up to our place in the global population. Not only will overpopulation massively overshadow any advances we make in curbing carbon emissions, it itself has repercussions which are far more tangible and predictable than human-induced global warming.

Never fear, for none of this means that we cannot be loving parents. There are loads of children already in the world, looking for families, who could be adopted.

Our population, as defined by our culture would continue as normal, and a higher percentage of the world's people would benefit from good education, healthcare and economic mobility. Yes, if everyone in the UK stopped having children then a whole lot of genes would die out, but our cultural inheritance would persist.

One might argue that foster children are not loved as much or that there is some inherent goodness in the genes that we pass on. Both of these claims are controversial conjecture which would need a lot of empirical evidence, whereas the claim that we should stop having children rests mostly on logic and common sense.

The truth is that the population of the world is expected to reach 9.7 billion in the next 40 years. We who know better simply cannot justify contributing to the humanitarian disaster that will cause.

What is at stake in the CUSU elections? A lot. In several senses, we are approaching a crucial period for students. The government is putting the finishing touches to its plans for the lifting of the cap on fees in 2009-2010. In response, university administrators are preparing for the full marketisation of Higher Education - making the shift from institutions of learning to profit-driven enterprises. Universities are imposing stricter discipline and management structures on staff, cutting costs, and changing course portfolios to cut out risky minority subjects and attract private-sector involvement. For students, this means course cuts, reduced contact time, more testing and, crucially, cuts in welfare provision. Think welfare and women's officers are swamped with casework now? Wait until spending cuts see Vice Chancellors shifting even more of the universities' work onto their backs!

And what's our national union doing to protect us? The NUS leadership have spent years dodging action on HE funding, cancelling demonstrations, paying reluctant lip-service to the SUs and campus activists who have actually organised opposition to the government's policies. They have wasted the campaign's budget on white-wine receptions for pro-fees ministers like Bill Rammell. Top Blairite Labour Students hacks like Wes Streeting enjoy playing

at being important members of the Westminster policy village - but even a child could see that no-one in government is paying attention to Streeting's pathetic behind-the-scenes 'lobbying'. He knows that making power-point presentations and feeding tiger prawns to Bill Rammell is not going to defeat fees - but chances are he also knows that this is the way to net a good job in the New Labour hierarchy. It's clear Wes is thinking about number one - and other students are an irksome distraction. That's why he and his boorish clique of careerists are rallying their pet SU presidents (and disoriented bureaucratic time-servers like Pete Coulthard) to push through their 'governance review'. The governance review is a raft of changes to the way our union functions, which the Blairite coterie surrounding Streeting cooked up in a series of semi-secret meetings which they laughably termed a 'lengthy consultation process' (did you hear about this?).

By breaking up National Conference into a complicated, opaque web of smaller 'zone' conferences, slashing funds for part-time members of the NUS executive who do the union's real activist footwork, and ensconcing the top bureaucrats in an unaccountable, untransparent "Board" stuffed with unelected outside "experts" and enjoying excessive salaries, they intend to destroy democracy in our national union - at a time when grassroots

student involvement is needed more than ever.

There are broader issues at stake: climate change is continuing to spiral out of control, and all the evidence suggests that ours is the last generation that can stop it. Abortion rights are under attack. It is no secret that pro-life militants intimidate and harass Women's Officers, and their anti-woman parliamentary representatives are on the march - see Ann Widdecombe's grisly anti-choice

**"The NUS leadership have spent years dodging action... they have wasted the campaign's budget."**

speaker tour. We need a Women's Officer who can force these bigots into the open, and rout them.

We need a CUSU which will win the battle of democracy in the NUS, and carry the fight against fees and marketisation, against misogyny and climate change, against course cuts and the poverty of welfare provision. We need a CUSU which doesn't hide in closed meetings, or believe that by producing unreadable reports it is doing its job: we need a CUSU which isn't afraid to get its hands dirty, to go out to colleges and facul-

ties and talk to students. If students don't know or care about CUSU it isn't because nothing is at stake for them politically: it is because they don't see it as a body which connects them to the fights which are crucial to them.

To get this union we need to vote it in. We have to be clear that now more than ever, this election is political, and the stakes are high. We have to ask candidates "where do you stand: on fees, on the governance review, on welfare provision, on women's rights, on climate change?" And not just "where do you stand", but "what will you do?"

Vague, content-free manifestos which make empty appeals to a candidate's "experience" (two years' fidgeting in JCR meetings and mind-ing the cash from the snooker table) or "dedication" (to what, exactly?) without giving a clear position or programme on key issues like these should be viewed with suspicion. In several CUSU elections, when asked about their politics, candidates have replied, with a straight face, "I will do my best to represent you", without mentioning their political stance! How can they claim to represent us when they won't say what they're standing for? Such candidates have inevitably proved to be either right-wingers or quietists - giving either vocal or passive support to whatever the government or the NUS leadership does.

Students are under attack; we need a fighting union. Vote wisely.

Kiran  
Moodley

# Farewell to Fidel

Castro shouldn't be the only one to exit Latin American politics

One can't help but smirk at the irony of President Bush's call for free elections in Cuba following Fidel Castro's resignation from office. The irony is the US has conveniently forgotten its track-record in that country and South America as a whole. The American need to guide Latin Americans' political and economic progress by any means necessary, means American imperialism in that corner of the world is at fault for far more atrocities than Castro's regime. As Fidel relinquishes his control, so too should America.

The US played a role in Cuba's history long before Fidel's revolution of 1959, and the situation was far from ideal. America fought the Spanish in Cuba at the end of the nineteenth century, on the basis that the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 had stated that the Americas should be free from any meddling from European powers. Unfortunately, the doctrine said nothing about freeing the continent from the meddling of the US and thus Cuba began independence under US military occupation. Political corruption and decay would last into the 1950s and Havana became a haven for North American gangsters. Cuba was constantly under US control because of the Platt Amendment of 1901, which ensured US intervention in Cuba when the US deemed it necessary, and prohibited Cuba from negotiating treaties with other countries. Cuba was thus passed from the arms of the Spanish straight into the arms of the Americans.

Such US intervention in Cuba has been seen repeatedly in Latin America. In 1954, the US saw a threat posed to the US-based United Fruit Company from the leftist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, and staged a coup that eventually put in place Carlos Armas. Armas subsequently disenfranchised more than half of the country's electorate. The Dominican



Republic was occupied by the U.S. military in 1965 because there was concern it could become a 'second Cuba.' And when the Marxist Salvador Allende won the majority vote in the 1970 presidential elections in Chile, the US intervened in support of the coup that ended his tenure. According to the US, the region's leaders could not manage their own countries - they were naturally corrupt and chaotic.

Yet Cuba under Castro has been a model of success. The Centre d'Economie de la Sorbonne in 2006 stated that 'Cuba's growth performance from 1959 to 1989, in relative terms, was far from bad, despite strong external pressure, especially

the U.S. embargo.' The report highlighted the success of the creation of a high-quality pharmaceutical and biotechnological complex. Despite economic difficulties since the 1990s, the majority of basic goods continue to be provided to Cuban people at low prices. Again, one can smirk at Bush's condemnation of Castro's administration: at least the Cubans had enough doctors to offer to send 1,500 of them to America to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Bush ignored this, and his administration, failing to deal with the problem, suffered a huge drop in support.

The US now faces a continent where it seeks to maintain a stranglehold, yet simply cannot destroy the will of the people. Cuba has been a shining light, such that South America is now a haven for leftist regimes that have taken inspiration from their Caribbean counterpart.

Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Lula da Silva in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela have each drawn inspiration from Cuba, where the backbone of the revolution has been the ideal of self-government, and ensuring the American gangsters never return.

Some of these governments follow a social-democratic and more practical approach. The new Cuban president, Raúl Castro, being more pragmatic than his brother, has stressed he will implement major economic reforms. Raúl wants to follow the model of China, making the regime work better to maintain the revolution. He has even said he would negotiate with the U.S.,

as long as it does not interfere in Cuban affairs.

Thus, Cuba will staunchly retain its distance from America. This is what has inspired Cuba's neighbours since 1959. Indeed, many leaders previously fought military juntas in their countries and saw Fidel as a beacon of hope. There are few leaders on the left who do not claim that they were inspired by him. The Cuban revolution showed Latin America that change was possible. Now, as the Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom says, "in Latin America, every country is following its own path. There are lots of different flavours to choose from now." Lula da Silva adds that "Fidel is the only living myth in the history of humanity. The myth lives on."

Castro is just one among many historic Cuban figures who fought for his people's liberty, and has been a great symbol for the whole continent. He held up two fingers to the US and told them that Cuba had a right to go it alone, and he has kept those fingers raised for almost fifty years.

Don't listen to Bush's calls for change, but Castro's response: "Change, change, change! Well I agree, but in the United States... Cuba changed some time ago, and will continue on its dialectical path." Latin America, inspired and transformed by Castro and the Cuban revolution, has shown the US it cannot have a forceful say in all foreign matters. Castro's swan song should therefore be American imperialism's too.





Mitzi Huang  
& Kate Glover



## A vagina dialogue

Critiques of The Vagina Monologues are welcome, but often miss the point

This month's run of The Vagina Monologues at the Fitzpatrick Hall was a huge success. It sold out each night, received five stars from The Cambridge Student and raised much-needed funds for the Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre. It also got people talking. Obviously, vaginas were on people's minds.

Over the past few weeks, a dialogue regarding the Monologues and related issues has cropped up in Varsity and the Cambridge community at large. Insofar as The Vagina Monologues is about breaking silence, a dialogue is a positive enterprise. However, some recent criticism suggests that the play, its content, and its goals are often misunderstood.

It is commonly argued that The Vagina Monologues reduces women to their vaginas. In last week's Varsity, "Contrary Mary" argued that the play perpetuated the "women=vagina" equation. While we agree women are not reducible to their sexual organs, we fail to see how telling a woman's story about her vagina defines that woman as her vagina. Exposition and equation are not synonymous. Getting from one to the other requires logical steps that simply do not exist in this context.

The Vagina Monologues is often targeted as being unfriendly towards men - proverbial "male-bashing". Again, this criticism reflects a misunderstanding of both the medium and the message. The play is a celebration of women. It is about liberation, healing and taking control - not by putting anyone else down, but rather, by honouring and celebrating women, their stories, their sexuality, their pain and their power. It's about loving vaginas, not hating men.

Another common condemnation is that the Monologues depict all heterosexual relationships as "bad" and all lesbian relationships as "good". "Contrary Mary" relies on one monologue to prove this point. However, this inductive reasoning doesn't withstand scrutiny. The Vagina Monologues does not say anything about all relationships, nor does it claim to. Whilst the play represents the experiences of some women, it is not intended to be conclusive on the subject. Rather, the play celebrates diversity of experience to show that, contrary to common belief, there is no "textbook example" of a woman's relationship with her vagina or with herself.

On this point, Contrary Mary argues "The Little Coochie Snorcher That Could" was "harmful and poorly informed". Such an accusation is insulting. This monologue is based on one woman's life. It is not fabricated. It is disturbing that what often bothers people about this monologue is the underage drinking and the speaker's sexual encounter with an older woman, rather than the repeated sexual abuse the woman endured as a child.

It should be emphasized that The Vagina Monologues is based on interviews with women. The monologues represent the lived experiences of women. To criticize the stories of those women robs them of that experience and shames them back into silence. This is precisely what the play seeks to remedy.

**"We fail to see how telling a woman's story about her vagina defines that woman as her vagina."**

The V-Day Campaign organises productions of The Vagina Monologues worldwide to raise money to stop violence against women and girls. It is often criticized for focusing solely on violence towards women. Such criticism is troubling because it assumes that raising awareness about one issue undermines the value of other issues. On this flawed reasoning, someone who raises money to fund cancer research is signifying that raising money to combat AIDS is unimportant.

This suggestion is nonsensical at best and counterproductive at worst. It puts ignorant and inaccurate words in the mouths of V-Day organisers and encourages people to turn a blind eye to the particular problem of violence against women. Violence, in all its forms, is a problem. The V-Day Campaign's focus on violence against women does not, in any way, suggest otherwise. It is simply an attempt to stop one aspect of the larger concern about societal violence in general, a point that was emphasized this year in the V-Day Campaign's

production of A Memory, A Monologue, A Rant, and A Prayer.

The Vagina Monologues is about women, but this does not mean it is a feminist play. It is always hoped that the audience will find something with which to connect or something that speaks to them. If that "something" falls under the rubric of feminism, so be it. However, the play as a whole should not be categorized on this basis as it is not a political philosophy or stance.

Yet it is precisely this "too political" argument that has been used to silence women and resist performance of The Vagina Monologues at Cambridge in the past. This attitude highlights the importance of staging the Monologues here and suggests that the campaign's goals have not been reached, regardless of how enlightened we think we are.

Silence continues. Violence continues. In fact, the two often go together: The British Crime Survey 2006/2007 acknowledges that police statistics about serious sexual crimes are artificially low due to unreporting. Furthermore, last year, after a very public sexual assault on college premises, one college's senior tutor's response to the victim was "boys will be boys"; he then brushed the matter aside. If that does not exemplify the need for the V-Day campaign in Cambridge, then we don't know what would.

The Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre lost funding and shut down last year. It is now open for 6 hours per week. It is unacceptable that anyone - male or female - who has been sexually assaulted can contact a trained volunteer for only three hours on Mondays and Wednesdays, or else leave a message. As noted in Theatre as Therapy (Varsity 671, February 8), rape crisis centres throughout the country are closing in droves and suffering from a lack of funding, and university attitudes on the subject reflect ambivalence at best.

We agree with Contrary Mary; we can do so much better. But in doing so, we must not alienate women and further discourage them from talking about their experiences.

Mitzi Huang and Kate Glover produced The Vagina Monologues and A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant and a Prayer as part of V-Day Cambridge University 2008.



I believe it was somebody in Jerome K Jerome's classic novel Three Men in a Boat who said, "I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours." And there is plenty that is excellent in such a liberated attitude to work, as well as in the brilliant economy of the name, with surname and family name identical; and then there is the deliciously elusive mystery of that central "K". Of course, seeing as his middle name was Klapka, abbreviating it to its bare initial was possibly a wise move.

Anyway, Jerome K Jerome's philosophy seems thoroughly suitable for mention in these pages: he also had time to write a book called Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow, and edit a magazine called The Idler. Such consistency is to be admired.

His writings burning a hole in my cerebellum, I decided to celebrate Fifth Week by showing equal devotion to my work. With this in mind, I decided to make an early start on this week's reading a full four days before my essay was due. I hesitated to my bookshelf and, amid an avalanche of dust, retrieved the copy of Paradise Lost I had taken from home so as not to need to traipse all the way to Sidgwick. This, I found, was the easy bit.

The difficult bit was actually finding a decent place to work. I tried my bed, but it was too comfortable and I kept drooping one way or the

**"I kept getting distracted by the temptation of various video websites."**

other like an eel attempting a headstand. I tried my desk, but that was too close to the computer and I kept getting distracted by the temptation of various video websites. Did you know that Romanian traffic controllers are now getting lessons from ballet dancers to make their moves "more graceful"? Eminently watchable.

Finally, I tried reading in the bath, but my copy of Paradise Lost was one of those pre-war Oxford editions with hard blue covers, and the blue paint dripped off onto my wet hands, dyeing them and the water so that after a few hundred lines the general look was of a minor royal with a burst artery. Eventually, in an act of final desperation, I went to the pub.

Amazingly enough, it worked. For a good two hours, I nursed a few ales while carefully reading and annotating Milton's masterpiece. Then more people started coming in, and I paid less heed to the machinations of Adam and Lucifer and more to their conversations.

In fact, glancing at my notes, I find I had accidentally substituted "Monica Lewinsky" for Eve - I suppose they were both tempted by snakes. Then I heard somebody suggest that brandy mixed with orange juice was a fantastic breakfast drink, and couldn't help myself from mentioning a few of my more expressionist morning cocktail recipes. Then, met with general disbelief, I decided to demonstrate them...

On the upside, at least I discovered the state one needs to be in to call one's son Klapka.



