

VARSITY

Friday February 20th 2009

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

Issue no 691 | varsity.co.uk

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Male dons earn £10k more

» Gender pay gap in Cambridge revealed by report
» CUSU: findings are 'shocking and disappointing'

Andrew Bellis

Pay discrepancies between Cambridge academics mean that male staff earn almost £10,000 more on average than their female counterparts.

A University-commissioned study into equal pay, which considered the salaries of over 1,500 University academics, reveals that the average pay for male academics is £58,141, compared to £47,353 for their female equivalents – a 21.2 per cent difference.

The report attributes the difference to the fact that more men are employed at higher pay grades.

In a statement, the University said it would "proactively address" the issue of gender imbalance in the top pay grades.

CUSU's Women's Officer described the findings as "shocking and disappointing".

The figures, published this week, have led to calls for a review of why fewer female academics apply for promotion. 73 per cent of the 1,537 academics whose salaries were reviewed are men.

£10k

Average difference in salary between male and female academics

21.2%

Percentage difference in average pay between male and female academics

In a report to the University Council, Joan Whitehead, a psychology lecturer who specialises in gender issues, argued for a more detailed study into female academic promotions.

"Data on applications for promotion do clearly show that women are less likely to apply for promotion than men, but when they do apply they are just as likely to be promoted as men," she wrote.

"The attitude seems to be that the under-representation of women at the higher [pay] grades is their fault for not applying for promotion. What we need to do is seriously address the question of why women do not apply for promotion in the same numbers as men."

According to a statistical analysis by Dr Whitehead, women are over-represented in the lecturer pay grade and under-represented in the senior lecturer grade, taking into account the gender proportions amongst the academic staff as a whole, which feeds into the overall salary differences.

Natalie Szarek, CUSU's Women's Officer, has expressed concern at the "shocking" findings.

She noted that, despite government legislation promoting equal pay and gender equality in the workplace, the University still needed to significantly improve.

Cambridge must "move with the times", Szarek said, warning that CUSU would continue to pressure the University to reduce gender inequality, though she acknowledged that "a lot of progress" has been made in recent decades.

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**Students call for ethical investment:
Hundreds gather on the Senate House lawn in
mass demonstration » p3**

Visa fee rises 'could put off internationals'

Gemma Oke & Lizzy Tyler

An increase in visa fees could result in a fall in the number of international students studying at UK universities.

The government has announced plans to introduce increases in fees for visas, immigration and nationality applications to take effect between 2009/10. The scheme, which is expected to cost around £2.2 billion in total, will see visas for international students rise initially from £99 to £145.

Critics have expressed disappointment at the announcement. Diana Warwick, Chief Executive of Universities UK, warned that the fee increases placed the British Government in "serious danger of sending out a message that it does not welcome international students".

In addition to the planned increases in student visa fees, there are also concerns that proposals to limit the period of initial leave to remain in the UK to four years for international students will be damaging for students and the wider economy.

This proposal means that students studying for degrees lasting five years or more, such as medicine and veterinary science, would have to apply for an extension on their visa before the end of their course, with no guarantee that leave will be granted.

"This is bound to affect their decisions about whether to come to the UK in the first place," Warwick said. "It is unfair that these students, who are investing considerable financial and other resources in studying in the UK, will not have any certainty that after four years of study they can continue and complete their qualification in the UK."

"This is a broader issue that affects the entire sector and our international standing," she said.

Universities UK also said that the lack of consultation carried out by the Home Office and the Immigration Department was a major disappointment.

Continued on page 6

University refuses to release law faculty occupation files

Varsity News

The University this week refused to publish an internal report into the Law Faculty occupation in January, claiming that it would prejudice future decision-making and prevent a "free and frank exchange of advice and views".

Cambridge denied a request by *Varsity* to publish the document under the Freedom of Information Act. The Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard, personally approved the decision.

Responding to the request, the University said that the material "comprises either information in respect

of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings...or information which is exempt under section 36 of the FOIA".

In order for information to be exempt under section 36 of the Act, a qualified person – in Cambridge's case, the Vice-Chancellor – must be of the reasonable

opinion that disclosure would be "likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs". The public interest in refusing to publish the information must outweigh the public interest in disclosure.

"The Vice-Chancellor's opinion is held on the ground that disclosure of such information at this time would

potentially inhibit the future free and frank exchange of advice and views and would thereby prejudice the ability of the University to respond effectively and expeditiously to occurrences such as the recent student occupation."

Varsity has requested a review of the decision.

VARSLITY

A special preview issue of The Hill, a magazine for the hilltop Colleges, can be found inside the centrefold. It is the third in a series of magazine previews in Varsity.

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Get involved

Weekly meetings are held for anyone interested in writing for Varsity.

News

Sunday, 4pm in the Maypole (Portugal Place)

Magazine

Wednesday, 5.30pm in the Maypole

OR

E-mail editor@varsity.co.uk to find out more.

Ethical investment is not that simple

This term has been characterised by a number of high-profile student protests, and this week was no exception. Monday saw a large group of students making a very visible (albeit impeccably behaved and officially sanctioned) stand against the University's investment policies, and calling for 'socially responsible investment'. Their intentions cannot be faulted, but we must recognise the difficulties inherent in such a proposal.

'Socially responsible investment' is a highly nebulous concept, to the extent that very few specific aims are actually expounded by CUSU's campaign. They oppose many companies, such as BAE, QinetiQ and Rolls-Royce, which contribute greatly to our economy and provide much-needed equipment to Britain's own armed forces. Beyond that, it is hard to see what campaigners want; they point to Oxford's recently implemented investment policy, but that promises little other than that Oxford will “engage with companies in which it might invest”. Indeed, the Other Place's policy even says that the university will “negatively or positively screen investments on ethical grounds, where this does not reduce the financial return on investment” (except in extreme cases).

For that is the crux of the matter: if Cambridge refused to invest in companies linked with the arms trade or other 'unethical' businesses, or in tracker funds investing in such companies, it would not be fulfilling its duties as a charitable foundation, required to maximise the return on its endowments. In the long term, this could seriously harm the University, and all those around the world who benefit from the research and education it provides. While the University should not be investing in obviously malicious businesses, to place a blanket ban on certain types of company could do more harm than good.

Varsity Drugs Survey 2009

Varsity is conducting an online survey on the use of academic performance-enhancing drugs. It is anonymous and should take no more than 30 seconds to complete. Please visit www.varsity.co.uk/drugs

letters@varsity.co.uk

Submit your letter for the chance to win a bottle of wine from the Cambridge Wine Merchants. All letters may be edited for space and style.

A place for debate

Sirs,

Re last week's editorial [issue 690, February 13th]: there was nothing remotely “unedifying” about students and



academics debating Emma's controversial 'Empire' May Ball theme