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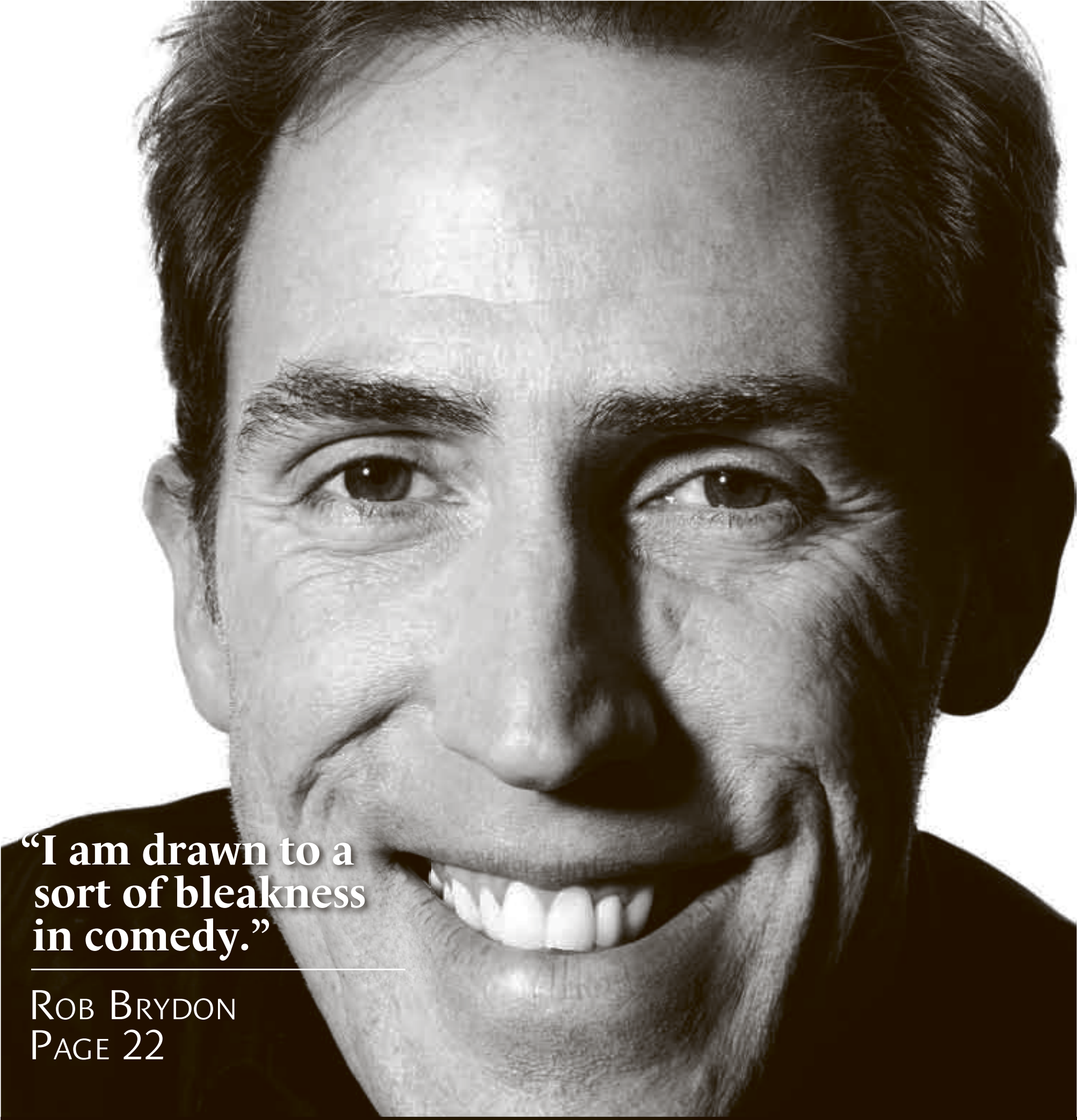
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WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?







**“I am drawn to a  
sort of bleakness  
in comedy.”**

**ROB BRYDON**  
**PAGE 22**

Douglas Hurd **Page 15**

The Great Varsity Band Hunt **Page 16**

Sebastian Horsley **Page 18**

Yeti **Page 23**

# VIEW



# Shackleton and Scott's ECCENTRIC EVENINGS

## This Week: Life Drawing

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

We have just come to the end of an arduous night of life drawing, and are examining our canvases. A small band of artists surrounds us, muttering threateningly in our direction. We were just a little too avant-garde for this crowd.

Scott and I had sworn long ago never to turn down a voyeuristic opportunity, and so we found ourselves last Wednesday evening in the Christ's art block, feigning enthusiasm for bedsits, and Hoxton. Given a choice of different materials, we stuck to charcoal and pastels – paint was decidedly beyond our artistic limits. When we were all ready, the model disrobed, and was handed a bicycle inner tube that helped create muscular tension, and a range of bold poses.

At first, these poses were only stuck to for a minute. Scott took to it quickly, scratching at his paper like a clumsy but eager chicken. I quickly remembered why Rembrandt had spat in my face in Amsterdam all those years ago, and was momentarily paralysed by insecurities. The stress manifested itself in my works, which were starting to hint at the darkness that I thought I'd left behind in Antarctica. Scott was clearly very engrossed; he was not struggling with the time constraints, and his pieces looked likely to take the outsider art market by storm.

After ten of these minutes were up, things became more relaxed. We were given sessions of five, ten, and thirty minutes, and I knew that the

time had come to unleash my inner Modigliani. Yet any attempt to match his nudes was vetoed by my hands. Instead, I found myself painting aged, hobbled hags, who bore no resemblance to the model. Disturbed by these memos from my unconscious, I opted to focus on outlines, spending much of my half hour drawing, and filling in, the model's shadow. With a few minutes left, I produced one more sketch, against my better instincts. The result was a one-legged, one-armed woman holding a baguette.

With time up, we planned to sneak out like trout.

We had not been warned, however, of the final stage: a plenary session of group criticism, like Jerry's Final Thought. We tried our best to remain silent, but were forced to speak. The work of our peers was genuinely impressive, but there was little we could add, and we muttered inanely about our inexperience and incompetence. We thought

we had escaped judgement, until a man praised my aforementioned silhouette, described by Scott as 'an ugly pink blob'. The model, who took part in the session, must have been pleased to hear that she could 'really be seen' in the blob.

On our way out, Scott started boasting about his affair with Frida Kahlo. Not for the first time, I had to remind him that he wasn't, despite his glasses, Leon Trotsky.

*Life drawing takes place every Wednesday at the Christ's College arts centre at 7PM*



## Elliot Ross' Rules of Etiquette



In a change to the tawdry drivel with which this column is customarily filled, this week's will dispense with lewd and inexcusable punnery and address the key issue of awkward silences at social gatherings - how they are produced and how they are to be remedied. I do not wish to speak of awkward silences in supervisions, for they are of another kind entirely.

The feeling of utter mental vacancy which takes over as your mawkish supervision partner shrugs and grins beside you. The icy peer of the world expert in Latin Liturgical drama shredding what you fancied was a look of earnest but inevitably fruitless engagement, a perfect blend of intellectual stimulation and puzzlement which said, "I must say I find your question fascinating, indeed it is one with which I have grappled for some time, however I find it ultimately unanswerable".

There is one renowned economics fellow who has been known to stare unblinkingly at her unfortunate undergraduates for up to five minutes after they have snivelled their "I don't know". This feeling of complete academic incompetence is what the fresher most fears.

But these are the polar wastes; let us turn our attention to more temperate deserts. An academic vacuum is intolerable, to be sure, but these occur in supervision time, when one has assumed the persona of an eager and intelligent reader. However much one's momentary lapse of reason might tarnish our self-esteem, this blot is limited to the bizarre character which most undergraduates slip into as soon as they enter an office or a classroom. Fortunately, the supervisor is not the Medusa and when the hour rings, one may simply shuffle off with a smile.

Far worse are the silences which punctuate social occasions, for here there is no academic alibi. One can say absolutely anything to fill the silence. Yet so often Cambridge's social elite find themselves sitting like tiny teenage Bud-

dhas, wrapped in stony silence, gazing at their boot laces and listening to the chirping of nearby wildfowl.

These silences usually occur when some weirdo begins to feel too comfortable and utters an atrocity too awful to be ignored completely and too left-field to facilitate a response. If not they are the result of poorly structured anecdotes, which use up their allocated portion of nervous laughter in their early stages, before expending the rest of their narrative energy on the revision of formerly mispronounced words or the clarification of incidental details.

In the former case, response ought to be straightforward since the apparent randomness should allow for what might otherwise be an overly abrupt introduction of a new topic. Other members of the group will be obliged, indeed gratified, to grab onto the new conversational thread. Sadly this is rarely the case, as group members are generally too appalled by their comrade's inanity or, as with the supervision silences already noted, can simply think of nothing to say. In case of the ill-conceived comic tale, the silence is often shorter, but swiftly leads into another of equal length.

There are manifold other ways by which such social caesura are created, and each requires bespoke solutions. Fire can be fought with fire. A fart, conceived as inaudible but expressed in the most animated tones can cause a nervous pause, but another, following hard on its heels, whether from the initial contributor or as an apt response from an audience member, can form the briefest of symphonies, and will result in affectionate laughter or outright disgust. In either case, the silence has been broken and a topic has been raised. The general good must always be defended by personal sacrifice of this kind and it is in this spirit which we must socialise with one another.

**Elliot Ross & Ollie Evans**



Buddha: better at silence than the average undergraduate

## Face Off

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# Hurd it here first

**Douglas Hurd**, former Conservative Foreign and Home Secretary, compares Robert Peel to David Cameron with **Josh Sutton**

When the man who features in your interview has been described as “cold with a smile as warm as the silver plate on a coffin,” it’s understandable if you’re not overly keen at the prospect of having to spend half an hour in his company.

Fortunately Douglas Hurd, former Conservative Home and Foreign Secretary, proved to be an immensely more affable statesman than Sir Robert Peel, the subject of Lord Hurd’s latest book, was supposed to be.

At first glance it may seem that Peel, whose most notable measures included abolishing the tariff on imported corn thus reducing the price of bread for the masses and allowing Catholics to sit in Parliament, may appear to be an odd choice for a new biography. As Lord Hurd explains, however, as well as being one of the most undervalued Prime Ministers of the nineteenth century, Peel’s reforms to the Conservative Party of the 1830s and the battles he faced in changing the image of his own party are remarkably similar to the problems faced by the party’s current leader.

“Like Peel David Cameron had to handle a party which was pretty well smashed,” Hurd says and like Cameron “he broadened the party’s potential supporters. He attracted the new business classes [of the 1840s] like Cameron has attracted those who may not have voted for the party before.” As Cameron is attempting to do, Hurd says, Peel also had to try and gain the support of those in his party who resist change and who risk splitting the party over their reluctance to reform.

The similarities between Cameron’s and Peel’s reforms are displayed in the rhetoric. Peel claimed in his 1834 election pledge the Tamworth Manifesto, often taken to be the founding principles of modern conservatism to be appealing “to that great and intelligent class of society ... less interested in the conten-

tions of party,” and more interested in effective government. That sounds suspiciously like Cameron’s attempt at courting the middle ground.

While Cameron may be managing to keep his party behind him, he still needs to gain the support of those disillusioned with politics, Hurd argues, to be certain of success in the next election. Crucially he needs to show “people who are interested in the issues why they need to be handled on a party basis. It’s only through the parties that you get things done and he must go on making that point,” notes Hurd. Putting it simply Cameron has to turn

“One has always got to be very careful thinking you’re going to solve problems by bombing people”

all that Make Poverty History enthusiasm into votes for a party committed to doing so.

Free trade is just one example of an issue Cameron, like Peel, thinks important and which, although there is tremendous public agitation for it, Hurd suggests it will only really be achieved by government and hence party action. Support through pressure groups and charities is tremendous but it’s only through parties and the pressure they can put on Europe for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy that a real solution, will be found. As Hurd puts it, “We should open up ... it’s just that I think it’s happening too slowly”

The CAP aside Hurd is a good European. His own fondness for Europe is well known and his pro European sentiment is quick to make itself apparent in our interview. He believes it’s “madness to see Europe as some kind of problem for the country,” and completely opposes a referendum on the treaty of Lisbon which critics claim is the failed constitution of 2005 reworded. But surely it’s only right that there is any opportunity for the people to decide on Europe, I put it to him.

“We’re a parliamentary democracy,” he replies. “In parliamentary democracies only matters of huge importance should have a referendum and the rest of the time you vote in your member of parliament and you get rid of them if you don’t like what they have achieved. We completely undermine the basis of it otherwise.” A convincing reply, but as Hurd himself notes it is harder to persuade the anti EU press of this, who con-

tinue to call for a referendum and who enjoy massive public support in doing so.

Peel performed dramatic policy changes on two massive issues, Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Corn Laws. Are there any decisions which Hurd would like to have rethought from his period in government I ask. “Oh yes. We should have had a Scottish assembly earlier. If we had we might well have had a stronger Conservative Party in Scotland. One of our problems now is in Scotland, we are simply not achieving the progress which we are making there in the South and which we have to make.”

From his years as Foreign secretary Bosnia sticks out. “On my own front there’s a query whether we should have intervened a bit earlier in Bosnia to bring that war to an end”, he says. “One has, however, always got to be very careful thinking you’re going to solve problems by bombing people ... we’ve learnt a lesson from Iraq.”

Of course, the comparisons between Peel and Cameron can only be taken so far. Both men operated in totally different political circumstances. For one thing Peel, Hurd reflects, didn’t have to operate in the kind of media environment which modern politicians have to and which Hurd believes is unhealthy for politicians. “You simply can’t be expected to run a government and constantly react when the media wants you to. It just doesn’t work.”

Things are clearly encouraging for Cameron, Hurd concludes. This government is on a steadily losing spiral. Now Cameron has reformed his party ideologically he needs to consolidate his gains and ensure he retains their support. When Peel left office he was cheered by the people. Cameron can only wish for the same kind of support - he could still gain it.

*Robert Peel: A Biography by Douglas Hurd is published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson.*



## Restaurant Review James Quaife

Albatross

132, Barry St



James Quaife returns  
by popular demand



You know when you’re really, really hungry, and food tastes so nice (?). That’s the situation I found myself in Wednesday last, at the hypermodern eatery Albatross. Hypermodern indeed. The eating chamber was decked out head to toe in chrome, and they had some jars of oil on the shelf, which looked good enough to drizzle on anything. And drizzle they did. The waiter was a real winner, cracking jokes as if there was no tomorrow and piling so much stuff in his arms that my guest confided in me that she wanted to push it all onto the floor and listen to it smash. I could tell this was going to be a very special evening indeed.

The proprietor insisted on us calling him by his first name (Nav); which was lovely of him. He told us how the restaurant had gone from strength to strength and showed us the eponymous albatross, which they keep in a freezer in the yard. Sick, I know, but you have to admit it’s fairly quirky! After that little interlude me and my guest were gagging for a bit of nosh, and luckily nosh was this place’s speciality.

My starter was the duck gizzard trifle, which was served smothered by a pillow of sour cream. And sour it was! My guest plumped for the ‘Ottingehli mushrooms with gooey banana chutney, sprinkled with fresh rocket’, which was exactly that. After such a whopping starter we didn’t know if we could manage a whole nother course, but Nav (!) didn’t know the meaning of ‘no’ (this was going to cause problems for my guest later!) and soon a mahooosive turkey was clucking its merry way down our throats (it was dead, don’t worry!). Without wanting to sound overly religious- for I have some fairly critical views on ‘religion’- thank God for the common turkey; that is not to say that Albatross will serve

you anything ‘common’; on the contrary it wasn’t common. In typical ‘Albatross’ fashion the eyes had been shallow-fried and were served with their own marmalade, and the rest of the beast had so many lovely spices smothered all over its chops that I thought I might as well never bother eating anything again!

Then we ate pudding, which at albatross is a bit of an institution. You literally can’t leave without trying their world famous carrot cake, which is nice as hell.

If you have the feeling that I’m about to drop a megabombshell, you might just be right. Top notch food is top notch for a reason- its fucking expensive. As we were going to sleep later (!) my guest confided in me that she thought the meal was very expensive. I agreed and said I would mention it to you, the reader. One for the special occasions then, but after you come here once you might be tempted to make up special occasions that don’t exist! (So that you can come again.)

My one criticism would be that with the exception of our waiter, who was probably the funniest man I have ever met in my whole life and then some, a lot of the staff were clearly very new arrivals to the country. If the immigration police had sealed the place off they would have had a field day. This isn’t a problem per se, but it’s a bit of an issue. So in conclusion, the food is ruddy nice, but don’t come here expecting to see home-grown talent. Don’t get me wrong, fantastic place food-wise: its just a pity that the waiters are imported: nonetheless, delicious...unfortunately the same thing can’t be said about the waiters. Except ours, who was basically a comedian serving food. Albatross food.

Tom Evans is back next week

**The set menu costs £30.85**  
**The wine list starts at £ 14.50**



# The Great Varsity BAND

**Daniel Cohen, Oli Robinson and Verity Smith**

## Errant Band

Errant band describe themselves as "a folk-blues fiasco of finger-picking and fiddling". They comprise Owen Holland and Sophie Erksine, both at St Catz, and Hugh Gifford who lives in Oxford. Owen sings and plays guitar, Sophie plays fiddle and Hugh plays bodhran. They formed when Owen and Sophie lived together last year and held jamming sessions on the roof of their house. You may recognize Owen as the organizational force behind Songs in the Dark, the Sunday night acoustic session at Clowns. Despite this, when asked for his opinion on the Cambridge music scene, Owen replied "There's a Cambridge music scene?" Their influences are many, from Dylan to Leo Kottke to Django Reinhardt to Sufjan Stevens. They also list William Morris, the socialist artist and wallpaper designer. They have just finished recording an album, Plough and Scatter which you can buy from Owen or hear on Sophie's Cambridge University Radio show. Owen is a member of the Socialist Workers party, Sophie is acknowledged in two books. Owen and Hugh is of aristocratic descent. **OR** [www.myspace.com/errantband](http://www.myspace.com/errantband)

# Monkey Princess

Like that band in High Fidelity, Monkey Princess are undergoing a minor identity crisis. It was the name of their last band, and it may have changed by the time this is published. Funnyman-about-town, Jack Gordon-Brown, who plays guitar and sings, went to school with Mike, who also plays guitar and sings, but they only founded the band when they got to Cambridge. Jono, their drummer, is a recent recruit, having defected from the Fat Poppadaddys camp. Jack claims that Monkey Princess sound like "moules poutate". There is little Belgian or piscine about them, though, and they don't sound much like that. There is little Belgian or piscine about them, though, and they don't sound much like that. There is little Belgian or piscine about them, though, and they don't sound much like that. There is little Belgian or piscine about them, though, and they don't sound much like that.

## Moscow State Circus

# Moscow State Circus

The Moscow State Circus met at school and three of them, now at Cambridge, regularly play as a trio during term time. The band arose from the ashes of London favourites The Dialogue in 2007, and are borne from the same scene that has produced Noah and the Whale, Laura Marling, Captain Kick and the Cowboy Ramblers and King Charles, playing regularly with many of them. They were brought back together by a shared love of band names of dubious legality and a desire to bring down one of the world's most famous entertainment troupes. The Moscow State Circus are stronger and more vibrant than ever: If you type "Moscow State Circus" into Google then their Myspace comes up fifth. Hasta la victoria siempre. Viva las unreasonably large legal fees. With Alex (guitar/vocals) at Corvictoria siembre. Viva las unreasonably large legal fees. At Trinity Hall, they've pus, Dave (keyboards/vocals) at Peterhouse and Ali (bass/vocals) at Trinity Hall, they've seen their fair share of the Cambridge music scene. Their verdict? It's a scene unfulfilled. If you want to know more about their sound, this description of it might help; they class it as "Fairground Blues," inspired by one-man bands, funfairs, barrel organs, dilapidated theatres and The Moscow State Circus, and, rather more prosaically, Scott Walker, Radiohead and The Moscow State Circus, and, rather more prosaically, Scott Walker, Radiohead and Cole Porter, Blur, and The Bonzo Dog Band. When they say that their future plans are to play, play and play, they mean it; in fact, The Moscow State Circus play until, and head, Cole Porter, Blur, and The Bonzo Dog Band. When they say that their future plans are to play, play and play, they mean it; in fact, The Moscow State Circus play until, and head, Cole Porter, Blur, and The Bonzo Dog Band. When they say that their future plans are to play, play and play, they are asked to stop. They were even forced on one occasion to recite Andrew Marvell's To His Coy Mistress over a fifteen minute oom-pah arrangement of 2 Become 1.

1. This was followed by solos on - amongst other instruments - a metronome, a pair of orchestral cymbals and a vibra-slap. They were then asked to stop. **VS**

[www.myspace.com/themoscowstatecircus](http://www.myspace.com/themoscowstatecircus)



JANE HAL



# The Chatto Quartet

The Chatto Quartet, made up of Grace (cello), Milan (violin), Lydia (violin), and Shiry (viola), are the latest group to hit Cambridge's classical music circuit. As is the case with gifted teenagers, they had come across each other in different musical organisations like Pro Corda and the Royal College of Music, but only came together as a unit when they all found themselves together in Cambridge last autumn.

They were first heard publicly at the lunch for the Shop on Jesus Lane, where they are the resident quartet; on "they really love the space to work in", and hope to play there again soon. Their first concert proper was in the King's Chapel last week, where they played works by Shostakovich and Dvorak (they "feel an affinity with

Slavonic music”), and concerts in other colleges will follow, starting with Caius on 1 March.

The Chatto Quartet claim as inspiration those musicians, like Max Baillie or the Brodsky Quartet, who “visibly really enjoy themselves on stage”. They are extremely positive about classical music in Cambridge, and the wealth of talented musicians and groups, but admit that, with exceptions like CUCO’s fusion of West African drumming with European classical pieces this term, the classical and non-classical scenes here are “by and large two separate worlds”. More attempts at interaction are needed, they argue, and by playing in unconventional spaces like the Shop, they’re making their own contribution. **DC**

**The Light Brigade**

## The Light Brigade

The Light Brigade got together over a shared love of the Pixies and the Smashing Pumpkins; Simon, the guitarist, is at Magdalene and Peter, the bassist, is at Pembroke. Their attitude towards the Cambridge music scene focuses on the positive, the epicentre of which is the new Cambridge Barfly, considered by them to be a real asset. If you haven't heard of it or been there yet, expect a little venue on Chesterton Lane which proffers gigs from all the best new bands. As Simon point out, the small venue lends itself to creating a friendly atmosphere in the room; though perhaps they should reconsider the logistics of a powerful smoke machine in said room. Atmosphere seems to be a major factor in the influences of the band; Simon says "we like bands that capture an atmosphere, or a way of life, which they communicate through their image, lyrics and sound." Their sonic influences include 90s shoegaze

big swirling guitars and ethereal vocals, into which category fall My Bloody Valentine, the Lills and the Cure. As for their own sound, we hear walls of warm, distorted guitar surround tales of sci-fi noir romance. Rock 'n' roll stardom is what they aim for. They are also keen to go on tour in support of R Kelly.

The Light Brigade seem to be eminently photographable; one afternoon, whilst walking down a street in West London, a land rover with blacked out windows pulled up along side them and the window rolled down. A man poked his head out and said in a South American accent, "Come to my studio and pose for me." They replied, "No thanks, you're a pervert." Instead of scuttling away ashamed, the pervert became indignant. "You know who I am!" he shouted. "I am the world famous fashion photographer Mario Testino!" Which, of course, he was. **VS**

[www.myspace.com/lightbrigademusic](http://www.myspace.com/lightbrigademusic)

## The Staircase Band

The Staircase Band put your Freshers' Week achievements to shame. A quartet of Clare first-years, they all live in the same staircase, and were brought together by a staircase meal on the second night. It was a dull, forced affair, and Arjun decided to loosen things up by playing his guitar. Merlin quickly retrieved his accordion, Arjun swapped his guitar for his violin, and they launched into a rendition of What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor; Ben ran to get his trombone, and, finally, Bob entered, sliding down the banister while playing his trumpet. They only properly decided to form a band a couple of weeks later when they played an impromptu set at a staircase party. They've since honed their craft at open mic nights in Clare cellars, and as the onstage band in The Gnadiges

Fraulein at the ADC. Their sound is a composite of diverse influences – European folk music, gypsy jazz, klezmer, Latin music, 1930s swing – described by the band as ‘wonky whirlthing gypsy swing’. They’re just as likely to play the Jungle Book’s I Wanna Be Like You, complemented by Merlin’s scat, as the Hebrew folk song Hava Nagila, but recent concerts have seen them focus more on the European aspect of their sound, each instrument, particularly Arjun’s demonic fiddle, competing with the others for speed and virtuosity. The Staircase Band play the dance music of yesteryear, and they ought to go down a treat on the ball circuit. They hope to travel to where it all started, with a trip busking around Eastern Europe planned for the summer holidays. **DC**



## Plaster of Paris

**P**laster of Paris met at Camberwell College of Arts, where they both did Art Foundation. One day, they thought they'd try covering a song together for an open mic night at what Lewis describes as a "godawful local hippy place." It ended up going really well and in between hearing songs about the joys of friendship, performed by dreadlocked fifty-year-olds, they decided to carry on and started calling themselves a band. Lewis subsequently moved on to King's, whereas Molly stayed at Camberwell to

study sculpture (having already turned down a place to study Opera at the Royal College of Music in favour of the Camberwell Art Foundation course). However, the relocation hasn't prevented them from producing music which, according to ICA, depicts rough and ragged stories of love, lust and woe, combining roots in folk, klezmer and chanson with raw emotion and operatic vocals, and is inspired by such legends as David Bowie, Björk, Metronomy, Django Reinhardt, Nico, Kate Bush and Cab Calloway.

But what do they think of our fair city's music scene? Apparently, it's one without much scope, as Lewis points out that "there really isn't much of a grass roots music scene that we've come across, beyond classical and jazz." Maybe they'll have better luck at Glastonbury, where they're playing this summer, and Paris will certainly appreciate them next month when they perform there. As if that wasn't enough, they're also in the film *Unmade Beds*, which will be released later this year, premiering

at Cannes. Speaking of which, Molly lost the kazoomophone the day before they were meant to go up to Notting-ham to film *Unmade Beds*. What to do? Spend the entire day (literally) running around London trying to find another old gramophone horn, of course. In the end a hairy-chested, shirtless man (he was only wearing trousers and a pair of braces) named Gordon, with a huge handlebar moustache, came to the rescue and lent them one. **VS**  
[www.myspace.com/wearplasterofparis](http://www.myspace.com/wearplasterofparis)

## Dress Rehearsal Rag

Charles and Rav have been playing in various bands since the age of about ten, and Dress Rehearsal Rag started off as a side project around three years ago. After a couple of good recordings and shows, they decided to focus on the band and have been going at it ever since. They say that their music grew out of liking "generic post rock like Mogwai, Explosions in the Sky and My Bloody Valentine" but that they are also pretty keen on more experimental stuff like "Hella, TRS-80, Chin Up Chin Up, Tortoise and Do Make Say Think" (ahem). When asked to describe their sound, Rav said "Ha! Melodic, quiet/loud,

occasionally Wall of Noise, Gloom-ism, and so on, of that what you will. They both grew up in Cambridge, and Rav is now at Jesus. They feel that although the Cambridge band scene died a bit when the Boat Race shut down, the dance scene is pretty good, and that Cellbar 8 and Box Tree put on some great nights. "Long live Dubstep", says Rav. They self-produce and sell all their music and apparently use about £300-400 worth of guitar pedals in the process. Their last two EPs were both written, recorded and produced in one week each. **OR** [www.myspace.com/dressrehearsalrag](http://www.myspace.com/dressrehearsalrag)

# Johnny Davies

Johnny Davies had impeccable classical credentials. The son of a music teacher, he started playing violin "pretty much as soon as I could stand up", and joined the Jesus College Choir at the age of eight, rising to become head boy. He first showed signs of switching to the dark side at thirteen, when he began to produce music using an Atari 520st; a set of decks followed three years later. Today, he produces under the name Le Jockey, making precise, melodic music that occupies "a middle ground between electro and minimal". He hasn't abandoned his past, though – he describes Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* as "possibly my favourite piece of music". He has DJed at many a Cambridge night and party, and as far away as Budapest and Madrid.

A resident, Johnny can boast of a greater contribution to dance music in Cambridge than nearly anyone. He helps out with college events, providing the PA and sound expertise for Emmanuel; he puts on a monthly techno and electro night at De Luca; and, with Ben Vincett and Justin Argent, he founded Cambridge label Horseplay Records in 2006 as an outlet for electronic music with an experimental edge. Johnny has an EP coming out on vinyl in May, and a number of remix projects are due throughout the year. He gives us all reason to be cheerful: unlike many of our interviewees, he is positive about the Cambridge music scene. "Scratch beneath the surface and you'll find a thriving night life." **DC** [www.myspace.com/lejockey](http://www.myspace.com/lejockey)  
[www.horseplayrecords.co.uk](http://www.horseplayrecords.co.uk)



# “Half-Byronic Half-Moronic”

**Sebastian Horsley**, the method artist who underwent crucifixion, talks to **Guy Stagg** about his commitment to failure, dandyism, and suicide.

**S**ebastian Horsley is the kind of character who belongs not so much in history or literature, but swaggering between Jack the Ripper's London and Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, in the realms of nightmare. His 'unauthorised autobiography' *Dandy in the Underworld* charts a merry course through addiction, prostitution and even crucifixion, lined with tailor-made socks and well-tailored epigrams. And yet on meeting the character one is impressed not so much with fear or loathing as by the few qualities Horsley boasts of rather less: humour and quick intelligence.

The interview begins, rather ominously, with Horsley's announcement: "I'm afraid I have rather reached the end of my personality." When reading his book the confession is far from surprising. Horsley became an artist, junkie and dandy after a traumatic childhood and some choice investments as a young man that funded a monstrous appetite for illegal chemicals and brothel crawling. He rose to fame as a 'method artist' who in 2000 underwent voluntary crucifixion in the Philippines in order to paint a series on Christ's own ordeal. The News of the World's front page response: "Art Freak Crucifies Himself" won Horsley the publicity and censure he craved. He then went through five years, two publishers and several attempts to get off heroin in order to produce "the next book in the Bible."

He now finds himself rather adrift, still towering around Soho in black top hats, but with little left for people to look at, and coming to terms with the fact that without drugs he has an embarrassingly un-bohemian habit for order, punctuality and shyness. Due to the fact that "living in Soho is like coming all the time," I met him in his flat, appropriately positioned on Meard Street, and festooned with skulls, syringes and a loaded gun. Sebastian

scampered around, with affected indifference, past rows of velvet suits and photographs of himself.

Horsley has built a personality from affectation. As he stands applying make up, the mannerisms, clothes and furnishings he wallows in are all equally made up, and each performs regardless of whether or not an audience is present. "I represent and they resent the life beautiful," he simpers, as we sit over tea outside a café, crowds passing suitably struck by his eccentric-Edwardian-undertaker appearance. "I see

**"Suicide is the only polite thing to do... it's important to know how to exit the stage with the same panache with which you entered it"**

through the illusions that we use to comfort ourselves ... I'm one of the most artificial people you will ever meet - I've cobbled my personality together from other people's, I've seen bits of character and thought "I like that, I'll wear that." But the point is I'm honest, I'm honest about my superficiality, unlike most people I don't pretend I'm not vain or superficial."

It is easy to become seduced by Horsley's philosophy, to become numbed to the ostentation and depravity he so openly personifies. Yet Horsley enjoys subversion, simultaneously characterizing himself by the horror-stories - burning away a million on heroin, crack, 'artistic' endeavours, over 1000 prostitutes and his personalised cut of shirt at Turnbull & Asser - whilst professing to "regret everything". Horsley realises that he will never inhabit the abode of great artists, and distracts himself with the transience of all art. His dandyism embraces this fact, celebrating the ephemeral intangibility of personality: "As a dandy I would seek to be someone rather than to do something."

The performance is necessarily flawed. There is the repetition: many answers are written, learnt and recited for every interview. There is the contradiction: "You should never abandon yourself to the coarseness of reality ... I want to be as radical as reality itself." But to balance this is the humour and absurdity: "I do whores, I do regular girls, I turn regular girls into whores. I don't actually, but it sounded good," said

with a pleased giggle breaking through the drawl.

"I like aphorisms: an aphorism is basically an ugly truth beautifully expressed." It would be easy to paint Horsley as an aphorism: the amoral and hedonistic realisation of a nihilist philosophy; the ornamentation that embellishes an utterly vacuous dandy ideology. It would be easy to construct Horsley as a sum of his epigrams: as the product of a "failed suicide," he says, "half-Byronic, half-moronic; part-shaman, part-showman." But that would be too comforting, and as he warns, "anything that consoles is utterly, utterly fake." Moreover one reacts to both the comedy and the tragedy of his performance, as Horsley realises: "we respond to vulnerability don't we - vitality and vulnerability."

Ultimately Horsley realises the frivolity and inconsequence of what he says - "I never know how much of what I say is true" - and tries to fasten this insincerity of language onto others: politicians, critics and all forms of artist. "The difference between me and them is that I'm honest about my self-interest," which leaves him with little patience for altruism or humility. And none at all for moralising as, given the libertine extents of his liberalism, manners are more important than morality. "If a man moralises," he says, "he's invariably a hypocrite and if a woman moralises she's invariably plain."

As a self-confessed peacock without a cause, Horsley is suitably reticent about his ambitions for the future: seemingly neither infamy nor immortality can in the end satisfy. "Popularity is the one insult I haven't suffered," he says, "fame is just being remembered for fifty years longer than anyone else ... it's just failure disguised." Similarly attempting to achieve anything with his art or writing beyond purposeless passivity is simply a fool's errand: "the artist is the least useful member of society but he is also the least destructive, the only person I am going to destroy is myself." His autobiography states "To become a work of art was the object of my life" and in true übermensch style Horsley has written, drawn and injected becoming itself with being.

It is surprisingly exhausting interviewing a person who speaks in only soundbites, and even more exhausting attempting to do justice to their personality. If man is the measure of actions then Horsley would be measured by two factors: self-definition and failure. "It's better to be an anonymous star than a famous non-entity ... I'm a performance in search of an audience ... I'm not a writer and I've got a book to prove it

... I'm a failed rock star - art and writing are just failed forms of music."

Critics regularly observe that Horsley's writing and conversation come across like Oscar Wilde on amphetamines, though it is a comparison he does not enjoy. But it is a mistake to try and sift through the wit in search of the profound, tortured soul. Horsley wears his scars upon his sleeve (hands admittedly) and inhabits the silk-clad superficiality he has fashioned for himself.

Perhaps the easiest of academic exercises is to spout a subversive ideology. Yet Horsley has the faith, born equally from arrogance and fear, to live by his own creed. And if, as he claims, "It takes courage not to believe," then Horsley is terrified as we all are. But what does one do after writing an autobiography? "Well, suicide is the only polite thing to do ... It's important to know how to exit the stage with the

**"If a man moralises... he's invariably a hypocrite and if a woman moralises she's invariably plain"**

same panache with which you entered it, but then the other side of that is, like everyone else, I'm afraid." But the most radical obituary Sebastian Horsley could leave would be through staying alive until a grand, comfortable and slightly dull old age. That would at least confirm his role as a magnificent failure, and his sneaking suspicion that he is in fact "quite a nice person: I remember people's birthdays."



Horsley's genuine crucifixion



ANNA TRENCH



# Benn making changes

**Imogen Walford** is impressed by what our Environment minister has to say about his hopes for climate change in Britain.

**“W**e’ve got to get on with it really”: Hilary Benn’s matter-of-fact analysis of climate change pretty much sums up the style of our current Environment minister. And typically, it comes as a positive under-statement finishing off a lengthy list of Labour’s achievements: levies of energy intensive companies; reducing rubbish in the ground that produces methane; obligations on energy suppliers; cavity wall insulation; duty on flights; excise duty changes – a dizzying array that leaves you wondering how anything gets emitted at all.

But it’s the climate change bill that the Labour government really wants to make the jewel in its crown – as Benn enthusiastically states, “it’s a groundbreaking bit of legislation”. There’s been much wrangling over the percentages in it, (60% or 80% reduction, five yearly or annual reviews?) but it will be groundbreaking for enforcing a national decrease in emissions to X in 2020. It’s a marker of how much of A Good Thing the climate change bill is seen to be that Cameron is competing for the moral high-ground in his fervent support for it.

So New Labour – New Environment. Sort of. As any environmentalist will quickly point out, there’s a big hole in the bill labelled “aviation”. If national emissions go down, but aviation emissions are going through the roof, it’s not much good. Benn’s quick to defend the bill – but to the critical eye his first two arguments aren’t that convincing. It will be included in the future. Aviation is international (leaving

**“If you don’t recognise progress when it’s staring you in the face, how on earth are you ever to build on it and get more progress”**

out the domestic ones then). But when he talks about what is being done you feel Benn’s about to rush off into action any second. He lays out the EU environmental council’s plan to set up an emission trading scheme, to be ratified in the European parliament. Aviation emissions under this will be capped in a pan-European scheme to let countries have the choice where to emit

carbon and where to agree to save it. And, as the consummate politician that he is, you are convinced.

Unsurprisingly, for someone who only moved from DFID in June, Benn has a keen awareness of the international community. Even on the domestic climate change bill he makes clear “this is the world’s first – lots of countries are watching what we’re doing here”. He

**“Benn’s the sort of man you’re glad is sitting down at the table at a climate change conference”**

jumps enthusiastically on the need to ensure fair division of emissions between developed and developing countries. And he also distinguishes carefully between “China and India”, which he singles out as being the big emitters of the next five years and “Mali, Malawi or Burkina Faso”, at “a very different stage of economic development”; he’s clearly concerned with what is “appropriate for each of us to contribute”.

Given his credentials and commitment, Benn’s the sort of man you’re glad is sitting down at the table at a climate change conference. If anyone understands the needs of developing nations and is aware of the truly international problem of climate change, it’s him – it would be an interesting straw poll to see how many MPs could put Burkina Faso on a map. There’s no doubting Benn could.

But then – even Hilary Benn came in for quite a mauling after December’s Bali conference (the successor to Kyoto). George Monbiot, the journalist and general environmental agitator, bluntly called him an “idiot”. Benn’s response is less rude but equally to the point: “if you don’t recognise progress when it’s staring you in the face, how on earth are you ever going to build on it and get more progress?”. That’s one of the problems with looking at international climate change conferences, really: the glass is either half full or half empty. It’s true that not very much was pinned down in Bali but then, as Benn counters, “you go back two years and say to someone what do you think are the chances that all the countries in the world will be able to reach the sort of agreement we reached in Bali – they would have said no



chance”. A fair point, although his next comment was less encouraging – he chirpily points out that now they just have to work out “what the shape of that agreement is going to be over the next few years”.

Benn’s keen to encourage the ‘Go Greener’ Cambridge campaign, an ambitious project encouraging Cambridge University and the colleges to take leading roles in tackling climate change, emphasising that students can play a “really important part”

in helping the environment, from attending events to signing the ‘Go Greener’ petition. He reflects on the “change in our society and that there’s no doubt climate change is at the centre of the awareness of young people”. Which is a good thing as, he points out, 40% of emissions are down to “the choices you and I make as individuals” – like walking more or conserving water.

But it’s clear that politics is for him the real engine of progress – not surprisingly

really, given the surname. Environmental awareness in Cambridge isn’t just good for the university itself, it’s a necessity for whichever of us (may or may not) become PM – “it’s the next generation that are going to be running the country”. So, watch your carbon footprint, join the campaign to make Cambridge tackle climate change – and when you’re running the country, you could do worse than to take Hilary Benn as your guide.



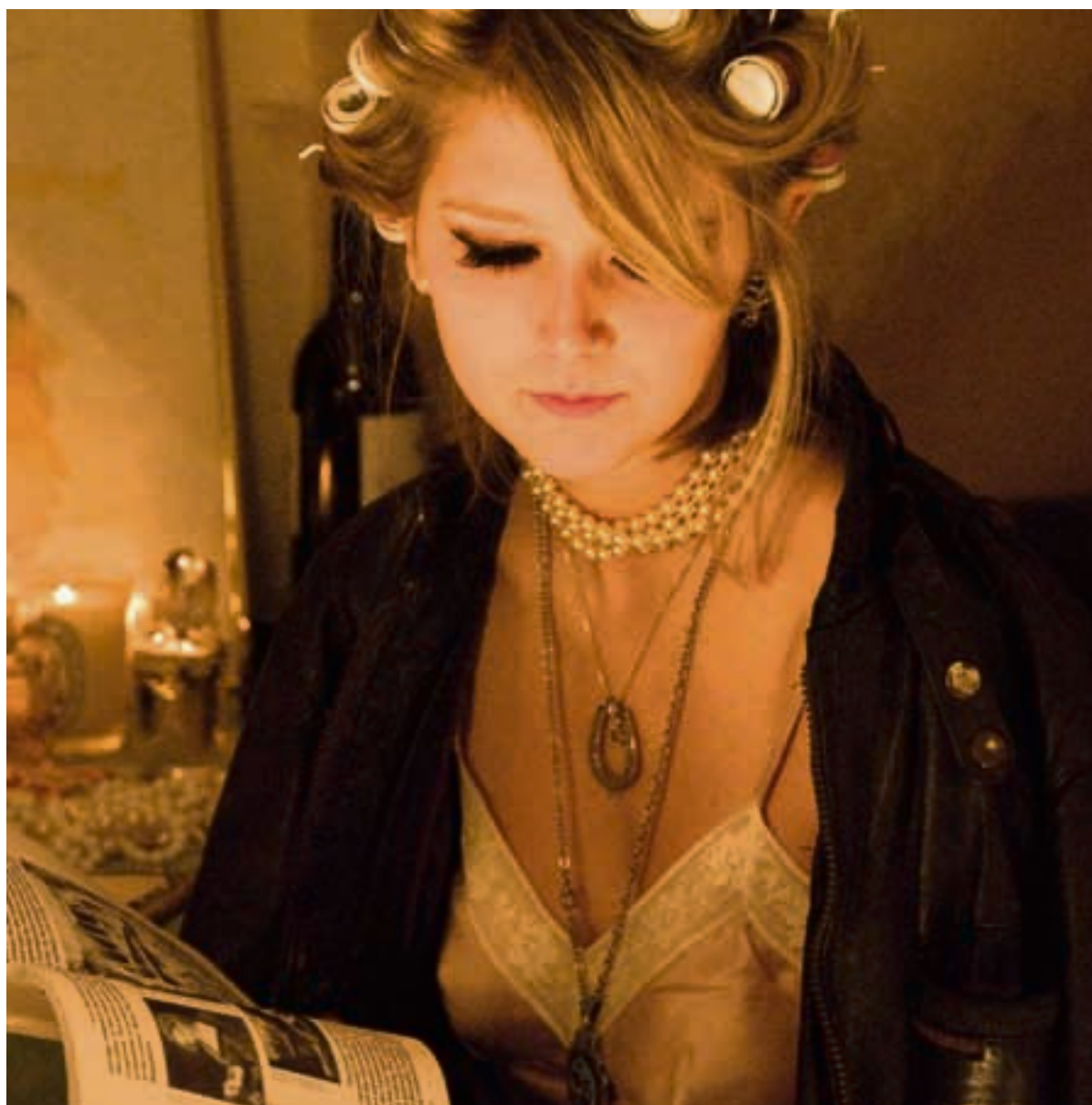
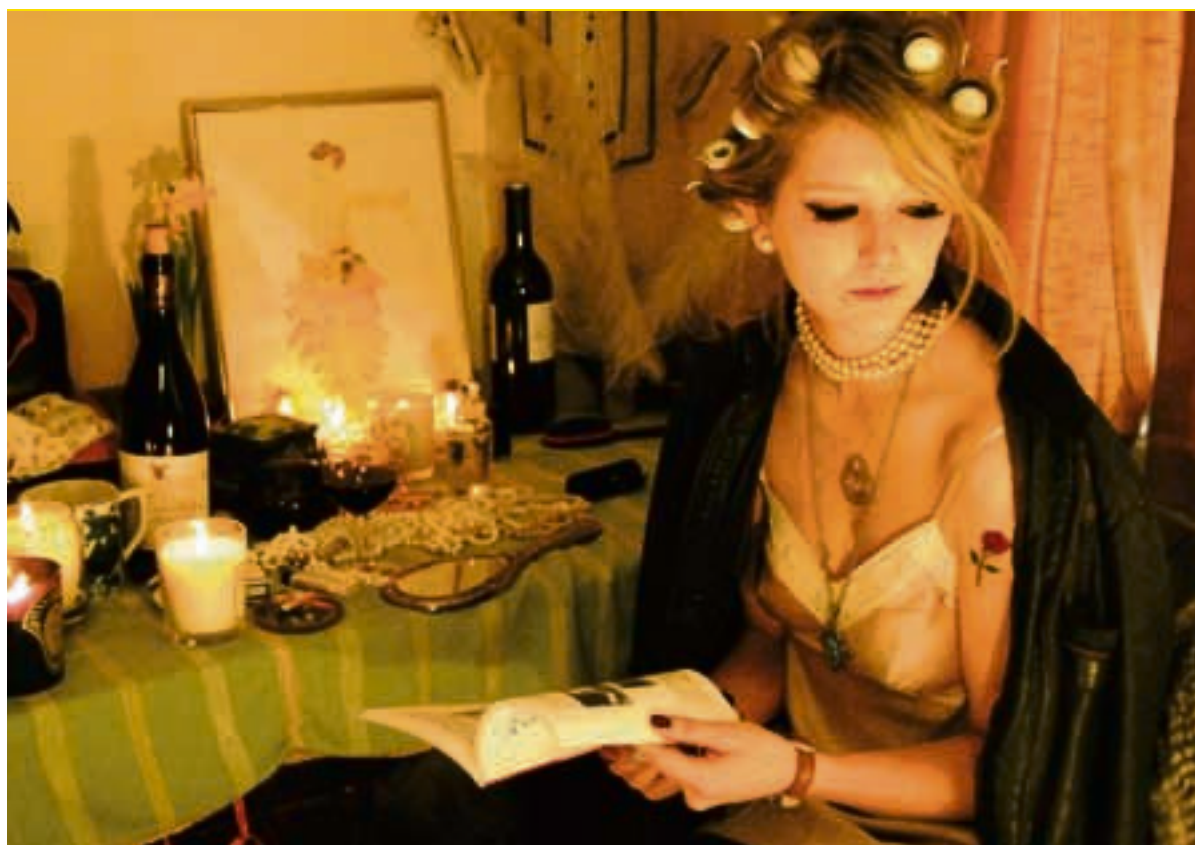
All clothes: Stylists' own  
Model: Claire Wells  
Photographer: Katy King





# Night Light

## Underwear | Outerwear



**Imogen Walford** talks to number-one woman powerhouse **Jane Shepherdson** about fashion, feminism, and fairtrade

We are the iPod, Facebook and though you may not realise it, Jane Shepherdson generation. Shepherdson was behind the Topshop phenomenon - and since last week, is back on the scene with Whistles.

The one-woman powerhouse that took Topshop's sales through the roof says "I wouldn't really describe myself as a businesswoman". Instead she constantly talks about instinct, an "emotional reaction" and wanting to make something "beautiful, completely new, original and exciting".

Shepherdson produces clothes that women want to wear - a surprisingly rare phenomenon in a male-dominated industry. Her awareness of this is absolute: "to be successful at your job, you still have to be five times better than the men". Would she call herself a feminist? The answer is immediate - "Yes, absolutely, don't you? I'm extremely proud of being one". Her staff are mainly composed of women, "not deliberately but they have more of an idea of what women want".

Despite being such a major player in the fashion industry, you probably wouldn't notice Shepherdson in a crowd. She's down-to-earth and friendly but the steel it must take to be her comes through occasionally; her searching look at my ensemble can only be described as X-ray, and when I mistakenly suggest that profits had begun to decline at Topshop before she left - she guillotines across me: "They were still going up".

This is how her self-fashioned image as an ordinary woman presenting clothes to ordinary women translates into stellar sales. Jane Shepherdson feels your pain over jeans shopping, "there's hundreds to choose from and they're all about a hundred and fifty quid and you just think - I can't even bear trawling through them all", and (hurrah), she wants to improve that. She hates the standard fashion-industry speak of "her", the ideal woman customer and you feel the collective relief of half the population as she says "I don't want to look like a celebrity - I want to dress strong confident women".

Her keen awareness of being a female in a man's world can only have been sharpened by the man she used to work with - Shepherdson's former money-bag at Topshop was the notori-

ous Philip Green. Her departure from Topshop was rumoured to be because he over-ruled her to channel vast sums into the Kate Moss collection (the mention of Moss provokes an emphatic eye roll). Despite comments in the press, she's maintained a dignified silence - although her, "I've worked with a lot of bullies" reveals a less-than-easy time at the helm. Her own description of her management style - "If I don't like say something I just say so, straightaway" - reveals why two of the key Topshop team, Jo Farrelly and Keith Wilks, have already defected to join her.

Post-Topshop, Shepherdson's keen to portray her move to Whistles as stepping away from the mass-market, "I don't want world domination or anything". But it's clear she has big plans for the shop. The "I don't want a big role" claim gives way to "I do think we'd do well in America though, New York, LA, key places".

If anyone can turn the yum-mummy Whistles brand hip, it's her. Shepherdson has a clear vision for the shop; it's going to be about grown-up clothes at decent prices, with "beautiful fabrics, really great tailoring... it's own identity".

Despite only being in the job for a week, it's also clear she's wasting no time in implementing the changes. Top priority is ensuring the ethical credibility of Whistles' suppliers. As a non-executive director of People Tree, ethical clothing is a cause that's close to her heart. She spent six months researching all the ethical and fairtrade brands, "of which there's about two". The verdict is damning - "they're really just hopeless, if you expect me to buy that just because it's ethical, there's very little design input, I'm sorry, but that's not good enough". As ever, you sense that Shepherdson's hit the zeitgeist - "I think it's something that people want" but then again "nobody does anything out of guilt". It's this zeitgeist-capturing quality that makes Shepherdson what she is today. And when she talks about the women who have inspired her - Barbara Houlini (Biba), Mary Quant, Vivienne Westwood it's because "they can grab the moment, capture it and give it back to you - I think that's really clever". A roll-call of women to which it's fair to add another name - Jane Shepherdson.





TOM EVANS

# Brydon: Prejudiced?

**George Grist** meets award-winning comedian and Keith Barret alter-ego **Rob Brydon** to discuss panel show pride, self mockery and how he's finally managed to reconnect with his Welsh roots

Half way through my interview with Rob Brydon in a private members' club off Shaftesbury Avenue, a group of loud and ostensibly obnoxious media types storm into the obviously closed off area. He leans in closer to the table and lowers his voice, distracted, and makes a strained face (almost a grimace) at his publicist, trying in vain to catch her attention. There is a more than subtle resemblance to his absurdly straight-lined alter-ego, divorced cabbie Keith Barret, shocked by the vulgarity of his celebrity guest. His first TV manifestation as Barret, the focus of the BAFTA nominated Marion and Geoff (produced by Steve Coogan's Baby Cow production company), encapsulated the ambivalent darkness of much of his previous work, including the seminal *Human Remains* with Julia Davis. I was keen to find out why he eschewed this in favour of the light-hearted Keith Barret Show concept – in Brydon's own words changing “beautifully crafted monologues” into, superficially at least, easy pickings. “I am drawn to a sort of bleakness in comedy, but the Keith Barret show was a satire on light entertainment. People can walk straight off from *Big Brother* into these chat shows, so why not a divorced taxi driver? Why not Keith?” On closer inspection, however, even in his less demanding format, Brydon's Barret is an impossibly incisive and quick-witted character.

The Keith Barret Show, along with his recent *Annually Retentive*, a pastiche of the panel-show format complete with behind-the-scenes bitching and devising, both

gleefully take the piss out of B-list and C-list celebrities, but Brydon insists that this is all in good nature. “I'm very fond of Richard and Judy, the guests from the Keith Barret pilot. Some of the guests on these shows understand it. You want to be captain of the ship but you're not – you're the cabin boy. Lembit Opik didn't want to play the game and Ea-

“You want to *win* every scene. Not in that way – god, that sounds horrible. You're not going to print that are you? I bet you are.”

monn [Holmes] did.” The success of these shows comes in no small part from the fact that Brydon is often on the panel himself, though he admits he “only picks the good ones”.

One of these is surely the *Big Fat Quiz of the Year*, which Brydon has returned to for the past four years on the trot. I'm interested to know the degree of preparation involved in something like this, but he assures me it's kept to a minimum. So which guests do the best? “It's Russell [Brand] and Noel [Fielding]'s show, really. You've got to assume roles on these shows, and Dave [Walliams] and I play it as the straight guys. I can't compete with their stream of consciousness. I don't do gigs. I've never taken a drug in my life. I'm married! But you've got to be on your toes because I watch these things as a fan and I say to my wife, ‘we haven't heard much from him

this evening have we?’” I put it to him that Fielding often stumbles through these shows with a permanent vacuous spastic grin, entirely unable to pull out a single funny quip or comment, but Brydon is admirably unwilling to put down any of his costars, and comes to his defence quickly. “Comedy is so much about attitude – look at Woody Allen or

Russell Brand. Once you have that attitude everything is easier, but getting it is not easy.”

He has recently branched away from pure comedy, playing roles in shows such as *Napoleon* and *Gavin and Stacey*, which took away a clutch of prizes from the British Comedy Awards last year, and is soon to start its second series. “Comedians have a certain way of looking at the world, close to filtering life.” He's keen to stress the more difficult, studied approach he takes to straight acting. “You're constantly thinking, ‘Where can I give a good reaction shot to keep me in the scene?’” You want to *win* every scene. Not in that way – god, that sounds horrible. You're not going to print that are you? I bet you are.” I assure him that I won't. The underlying modesty he shows seems to be in harmony with much of his work – he chooses his projects incredibly carefully. One of them

was the marvellous *Cock and Bull Story*, a big screen interpretation of Lawrence Sterne's ‘unfilmable’ *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, arguably driven by the constant quibbling between Brydon and Steve Coogan, both playing versions of themselves. “The banter on camera is an edgier, loveless version of what we really are. The only improvised bits were the sections that book-end the film – the bit about the teeth at the start and the Al Pacino impressions at the end. I always turn to Al.” I ask him whether his pride takes a bashing at all when he mocks himself on screen – after all, much of Keith Barret was ultimately tragic, and there are plenty of personal snipes in *Cock and Bull* (“Have a look at the colour,” he says in the intro, tapping his teeth. “It's what I call not-white. Actually it's a nice colour – I think you could decorate a child's nursery with this colour.”) He starts out with an unashamed Barret-ism. “You're what I call a young person, but as you get a bit older and more comfortable in your skin, you'll do pretty much anything for a laugh. After all, your life isn't what goes on screen. That's your job, your work. I wouldn't bring my career if I was evacuating the planet – I'd bring my family.”

His newest project, *Identity Crisis*, charting his search for his inner Welshman, is a documentary, and the decision came easily to him. “I wanted to do a documentary on things I have a passion for. Not Elvis Presley, that's been done to death. Then I thought of Wales – it stemmed from the seed

of dismissiveness in the character in *Annually Retentive*. So I booked a theatre in Aberdare for a stand up show – as myself, not Keith.” The prospect of a booked stand-up show galvanised him into getting the documentary on track, as well as the desire to appease a friend jaded by constant (albeit fond) Welsh-bashing. When he toured as Barret, an exchange with an audience member epitomises this attitude: “Do you speak Welsh? You do? [a pause] Why? [laughter] No, no, no- what I mean is, is it part of your job, or were you forced to learn it as a child?”

The gloomy Welsh attitude is summed up by Brydon's meeting with Manics' bassist Nicky Wire. “He told me that after *If You Tolerate This* went to number one, they were all delighted for 20 minutes; but after that they were gloomy again, on the tour bus, because it had sold 20,000 fewer copies than they expected.” But the show works. Some (wisely edited) stand up at the start shows his anti Welsh humour bombing, but as he turns the focus round to his favoured self-mocking, the audience at the show's end empathises and is utterly won over. “I feel like I've rediscovered a part of me, and a part of my country. I was living here in London in my lovely media world with my friends, and I felt quite disconnected. But when I drove back, and heard the Welsh accent of the girl in the toll both on the Severn Bridge, it made me feel warm inside.”

*Rob Brydon's Identity Crisis is on BBC4 tonight at 9.00pm*



# 'I enjoyed the Libertines immensely'

**Hugo Gye** wonders why you haven't heard of **Yeti**

**P**eter Doherty: the one who likes crack and Kate Moss. Carl Barât: the one with the cigarettes and leather jackets. Gary Powell: the cheerful black American drummer. John Hassall: the guy who just stood there and swayed; the other Libertine. And yet it is the invisible, forgotten Hassall, once Lib-

ertines bassist, whose new band Yeti is doing something really exciting, far from the Libs knock-off we might expect. Yeti's debut single *Never Lose Your Sense of Wonder* was released in 2005 to a wave of justified acclaim: it is a wonderful song, melodically perfect and uplifting without being saccharine. Thereafter they drifted: apparently the band "got lost in the West End. They dug up a

lot of the one-way streets, resulting in a no-way system. Our absence aided the buzz kill more than Buzz Killington; we actually released a second single and an EP, but nobody was interested." They resurfaced late last year, releasing *Yume*, which "is not an album, it is a mix-tape; it was a chance to release the British singles in Japan and fund the recording of the real album." That "real album", *The Legend of Yeti Gonzales* (one cannot claim for them a knack for snappy titles), is scheduled to appear on May 5, the culmination of three frustrating years; they are now coming to the end of a tour, and they played at Soul Tree last

humongous tune after joke. Yeti remind one most obviously of the La's, with their simple yet profound pop songs which eschew any flourish or self-absorbed innovation. They will not shift your musical horizons in the same way as the Arcade Fire or Mars Volta can; yet this is still music to dance to, to laugh at (their track *Insect-Eating Man* is pure music-hall comedy) and to fall in love with. They say that they will never "merely copy the guy at number one. There will always be a place for melodic music; whether there is a place for Yeti music, only time will tell."

However, much of the attention they get must be because of their frontman's Libertines past. When asked whether this annoys them, they reply, "Depends on the time of the month. Mostly the only people who are interested are newspapers and thirteen-year-olds. And usually they can't spell John's name and don't know which one he is, so it's more amusing some days." (For the record, it's spelt Hassall and he's the anodyne-looking bassist.) This must be disingenuous: much as they are a brilliant band, John's background has

been their main way in to the public consciousness. Hassall himself is clearly irritated by the burden of his past: he claims to be "jealous of the others' ability to get to the bar so quickly after a gig", and when asked whether he would consider joining any Libertines reunion he simply replies "Would you?" He says of his ex-bandmates that he "still sees Gary and Carl occasionally" – a laconic answer that cannot help but recall the unmentioned Doherty, whose conversion from musical hero to tabloid wreck has tarred the legacy of the Libertines, and by extension Yeti.

However, John is not entirely negative about his old band: he acknowledges that, while he always wanted to play his own songs, he did not mind playing those of Doherty and Barât: "they were good songs, and they still sounded relevant after playing them for ages." He says now that "I feel as though I've moved on in many ways, but I did enjoy the Libertines immensely." Yeti deserve to be celebrated as far more than a Libertines substitute: they are on the way to being a truly great pop band, if only people take notice.



Tuesday; the audience was appallingly small, but the band was on great form, cracking joke after

## Great Works of Art in Cambridge #7: *Before* and *After* William Hogarth Fitzwilliam Museum

It always comes as a shock. Amongst the rich maroon walls, mahogany furniture and ornate gilt frames, the viewer does not expect a chafed penis. But then Hogarth loves to shock; he makes you laugh, wonder if there is a moral lesson, and most of all hope no one unexpected is looking at the same painting by your side. The first painting of this pair, *Before*, begins innocently enough. In a traditional pastoral setting two young lovers flirt amongst lush green erections of nature. He's coming on to her in blue and she's playing coy in pink. There are many none-too-subtle suggestions of the fun which is to follow. His leg slips through the folds of her skirt, her apples tumble from her lap, and there is an unmistakable bulge in his crotch. They are rosy-cheeked and wet-lipped: is he proclaiming his sincere love or just proposing a little rumble in the undergrowth? Is she telling him to bugger off or asking for more?

After shows that it was the latter in both cases. Courtly games have been replaced by post-coital collapse. The flushed and sweaty lovers pant with glazed eyes and strewn clothes. But although they hold hands they do not look in to

each others' eyes, and their positions seem awkward and momentary. Her hand hovers above his thigh and she stares into chest. He gazes ahead, perhaps at her reddened naked thighs, perhaps at nothing to do with her at all. In a minute they will arise, he will button up his trousers and she will smooth her skirts and they will leave this pastoral scene and go their separate ways.

*Before* and *After* were painted in 1731. There would have been much dirtier images and literature around for anybody who cared to search, but for an oil painting by a respected artist which would have been publicly exhibited, these paintings are still shocking; when the museum bought it in 1964 the man's genitals had been painted over. Hogarth presents it as such a small leap from the polite hand gestures (the hands are brilliant – just look at those outstretched little fingers), to the uncovered pubic hair. If there is a moral lesson to be learnt (as in Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress*) it is not explicit. And yet just to laugh seems inadequate. Perhaps it should simply be viewed as a picture of reality, in 1731 and today.

Anna Trench



William Hogarth  
1697-1764  
*Before*



William Hogarth  
1697-1764  
*After*



Varsity now publishes extended first-night reviews of every play in Cambridge at **varsity.co.uk/reviews**

## view from the groundlings



A while ago, as we were leaving a theatre here in East Anglia, a friend of mine thought the play we'd just seen was awful. I sort of agreed. They seemed to have overreached themselves somewhat: the play in question was notoriously difficult; the space offered serious logistical and staging challenges; many of the cast were playing characters significantly older than themselves. All things considered, maybe they'd actually done a pretty god job at what was undoubtedly a very ambitious show. "Yeah, but they shouldn't do things that are always going to be too hard for them and never going to be that good", my companion protested loudly, gesticulating wildly, before breaking off sheepishly as he realized a member of the cast was standing right behind him. Cringe.

But, shouldn't they? If I applied a similar philosophy to my essays, I'd just never do anything. Admittedly, I'd save my supervisors the ordeal of having to sit through them, but what would I get out of it? Which brings us to the question of what plays at Cambridge are for; are they 'for' the audience who watch them or is it more important to consider the experience for the people involved in the production? A previous contributor to this column called for "quality", but are an audience and a cast going to get more out of a 'bad' production of Hamlet, or out of a really rather excellent staging of that thoroughly dodge play my mate Bob wrote a few years ago when he was feeling creative on the bus?

In lots of ways, I don't really know – and for the record, I'm all for new writing, just maybe not Bob's. From an audience's perspective, I understand that no-one wants to go and see a bad play, not least when theatre-going here has this year become a serious financial commitment following some stealthy, unexplained and apparently uncontested ticket price rises, but, equally, actors will surely get more out of a challenging role, and if students don't get to play these roles here, most of them never will.

Maybe audiences should be more sympathetic to the fact people have to be ambitious (and maybe prepared to fail a little), because otherwise no-one will give themselves the chance to do anything truly impressive. I'm sure anyone who saw Don Giovanni last week will agree that this is a risk worth taking; sometimes you succeed.

Alex Reza

## Murder in the Cathedral

### Jesus College Chapel

Dir: Kirsten Treen

Theatre

★★★★★

There's a certain mystique about a production in a chapel; but more mystifying in this production of TS Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* was the meta-theatrical commentary accompanying the inner conflict of Thomas Becket.

The three members of the chorus of women from Canterbury are masked, which dampens any empathy for their situation, and their dialogue is often muffled by a pervasive echo. The picture frames that they persist in holding up seem like leftovers from a Design Technology project. The

frames were more successfully employed by the four tempters to represent windows of opportunity and temptation rejected by Becket, being knocked over when portentous lines were venomously delivered.

But these are simply pedantic quibbles. The portrayal of Thomas Becket requires an intensity of feeling and intelligence combined with a conviction of faith, which James Pelly achieves very well. He successfully brings out Beckett's magnanimous nature without making it too overstated. The scene in which the four nights frankly

justify their brutal murder, suggesting that we see the assassination as "suicide", brings welcome touch of humour.

It's a production worth going to - if only to see how your perspective of a complex character, who eventually seems entirely secure in his moral integrity, slightly shifts, and to see the fragile calm of the chapel being shattered. Kirsten Treen has tackled a taxing play, bringing new life to a writer who might otherwise be remembered for his contribution to theatre with the production of *Cats*.

Aurelie Hulse



DYLAN SPENCER-DAVIDSON

## Romeo and Juliet

### ADC

Dir: Rob Icke

Theatre

★★★★★

Romeo is not pretty. Nor is it short. Do not take your date. Warnings done; go see this play. This is *Romeo & Juliet* as hard, brutal horror; shorn of the lace and fripperies that so often hide its darkness. There is little to this production but the acting. Technology is minimal, lighting simple, music occasional. Rob Icke must be the tenth director this year to threaten on his flyer to "strip down a play in order to examine it afresh". But for once this does not mean Shakespeare with lesbians on a budget. Icke's stripping works because it is honest, because it goes with the grain of the play rather than wantonly against it. That said, piling scene upon scene without break or distraction (bar the hard-earned interval) does expose the joints of the production. Romeo feels like it has been slotted together scene by scene, each five minutes honed as an audition piece for the benefit of the theatrical agents who will

no doubt come this week. The director's focus always is on tactics, rarely strategy. The result is a play whose parts are greater than its whole. The benefit of his approach is that the action is always absorbing; at any point in the tragedy it is difficult not to care. The penalty is that some scenes, clever in themselves, feel awkward in company. I am glad to know that Icke can pull off a scene using no stage lighting at all, but I'm still not sure what clowns in gloom, lit with their own torches, can really add to Act I. But these are quibbles. This is an actors' play, and the acting is better than anything you will see in Cambridge this year. Lizzie Crarer's gawky Juliet is so good the play's title should be reversed. The marvellous apoplexy of Josh Higgot as her father is enough alone to explain the tragedy that follows. Others would get their mention if space allowed. In the name of God, go.

Ed Blain

It became apparent within the first few minutes of the play that this had been the wrong night to wear the fur coat. *Conviction* is a piece of new writing by Alice Malin, documenting Richard's (Josh Coles-Riley) involvement with an extremist animal-rights movement, lead by the sinister Anthea (Imogen Taylor), and estrangement from his fashion-designer daughter Victoria (Sinead Martin).

Malin's script is laudable in its attempt to deal with weighty themes: vivisection, violence in activism, and family breakdown. It does not pull it off. Richard muses "there are no degrees of black

and white anymore, just one long drawn-out grey smudge": this play manages to be black and white and grey, avoiding nuance as though it were a suspicious French perfume whilst splodging together a lot of distinct issues to conclude that animals are nice and we shouldn't do nasty things to them.

The most enjoyable sections of the play are those which should probably have been cut. Victoria's outing to a night-club adds almost nothing to the narrative, but was still preferable to being bellowed at by Coles-Riley, who appears to confound panting with acting.

In the intimate space of the Play-

room, once something has crossed the line between serious and silly it is impossible to claw it back: lines like "I'm not going to stand here looking at the leaves in the gutter and the dog-shit in the drain – they create their own bureaucracy and I'm not getting tied down in it" become unintentional gems. It may take a special kind of courage to stand on stage and proclaim such controversial slogans as "Down With Murder", but an hour and forty minutes should have been long enough for this play to produce a more cogent response to the questions it poses itself.

Giulia Galastro

## Conviction

### Corpus Christi Playroom

Dir: Grace Hadley & Alice Malin

Theatre

★★★★★

## Medics' Revue

### ADC

Theatre

★★★★★

Going to the Medics' Revue, I was prepared to be shocked, disgusted, and deterred from ever again darkening my twisted-minded doctor's door. Unfortunately, this was not the case. 'The Hysterec-tomy Boys' was reminiscent of a rather mild work-party cabaret, based on innuendo, awful groan-inducing jokes, and enthusiastically unpolished performances. There were some decent pieces, such as a sermon corrupted by corporate sponsorship ("Jesus, after a Wait-rose on the third day") and an impressively good rendition of bored invigilators commentating on an exam.

These semi-hits were, however, interspersed with some awkward misses. It played heavily on Cambridge stereotypes, and toyed half-heartedly with somewhat tired politics. There were some dubious moments, like the sexually-thrusting rendition of the 'YMCA', re-dubbed as the Peterhouse-ribbing 'LGBT'. It was a shame, because these bizarrely misguided moments took the edge off some genuinely good ideas.

Perhaps, in a production like this, such criticism is out of place. Perhaps it should be taken lightly, and perhaps you should just laugh along. The audience

certainly took it in this spirit, and sounded as if they loved it. Good on them, but – despite the show hardly ever being medically-based – it did seem at times that this apparently medic-filled crowd had previously been initiated into some glaring in-joke.

The actors didn't take themselves or their show too seriously, which certainly helped, and there was a definite sense of colleagues playing around. They made an admirable effort at something they're not supposed to be good at, but they've chosen their career paths well and should certainly stick to them.

Jon Andrews



Rarely does one comes across a show that justifies its own advertising hype, but the annual Cambridge University Tap and Jazz Society production, which promised to be “electrifying, diverse and entertaining”, managed to do just that. Variety in every form seemed to be the order of the day, from the costumes and colours to the styles of dance and music.

Although the complex formations were not always flawless, the more balletic movements of the lyrical piece provided a clever contrast to

the temptresses tapping along to Chicago’s ‘Roxie’, and the hip-hop moves of Timberlake’s ‘Smack That’.

A personal favourite was the breathtaking conclusion to the first half. Performed and choreographed by a group of seven dancers, the pulsive agility of the aptly named ‘Explosive’ left the audience in impatient anticipation for the rest of the show. The only downside of the enormously high quality of dancing exhibited by most groups was that they did make some of the more inex-

perienced performers look a little less vibrant.

With so much of our attention to the Arts focused on theatre, dance performances in Cambridge tend to go unnoticed and certainly under appreciated. There is time, however, to rectify this gross neglect. This weekend the Ballet Society is performing what promises to be an equally exciting show to the music of Holst’s Planets. Each routine will aim to reflect the character of the Planet/God in question.

**Gianna Vaughan**

## CUTAZZ Mumford Theatre

Dance  
★★★★★

## Hedda Gabler Corpus Christi Playroom Dir: Isabel Taylor Theatre ★★★★★

Hedda’s central complaint, according to her creator, Ibsen, is that she “really wants to live the whole life of a man”. She craves the power that men have and, longing to “control the fate of a man”, she does everything she can to manipulate the characters who walk into her drawing room. The Corpus Playroom suddenly feels even smaller and the projection of a window onto one wall serves only to increase the sense of claustrophobia: there is no window to the outside world; we, like Hedda, feel trapped.

Molly Goyer Gorman as the eponymous lead walks a fine line between delirium and desperation: she does an astonishing job of bringing out Hedda’s calculating nature whilst forcing the audience to lay the blame at the society of which she is a product. Though she may be “boring herself to death”, we cannot look away, and her meticulously

detailed performance easily sustains this level of scrutiny.

Isabel Taylor’s production never fails to entertain but the most electrifying scenes are between Hedda and Thea Elvsted; Emma Loffler pitches her delicately insipid Thea against the lethal power of Hedda’s lust for control resulting in moments of humour (“I shall call you Thora.” “It’s Thea, actually.”) and drama (“I think I will burn your hair after all”).

Nevertheless, Ibsen’s play is a truly great one, without being too rooted in the social conditions of his time: Hedda, though a result and of the society she is born into, is an anomaly within it. Taylor’s production leads the audience on to the final dénouement which is thrilling in its twists and turns. The final moments of this production more than do justice to Ibsen’s work and leave you, with Hedda, longing for escape and gasping for air.

**Elizabeth Davis**



## Trinity College Choir: Howells’ Requiem Trinity College Chapel

Concert  
★★★★★

Herbert Howells’ Requiem is one of the most personally intense pieces of all choral music. Its composition was interrupted and invigorated by the death of Howells’ son, Michael, at the age of nine in 1935, and whilst the orchestral Hymnus Paradisi was the public face of Howells’ grief, the Requiem seems to frame his most contemplative and personal thoughts.

The trebles who sang the Requiem would have been the same age as Michael, and this stimulated Howells in the creation of some deeply poignant lines. Although this aspect can

be overplayed, it certainly was a challenge Trinity faced when they took on this work with female sopranos.

Any extraneous considerations melted into oblivion with the opening bars of the piece: Stephen Layton’s distinctive conducting style gave the piece a suppleness that allowed the choir to revel in the conjunction of music and text. The solos were expressively, if a little unimaginatively, sung; and disappointingly the choir was on a few occasions not entirely metrically together. Yet each member seemed to be in union in their sense of direction and phrasing in

each line.

The highlight of the performance was the second Requiem Aeternam, with a delicious texture immediately established out of which various lines rose gracefully to voice the poignant words which Howells must have felt so fervently for his son: “Requiem aeternam dona eis, et lux perpetua luceat eis”. (“Give them eternal peace, and may perpetual light shine on them.”) Trinity made this work feel personal to everyone in the audience, and for this they deserve the greatest respect.

**Toby Chadd**

There are some bands you secretly hope will never get big. I almost had an aneurysm when, on my third trip to see my beloved Bright Eyes in 2005, I found myself surrounded by 14 year old girls screaming “I love you Conor!” and pretending they knew all the words, when in fact they had heard First Day of My Life on The O.C. and thought it was pretty. Yes, it is snobbish and self-involved, but I genuinely think that certain artists thrive on being a little leftfield.

Metronomy are one of those bands. For the uninformed, Metronomy are a Brighton-originated

London-based electro-pop collective of sorts. Joe Mount writes and records the songs, but the one-man show augments to a threesome on tour. And on stage they truly shine. The Barfly may not be rammed, but we are treated to 45 minutes of blisteringly energetic, humorous pop made delightful by the added band members, Oscar and Gabriel. Their synchronised dance moves, handclaps and saxophone antics draw every eye to the stage, and encourage every lanky sweaty fourteen-year-old to respond by viciously moshing.

They should be dancing, because Metronomy make intelligent, cute,

colourful songs which demand an equal response. Latest single Radio Ladio, played early on, receives woops, handclaps and head-shaking. Fan favourite Black Eye Burnt Thumb, the beautiful bastard offspring of electro and oom-pah, gets the crowd jumping and stamping. They may want superstar status, but these moves delight the secret fan rather than the stadium. Finishing on stormer You Could Easily Have Me, Metronomy tonight confirm their status as one of the most entertaining, consistent and innovative pop groups around. Just don’t tell anyone about it.

**Lowri Jenkins**

## Metronomy The Graduate

Gig  
★★★★★

**albums**  
every right-minded person should own

### Philophobia Arab Strap

Like so much brilliant art, Arab Strap aren’t easy. Much of their music is characterised by unrelenting melancholy, and their lyrics by an utter lack of shame in matters of the heart – and body. I once put the first track from Philophobia on a mix CD for a friend only for him to tell me that the words, whose unparalleled appeal for me lies in their raw honesty, were “a bit too much”. This record demands a certain lust for gloom, but also, importantly, a sense of humour. Arab Strap deal in and elicit the jumbled and contradictory impulses that make us human, like the urge to giggle whilst fighting back tears. Commit to Philophobia and you’re in for a brutally life-affirming journey into the dark.

Arab Strap broke up in 2006 after ten years and six studio albums. Philophobia, their second record, is a desolate, lo-fi indie masterpiece of the early years. Content reflects form, with the bleakness of Aidan Moffat’s lyrics given body by Malcolm Middleton’s guitar, which oscillates between twinkly acoustic licks and searing distortion, all mapped out against fragile drum machine loops and the odd trumpet solo. Tender and elegiac narratives of burgeoning love (Islands) sit alongside meditations on the self-loathing engendered by infidelity (The First Time You’re Unfaithful).

In New Birds, the album’s emotional centre-piece, Moffat tells the story of a fraught encounter with an ex-lover he hasn’t seen for five years: “you can see the breath in the air between your faces as you stand in the leaves”, he murmurs, in his thick Falkirk accent. The song is narrated in spoken word which at one point becomes a neck-hair-prickling whisper, before building to a jagged climax that you feel somewhere inside your chest.

It’s hard to feel bitter about the state of music today when you come across bands, like Arab Strap, whose back catalogues brim with integrity and pathos. Gruelling and sleazy, sad and funny, this is gritty urban poetry of the highest order. And like the best poetry, Philophobia makes no apology for its honesty. It will have you wallowing smugly in its own filth, and it’ll never let you forget that you belong there, just like the rest of us.

**Grace Jackson**



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|   | film   | theatre   | music   | other  | going out  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <div><div><div>pick<br/>of<br/>the<br/>week</div><div>friday<br/>29</div><div>saturday<br/>1</div><div>sunday<br/>2</div><div>monday<br/>3</div><div>tuesday<br/>4</div><div>wednesday<br/>5</div><div>thursday<br/>6</div></div></div> | <b>Good Bye Lenin!</b><br>Tues 4th and Wed 5th Mar, 11.00, Arts Picturehouse.<br><br><br>Becker's critically acclaimed film recently became the most successful German production ever. The scene is East Berlin 1989: when Alex's Socialist mother comes out of her coma after the fall of the wall, he has to find ways to keep the truth from her. | <b>Snippets: the 2008 Footlights Spring Revue</b><br>Tues 4th - Sat 8th Mar, ADC Theatre, 19.45<br><br>It's what we've all been waiting for. Well, sort of. This year's Spring Revue of occasionally true snippets lays siege to the history books, doctors the documents, annuls the annals, crucifies the chronicles, blitzkriegs the bulletins and pillages the village. On the Footlights' 125th anniversary, Snippets gives us all a history lesson. With a twist. | <b>Operator Please</b><br>Mon 3rd, The Graduate, 19.30, £6.50<br><br>Some Aussie kids that sound a bit like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs on acid. They make lyrics such as "this is a song, this is a song, this is a song about ping pong" seem catchy. Apparently they won some battle of the bands at their school and are now becoming international super-stars. Sickening isn't it?<br> | <b>David Icke</b><br>Tues 4th March, Cambridge Union, members<br><br>A former footballer and television presenter, Icke really caught people's attention when he announced, on the Terry Wogan show, that he was the 'son of God'. Since then, he's written about the Illuminati, lizards, and Jews controlling the world. He promises to tell us the truth about 9/11 and the War on Terror. Amusingly, he has said that one of his greatest childhood fears was being ridiculed in public. Unmissable. | <b>Brooklyn Block Party</b><br>Sat 1 March, Queens' Fitzpat, 21.00-12.45, £5<br><br><br>Robbo Ranx (1xtra, big dog dancehall DJ) will be playing a mixture of hip-hop, RnB and dancehall. Uni breakdancers also in attendance. Get there early... |
|   | <b>Semi-Pro</b><br>Vue, 14.10, 16.20, 18.40, 21.00, 23.20<br><b>The Italian</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 12.00, 16.30, 18.45  | <b>Romeo and Juliet</b><br>ADC Theatre, 19.45<br><b>Hedda Gabler</b><br>Corpus Playroom, 19.00<br><b>Conviction</b><br>Corpus Playroom, 21.30   | <b>Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra</b><br>West Road Concert Hall, 20.00, £12<br><br>Classical music is no laughing matter   | <b>Pembroke Players Amnesty Smoker</b><br>New Cellars, Pembroke, 19.00<br><b>Cambridge University Ballet Society: The Planets</b><br>Mumford Theatre, ARU, 19.30, £4   | <b>Don't Panic</b><br>King's Cellar, 22.00-00.45, £2/ free for King's students<br><br>Psytrance. Speaks for itself, really.  |
|   | <b>Tangiers to Tehran: Sama Keane</b><br>Old Labs, Newnham, 20.00<br><b>Untraceable</b><br>Vue, 14.00, 16.30, 18.50, 21.15, 23.40  | <b>Romeo and Juliet</b><br>ADC Theatre, 14.30, 19.45<br><b>Alice: A Fresher's Tale</b><br>Selwyn College, 19.30<br><b>Murder in the Cathedral</b><br>Jesus College Chapel, 20.00  | <b>The Audition</b><br>The Graduate, 19.30, £8.50<br><br>Don't call us we'll call you. Next please  | <b>Unheard Of</b><br>XVIII Jesus Lane, 19.00-23.00, free for members (membership available at door)<br>Open mic night  | <b>Brooklyn Block Party</b><br>Queens' Fitz, 21.00-00.45, £5<br><br>See pick of the week   |
|   | <b>Tangiers to Tehran: I am the One Who Brings Flowers to her Grave</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 14.30<br><b>Tangiers to Tehran: Inch' Allah Dimanche</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 14.30   | Once again, there is a void in Cambridge activity on Sunday. You're probably doing an essay anyway.   | <b>Mastana 2008</b><br>The Corn Exchange, 18:30, £14<br><br>Hindu Cultural Society's flagship event. Expect dancing.  | <b>Momentary Momentum: animated drawings</b><br>Kettle's Yard, 11.30-17.00, free<br><b>An Evening in Italy</b><br>The Raleigh Music Society perform Italian classics (obviously): Newnham, 8-10, free  | <b>The Sunday Service</b><br>Twenty Two, 22.00-03.00   |
|   | <b>Be Kind Rewind</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 12.30, 21.30<br><b>The Bank Job</b><br>Vue, 13.30, 16.10, 19.00, 21.30   | Today, listen to Book of the Week on Radio 4. I don't know it will be yet, but don't let that put you off.  | <b>Operator Please</b><br>The Graduate, 19:30, £6.50<br><br>See pick of the week.   | <b>Matthew Trusler &amp; Clare Hammond (recital)</b><br>Chamber, Cambridge Union, 19.00<br><br>Matthew will be playing violin, Clare the piano.  | <b>Fat Poppadaddys</b><br>Fez, 22.00-03.30, £3 before 11, £4 after   |
|   | <b>Good Bye Lenin!</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 13.30<br><b>My Blueberry Nights</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 14.10, 21.00<br><b>Be Kind Rewind</b><br>Vue, 13.00, 15.40, 18.00, 20.20  | <b>Snippets: the 2008 Footlights Spring Revue</b><br>ADC Theatre, 19.45<br><b>Table Manners</b><br>Pembroke New Cellars, 19.45<br><b>The Physicists</b><br>Corpus Playroom, 21.30   | <b>Hayseed Dixie</b><br>The Junction, 19:00, £15<br><br>A Hillbilly tribute to AC/DC. No, really.   | <b>Tom Holland</b><br>Latimer Room, Clare, 19.30-21.00<br><b>CU Wine Society present AXA Millésimes</b><br>www.cuws.co.uk  | <b>Kinki</b><br>Ballare, 22.00-03.00, £3<br>Featuring Rhino from Gladiators<br><b>Battle of the Bands</b><br>Soul Tree, 21.00-02.00, £3.50/£4  |
|   | <b>Good Bye Lenin!</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 11.00<br><b>Rambo</b><br>Vue, 12.50, 15.10, 17.20, 19.30, 21.40   | <b>Dulcitius</b><br>ADC Theatre, 23.00<br><b>Indivisible</b><br>Pembroke New Cellars, 22.00<br><b>Table Manners</b><br>Pembroke New Cellars, 19.45  | <b>Kid Harpoon</b><br>The Graduate, 19.30, £6<br><br>A controversial device used by predatory paedophiles.  | <b>Pierre Joliot</b><br>Union Chamber, 19.00-21.00<br><br>A famous biologist, and grandson of Marie Curie, he will talk about the evolution of research in the modern era.   | <b>Cindies</b><br><br>Mix together a VK Blue and a Smirnoff Ice for a Woody B, drink of heroes. Yours for £6.60.   |
|   | <b>Viridiana</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 17.00<br><b>Semi-Pro</b><br>Vue, 14.10, 16.20, 18.40, 21.00<br><b>The Italian</b><br>Arts Picturehouse, 12.00, 16.30, 18.45   | <b>Dulcitius</b><br>ADC Theatre, 23.00<br><b>The Cement Garden</b><br>Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, 19.45<br><b>The Physicists</b><br>Corpus Playroom, 21.30   | <b>Look See Proof</b><br>The Graduate, 19.30, £10<br><br>Listen hear proof. Generic Pop-Rock proof. Look see lots of other very similar bands.  | <b>French Tapestry and Illustration</b><br>Fitzwilliam Museum, 10.00-17.00, free   | <b>High Contrast, Commix and Logistics</b><br>Fez, 22.00-03.00, £5/£7<br><br>Drum 'n' bass heavyweights.   |

# More...

## Dance

### Vincent Dance Theatre

Thur 6th March

The Junction, 20:00

I know absolutely nothing about dance. Maybe this will be good. Maybe it will be crap. Who knows.



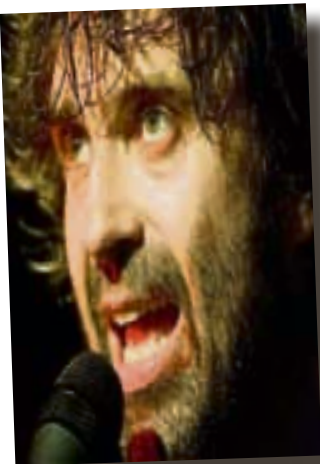
## Other

### Illustrated Jazz Talks: Sax, Jazz Invention, part 1

Tues 4th March

Lecture Room 1, Concert Hall, West Road 19:30

Speaks for itself really.



## Comedy

### Phil Nicol

Tue 4th March

The Junction, 20:00

Phil Nicol has a new show called Hiro Worship. He won the Perrier (or whatever its now called) last year. Should be good.

## Free Stuff

**Keane**  
Free Film, Sat 1st, Newnham Old Labs 8pm

**Drinks in a pub**  
Free Socialising, Any pub, Any time.

**Coffee in Cafe**  
Free Chat, Any cafe, Any time.







# Women's Blues bury demons

» Footballers reverse last year's events to win on penalties

|  |   |
|--|---|
| OXFORD   | 1 |
| CAMBRIDGE<br>(AET CAMBRIDGE WIN 4-2<br>ON PENALTIES) | 1 |

VARSITY SPORTS REPORTER

Cambridge reversed last year's penalty shoot-out loss to take the Varsity match, after dominating for the majority of the match. Lisa O'Dea was the hero of the shoot-out, with two saves, whilst missed opportunities had squandered midfield dominance in the previous 120 minutes.

Right from the start, the Light Blues showed their determination to avenge last year's defeat, and they came close early on when Nikki Hoffman outjumped Oxford keeper Katy Langley to head narrowly wide. Cambridge continued to dominate, with player of the match Leesa Haydock controlling the midfield and feeding a series of passes through to wingers Toolan and Hughes, whose pace caused constant difficulties in the Oxford defence.

But Oxford went ahead, against the run of play, when they won a free-kick on the left-hand side. Ann Harvey's effort was parried by O'Dea, but in the resulting melee the ball was prodded over the line by the Oxford striker. Cambridge created further chances before half-time, going agonisingly close when Hughes just failed to connect with Fisher's cross, but Oxford's defence stood firm, and, in spite of their dominance, Cambridge ended the half trailing 1-0.

The start of the second half saw a renewed onslaught on the Oxford goal. The equaliser seemed certain to arrive, and it did so not long into the second half when Haydock's pass found Murphy, whose skill



Blues get their heads down for a Varsity victory

took her past two opponents and allowed her to fire in a low shot. She was denied by the post, but Fisher, arriving in the six-yard box, stroked home the rebound to put the sides on level terms.

Cambridge continued to dominate, and strong second half displays from

full-backs Richardson and Ross kept the Dark Blues' wingers at bay, while the ever-energetic Murphy continued to threaten at the other end, but nobody was able to find a winner as the game headed into extra time.

An early Oxford break in the first period of extra time gave Cambridge

a scare, but the game soon reverted to its previous pattern of Cambridge possession and near-misses. Murphy went close after a neat exchange of passes with Fisher, and a series of corners in the dying minutes raised Cambridge hopes. Hollingsworth just failing to connect as she slid on to a low ball at the far post, but by this time things had an air of inevitability.

And sure enough, penalties it was. This time, however, the Light Blues showed great technique and composure, Haydock, Grimes and Clare Longden all scoring their kicks. O'Dea denied Oxford's third and fourth takers, leaving Murphy

**"Penalties are never a nice way to end a game"**

to step up and slot the ball into the bottom corner. Proud captain Grimes commented: "It was a tough game and there were a lot of tired legs out there but Cambridge were the stronger team throughout and were unlucky not to win outright within 90 minutes. Penalties are never a nice way to end a game but we thoroughly deserved to come away victorious today."

In the seconds match the Eagles retained the Varsity trophy as goals from Cammen, Hanks and captain Ellie Nalson handed them an emphatic 3-0 victory over a determined Oxford side in front of a vocal away support. Cambridge took time to find their rhythm, and although they had the greater share of possession, initially struggled with the final delivery.

## Trampolinists bounce well above Oxford

This year's Varsity match proved a resounding success for the Cambridge University trampolining team, beating Oxford last Saturday by 431 points to 381.1 to regain the varsity title. Fifteen individuals travelled to Oxford to compete at the university sports centre in the 36th annual trampolining varsity, where individual wins in all three categories left the victory undoubted.

Each competitor completed a set routine, followed by an individually designed voluntary routine of ten moves. Five judges watched and analysed to determine the neatest yet most difficult routines attempted. The hard work of the Cambridge team over the past two months was rewarded, with Cambridge taking first place in each of the three categories. Emma Hunter, Brioney Gee and Carol Evans placed top in the novice, intermediate and advanced categories respectively. A special mention should also be made for veteran bouncer Lottie Pocock, competing in her fourth and final varsity match, and also the intermediate (B) team who took a clean sweep of the top four places. This is also a tribute to the small team of coaches who have given much time and effort to build a club of great strength and depth. A Varsity win was all we would settle for and certainly what was deserved.



## FOCUS ON: LENT BUMPS

JAMIE PTASZYNSKI  
Sports Reporter

I read an article not long ago about rally racing and the thrilling experience of watching it. If you did as well, skip the next sentence. Basically, you stand by the side of a dirt track in the middle of nowhere and every now and then (depending on course length) an idiot in a Ford Focus shoots past and sprays you with mud. Why would anyone bother? What you're really hoping for, the only thing that could make this afternoon worthwhile, is a terrible crash on the corner that you happen to be standing on.

**"One thing I do enjoy is the idea of eight huge brutes subjugating themselves entirely to a tiny little girl"**

Rowing, I suspected, would be quite similar except rather than a crash you hope for a 'bump'. You sit on a riverbank for an hour and an half to watch two races. Because you can't get a 'bank pass' unless you're properly involved, you can't even cycle alongside the boats. You have to decide whether you want to watch the start, the end, or two hundred yards some-

where in the middle. Whichever you choose, you stand very little chance of witnessing one of these mysterious 'bumps'. If they bump before they reach you, they stop racing and row past you at jogging

'bumps' bit to a friend using seventeen sugar cubes on a pub table.

But I'm a sports fan. I'll watch almost anything which involves muscle, grit, speed, skill or, most importantly, competition. Last

disguised by the electric rainbow lycra the participants feel they have to wear. Speed it seems to possess, until you notice that the guy on a bike shouting at them to row harder is making consider-



Desperation on the Cam

speed. The only way you can tell what's going on is by the headgear of the rowers: no headgear equals bumped, crowns of foliage equals bumpers. Also, you're almost certain to get your trousers covered in goose droppings.

As you can probably tell, I wasn't keen on the idea. Nor did I have a clue what the race actually entailed. Thankfully I overheard a woman explaining the whole

year I watched so much ski jumping that I can still name most of the big hill winners from the Austrian and Scandinavian competitions. Surely, then, I could find something here to grip my attention. Rowing as a team is skilful. People have been honing the technique required to row at speed since way back when Spartacus was around. This incredible history of the sport is

ably less effort than the rowers themselves. One thing I do quite enjoy is the idea of eight huge brutes subjugating themselves entirely to a tiny little girl with a ponytail and a microphone, in the name of sport.

Despite my many reservations, I was glad of the task almost as soon as I left my door. It was a beautiful day, warm but refreshingly crisp. The clear blue sky re-

flected off the water, which shimmered and sung to the rhythm of the practice boats. The atmosphere around the boathouses at about three o'clock appeared relaxed. Rugby balls were tossed about and a playful camaraderie prevailed. But as the boats were rolled into the water the underlying tension broke through onto the surface. I went to position myself at The Plough in Fen Ditton, which offers superior views of the river, and by the time the Women's first boats came past on their way to the start, I could feel that tingle which is provided only by the prospect of a serious sporting event, or Christmas.

In the race between the men's first boats I saw a bump. I saw the strain on the faces of the Pembroke oarsmen. I saw their muscles working, flexing all together. I saw the desperation in the eyes of the Churchill cox as he felt the first little nudge in his bright pink behind. I suddenly noticed I was holding my breath, my whole body was rigid, the effect of that momentary thrill.

I could never take rowing seriously enough to take part in it. I could never put myself through the same rigorous training regime as our rowers do. I could never push my body so close to breaking point for the sake of overtaking a bunch of Trinity students who can't count to three. But what I would like to do is thank everyone who does because I had an absolutely delightful afternoon.



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UnanimousED PEACE &  
NIALL RAFFERTY

As regular readers will know, we're not usually ones to blow our own trumpets after a productive week. Things will be no different in this edition. After all, it's not as if the banker and prediction came in for the second consecutive week, sending our profits towards the £60 mark and our strike rate up to 50%. No, boasting just isn't our thing.

This week our banker takes us to Pride Park, where Roy Keane's Sunderland side will be hoping to improve their poor away record. Derby are resigned to the fact that they will be a Championship side next year, but Sunderland are far from safe and could well do with the points to ease their relegation fears. The Mackems won the reverse fixture at the Stadium of Light thanks to a 90th minute goal from Anthony Stokes and we'll be praying that Sunderland deny Paul Jewell his first win as Derby boss. Sunderland's poor away record gives us value, and although they have lost nine on the trot away from home, this is the one game where you'd have to fancy their chances.

We're heading all the way to New Zealand for this week's racing selection. The Mercedes Derby is the highlight of the Kiwi's racing calendar, combining top horses and the sort of glamour you'd expect to see at an Oscars' after party. Red Ruler looks the one to beat following his impressive victory last month, and at 5-2 there's plenty of value to be had. After the thrashing they dished out in the cricket earlier this month, it's about time the sheep farmers did us English a favour. We'll be happy to forgive them for that result if Red Ruler does the business on Saturday.

Our long shot takes the form of an accumulator for the second time this term. First up, Sven's Man City should be more than capable of grabbing a win against Wigan. Despite a lacklustre performance against Everton on Monday night, Sven has enough time to replenish his squad to face a struggling Wigan side. Secondly, Middlesbrough, who looked impressive at Anfield last weekend despite their 3-2 defeat, should beat a Reading team that boasts the worst defensive record away from home in the League. Last but not least, following the rowdy celebrations of Sunday night which left Ledley and Co. splattered all over the tabloids, Ramos will be hoping to improve Tottenham's league position. Thanks to their red-hot strike-force and a strong defence, Spurs really shouldn't find any difficulty in beating Birmingham this weekend.

## THE BANKER

SUNDERLAND TO WIN AT DERBY 5-4  
£4

## PREDICTION

RED RULER TO WIN THE MERCEDES DERBY 5-2  
£3

## THE LONG SHOT

MIDDLESBROUGH, MAN CITY AND SPURS TO WIN 11-2  
£3

RUNNING TOTAL: £56.78

## The banker who

» In an exclusive interview with the man behind the big money investment banker Keith Harris

Examine every major change the business of football since the early 1990s and you will find one name that is constantly there – Keith Harris. In the early 1990s, when the publication of the Taylor Report gave clubs an ultimatum to make their grounds all-seater, it was he as Chief Executive of HSBC Investment Bank who helped many of them float on the stock exchange, raising the £20-£40 million required by each to upgrade their stadia. When Sky first realised that football would be the key driver of their business, it was Keith Harris who advised them on the first in a series of increasingly galactic television contracts that gave clubs their first taste of the now billions pouring into the sport and brought regular live football into the living room. When the Football League signed their own multi-million pound TV deal with ITV Digital, he was approached soon after with the role of chairman, presiding for three years before the collapse of the television company in 2002 led to his resignation, prompting him to state, famously, that he was “giving the asylum back to the lunatics.”

**“The correlation between expenditure and success is a pretty good one”**

Shortly after, however, in his new role as Executive Chairman of the investment bank Seymour Pierce, in which he owns a 16% stake, he brokered the landmark sale of Chelsea to Roman Abramovich in 2003, and started the tidal wave of foreign-backed acquisitions of football clubs. Since then, Keith Harris has acted on behalf of both clubs and private investors on a series of high-profile and sometimes controversial buyouts of publically listed football clubs, including Randy Lerner's acquisition of Aston Villa, Eggert Magnusson at West Ham and ex-Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's takeover of Manchester City, in addition



to advising several other PLCs on attracting new investors.

A man who is loved by his friends and utterly despised by his enemies, his expertise in the business side of football is stuff of such legend that many investors looking to buy a football club go to him before even selecting one. Despite the very public disquiet being shown by many fans, politicians and the media, Harris claims that “foreign ownership is not a principle concern,” citing the takeover of Mike Ashley at Newcastle

as an example of a home-grown acquisition. His words hang in the air – whereas all of the deals he has advised on have led to greater success on the pitch, the Sports Direct charlatan's reign at Newcastle has been a series of ever more embarrassing gaffes that have made the perennial sleeping giant as much of a laughing stock as the Cornish independence movement.

“Things that concern me more,” he continues, “are how they do finance their acquisition, and I haven't acted for anybody who's

put leverage in.” Leveraged acquisitions, whereby debt is geared onto clubs by the buyer, are one of Harris' enormous bugbears. He mentions that “the one club that leveraged itself highly during the 1990s, Leeds United, came a cropper not though an acquisition, just through borrowing money.” He believes that the uncertainty inherent in football translates to the balance sheet, and “although he prospect of making profit still remains, there's no certainty – one year you might make thirty million, the next you might lose ten,” and this makes servicing large debts in the long-term impossible.

It is perhaps unfortunate, therefore, that Harris' own beloved Manchester United are leveraged up to their eyeballs, paying £30 million in interest payments alone last year. Having opposed them from the start, where he fought in vain to arrange consortium to rival the American bid, he says that he “tries not to keep this personal, but I think they are mortgaging its future and I disapprove enormously,” with the worry that an unsuccessful season caused possibly by the retirement of Alex Ferguson would lead to meltdown.

Above all else, Keith Harris is a constant agitator for change. Despite having been one of the most ardent advocates of the PLC model for football clubs in the early nineties, he is now in favour of “a return to the time where the model of ownership is back into private hands, just as it was before the rush to go private, when the local industrialists owned football clubs.” His change of heart has been brought about by the sometimes frightening amount of money being poured into football. Although he concedes that “most clubs are much better run now than in the mid 90s, when a lot of the time between 85 and 120 percent of revenues were going on the players' wages, and there's a notion that you shouldn't be giving them more than 50% now,” in his keynote speech to the Future of Football conference, entitled *Forward to the Past* he propounded the view that “the size of the business is on a higher plateau. One Premiership club chairman

Captain's  
Corner  
Swimming and  
Water Polo  
Henry Gomersall

So how's it all looking in the world of watersports?

Well we've just had a pretty disappointing set of Varsity matches this weekend (see back page). It was always going to be difficult this year, as we lost a large proportion of last year's clean-sweep squad, and Oxford has a particularly strong year. Even in the events we lost it was still really close, and to draw the water

polo away against a team who won their BUSA league to retain the trophy can definitely be classed as an achievement

What's the standard like?

To put it one way, we got a one two in one of the butterfly races on Saturday, and the swimmer who came third is in the Indian national team. Obviously, because Britain takes swimming quite seriously, we don't have any internationals, but we're not that off and certainly can compete on a national level. In terms of water polo, almost everybody who plays in the Blue squad has played for local clubs before coming here, and it's always a big step up for them. We were relegated from the premier league last year, but we're looking pretty likely to go straight back up again this season.

How do you train?

Currently each of our four first string squads trains four times a week, and our seconds train twice. That all adds up to about 24 hour's worth of pool time that has to be found and paid for somehow – as the university still does not have its own pool. It's a really negative state of affairs and currently each of our members have to pay £140 a year in subscription fees just to be able to train. Unless there is a sea-change in the attitudes of the Octocentennial appeal I can't see a time when this situation is going to change

What does it take to get in your team?

Speaking as water polo player, first and foremost you need to have an incredible amount of fitness in the pool – matches are long

and you have to be able to sprint over long periods of time. Apart from that, skills that you associate with most sports are all important.





# changed football

takeovers in English football, Henry Stannard talks to

said to me it's not a game for the multimillionaires any more, it's a game for the billionaires. Rich titans locking horns."

With that, and the volatile profit margin, in mind, it is tempting to ask what on earth attracts wealthy entrepreneurs to football in the first place. On this point Harris takes what appears to be a double-edged view. He accepts that for most of football's new breed of owners a football club is "a trophy asset – one that gives huge pleasure," and that whereas when he was growing up "the person that was respected in the community used to be the local doctor, the judge, the JP, today the football club director is the guy who puffs his chest out and who people want to be with." His client Thaksin Shinawatra's takeover at Man City may have been successful on the pitch, with Eriksson's team built around a core of young English players, but outside football he returned to Thailand yesterday, flanked by two City players, to give himself up on charges of corruption. Although he is obviously not comfortable talking to any great extent about the politics, he praises Shinawatra as being "a very good listener. It was a difficult deal to do, but he was a very good client" and is certain that he will clear his name in the Thai courts.

Despite all this, he thinks that "it would be a shocking shame if it just becomes a plaything for very rich people. At the heart of it there's got to be the love of sport and a passion for winning."

## "Randy and I recruited Martin O'Neill in my living room"

Without ever saying so, it is clear that he believes that one-person ownership is a necessary evil in the capricious and high-rolling world of football. There are examples of takeovers that have gone spectacularly wrong, but the same could be said of PLCs. At the heart of his business dealings though, he claims, are the fans. "I think you walk away from the fans, and you walk away from the sport. At the end of the day, whether they're

buying a jersey, subscribing to Sky or walking through the gate, they are the audience. In the theatre, if you don't have an audience, then you don't have a play, and if you don't have a play then you don't have actors."

His view of an ideal chairman is coloured greatly by his friendship with Randy Lerner, the dynastic American billionaire who bought Aston Villa at the

executive for the purpose, he rants that "they (Carlton and Granada) procrastinated, prevaricated and used every excuse in the book not to sign a proper contract."

He is also typically candid about why the venture failed "The marketing budget they were given was ludicrous – they spent £1 billion of their shareholder's money on marketing and on contracts. The delivery mechanism didn't work – I

**"The problem with football as an administrator is that you put your arm around someone's shoulder to help them out, but in doing so you probably elbow somebody else in the face. The guy you're helping out forgets the minute you've done it, the guy you've elbowed never does."**

and you're the first journalist to know this, but when we got four years of Sky at £25 million per year, the nearest bid was £3 million a year from the BBC." In hindsight, it is clear that, although mistakes were undoubtedly made, for example the costly court case that was doomed to fail almost from its inception, the current rude health enjoyed by the Football League is down in no small part to the deal he struck with Sky in the crisis period of summer 2002.

Keith Harris is a man who embodies modern football. There are many who resent the commercialization of football, and discussing his early memories of the sport, it is clear that he too has some sorrow for the passing of what are now in the eyes of loyal fans thought to be the halcyon days of football in the 1960s and 70s. However, rather than lament the era's passing, he is trying to shape the future of the sport he loves and ultimately, with his financial acumen and not inconsiderable charm, that can only be a good thing. As I go to leave I look round the walls of his office, which are decorated with football memorabilia, and he points out a painting of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's winning goal in the 1999 European Cup Final. "You talked about cocaine in Varsity, well there's no stronger drug than this. United were 1-0 down, absolutely steam-rolled – they could have gone 4-0 down without complaining, but as it is they won, which was an astounding result. And that's what football's all about."

Some of the men taking over the English game and clubs benefitting from the help of Harris. Clockwise from above: Magnusson at West Ham, Shinawatra at Man City, Ridsdale at Cardiff, Watford, Derby County, Lerner at Aston Villa, and Abramovich at Chelsea, Shinawatra at Man City, Ridsdale at Cardiff, Watford, Derby County, Lerner at Aston Villa, and Abramovich at Chelsea

beginning of last season.

"He is a man of great humility and the fans love him. Randy describes himself as a custodian of the club for its fans, and you couldn't ask for a better attitude."

Before assuming his role of kingmaker, however, Harris first gained widespread coverage for his part in the ITV Digital collapse that at one point threatened to bankrupt the Football League. Recollecting the events of five years ago, he remains unrepentant. "There were two contracts I inherited when I came into the job – one for the TV deal and one for the website. The NTL contract was enormous, typical American lawyers – turgid reading but the contract would hold water. The TV one was 3 pages, more manuscript than type. It was not a contract, it was a contract to agree." Despite taking on a chief

subscribed to it to be loyal and I used to watch mo-saic on my television. It was crazy. Their marketing emblem was a monkey, someone surely should have thought about the downside of that."

When ITV were forced to the renegotiate the contract, the clubs went into meltdown, as they had already spent the money expecting it to keep flowing into the game, and refused to have anything more to do with the soon-to-be defunct digital operator. Forced to look for a new contract, he accepted a sum vastly reduced from the £440 million over four years previously enjoyed that was still "far beyond anything they could have done" and pushed it through despite the vociferous protests of many of the club chairmen. Compelled to resign, he now justifies his position by saying "It's never been released,

## News from the River



Last weekend the Blue Boat had its first fixture on the Tideway against the Canadian Olympic squad. By all accounts, the race was a success, although perhaps more for the experience earned than the outcome itself. In the first of two pieces, Cambridge found itself almost a length down off the start, and had to battle around the outside of the course's first bend. The Canadians launched several offensives but never managed to break free from the Blue Boat's grip. Down the straight leading into Hammersmith Bridge, the river started to turn in the favor of Cambridge, and lost ground was regained through rhythm and resilience.

Unfortunately, the boats moved together beneath Hammersmith Bridge, and a clash between crews led to broken equipment in the Blue Boat. The race was necessarily ended early and both boats returned to shore for repairs and assessment.

These breaks – although sometimes unplanned in their occurrence – allow a crew to reevaluate its strategy and race plan before the second half of the fixture. Coming out of the collision, however, it was Canada, rather than Cambridge, who made the necessary adjustments to rough water and gusting winds. The second piece saw the Canadians move clear of the Blue Boat, despite repeated attacks by the latter to ward off the North American's impending advance.

So with the scorecard showing one cancelled race and one loss, how can I look back on the weekend and claim that it was a success?

Until the Boat Race itself, the result of a race will not be dictated by outcome alone. This is not to say that we will tolerate complacency in our campaign; rather, tests against opponents who prove to be superior at the time often teach far more than wins against a poorly matched crew. The race was captured on several different video cameras, and each coach will watch the tape countless times to determine the necessary steps for moving forward. Additionally, we shared a formal dinner with the Canadians back in Cambridge after the fixture, to which the Canadian coach was invited. He provided his share of insight to the Cambridge coaching staff and president, opinions that will prove invaluable in delivering an outside perspective of the Blues crew. Sometimes, we can get so focused in on what the Cambridge 'technique' looks like – a pattern noted for its simplicity and aesthetics – that we fail to appreciate the simple art of moving a boat forward.

Looking ahead, both crews are now in London for four days of training on the Thames. Goldie will face a University of London crew on Saturday in its first fixture of the season, while the Blue Boat will take advantage of a weekends' more experience on that wonderful stretch of river we call home.

Spencer Griffin Hunsberger



# SPORT



**Interview**  
**p 30-31**  
**Football's**  
**mystery**  
**Mr Big**

## Swimmers given blue rinsing

» Water polo and swimmers both surrender last year's clean sweep

### WATER POLO

**MEN'S:** CAMBRIDGE 10  
OXFORD 10

**WOMEN'S:** CAMBRIDGE 4  
OXFORD 8

### VARSITY SPORTS REPORTER

February 23 was a disappointing day for the Cambridge water polo teams, with an 8-4 loss for the women and a 10-all draw for the men. Though not the clean sweep Cambridge achieved last year, the matches were hard fought and the men's draw came down to an equalising shot for Oxford in the last ten seconds of the final quarter.

Cambridge has historically dominated the men's and women's water polo, apart from a winning streak for the Oxford men's team in the mid-1990s. Possession of the trophies has roughly alternated since then, though Oxford has the unique advantage of its own pool and professional coaching.

With a largely new pack, the Light Blue women knew they would have to step up to take the match. Oxford scored a goal almost off the swim-off; after a second Oxford goal, the Light Blues countered and new squad member Rebecca Voorhees scored a decisive goal from centre forward. The Dark Blues maintained a one point lead in the second quarter, with Cambridge captain Rachael Mell and Line zu Ermgassen keeping Oxford's counters in check.

As Oxford pulled further ahead in the final two quarters, it became apparent that the Cambridge man-ups (6-on-5 plays when a player is sent off) and arc formation were not being maximised. At least six Cambridge shots on goal went wide or short, with some valiant plays by centre forward Jenny Macleod. This was in part due to Cambridge players being thrown off by the unfamiliar dimensions of the Oxford pool, regulation size, but wider than the pool the women practice in.

Women's captain Rachael Mell said, "The team played really well, it was a good match, luck just wasn't



SOPHIE PICKFORD

on our side. I don't think the score really reflected our performance, it's just a shame we didn't convert all our chances."

The men's team faced a strong Oxford squad, who were fresh from winning their BUSA group but missing their captain due to injury. After a slow start, with Cambridge going 2 goals down, Andrea Cantone slotted two goals in succession to equalise by the end of the first quarter. The Light Blue men dominated the second and third quarters with successful man-up set plays and good countering. By the second quarter, Cambridge had a comfortable 7-3 lead over Oxford.

With a 10-7 lead in the last quarter, the Light Blues played conservatively (perhaps not conservatively enough), running

down Oxford's shot clock (possession is 30 seconds before turnover), but conceded two goals despite some excellent saves by keeper Sebastian Reddemann. With ten seconds to go, the Dark

**Right on the buzzer**  
**Oxford's talented No. 8**  
**brought the game to 10 all.**

Blues made a final counter and succeeded in getting a man-up. On the buzzer, Oxford's talented No. 8 got a beautiful shot into the upper right corner, bringing it to 10-all. A virtual one-man-show, he

scored 6 of Oxford's 10 goals.

Men's captain Steve Cooke summed it up, saying, "A great performance from the team to outplay the Oxford side was let down by bad finishing; it was a match we should have put beyond doubt."

The enjoyment of the match was somewhat mitigated by the lack of spectator space at Oxford's Rosenblatt Swimming Pool, leading to protracted negotiations pre-Varsity to allocate scarce seating between the opposing sides. If and when Cambridge builds a swimming pool, it would be well advised to include spectator stands, similar to Parkside Pool. Hopefully a double-deep pool (deep at both ends or with an adjustable floor) will be a possibility in Cambridge in the not too distant future.

### SWIMMING

**MEN'S:** CAMBRIDGE 38  
OXFORD 52

**WOMEN'S:** CAMBRIDGE 40  
OXFORD 40

This year, the Light Blues travelled to Oxford to defend the Varsity Swimming trophies against the strongest Oxford team seen in recent years.

Each University is represented by two swimmers over only 6 individual events for the girls, 7 for the boys, and just one team in the two relays. Every swim is critical so, with Oxford fielding two international swimmers, it was always going to be a tough match.

Prominent swims amongst the men came from team stalwart Dan O'Dea in the 100m Butterfly and Man of the Match, Matt Webb, in the Butterfly and Freestyle, with both swimming some of the fastest times ever seen in their events. Captain Tom Edwards held the team together out of the pool and supported it in the pool with swims in the Freestyle events.

For the ladies, Freestyle specialist, Sonia White, smashed 5 seconds off her PB in the 200m Freestyle and swam to a ranking in the All Time Top 5 Cambridge times in both her races. Heather Moore's superb performance in the 100m Backstroke was also memorable, fighting to win first place in an incredibly close race, finishing in the second fastest Cambridge time in this event ever.

The Varsity programme left the spectators expecting much from 'the old guard' Teresa Thurston and the 'swimmers expected to excite,' Brett Mclean and Ladies' Captain, Katherine Hedley. They were not disappointed, with all three producing wins. Mclean provided a lesson in dedication, showing how exceptional training pays off in Varsity. Woman of the Match, Thurston, won the 100m Butterfly by a large margin, Hedley doing the same for the Breaststroke – both supported by second places from Isabelle Kaufeler and Kate Weber.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 28

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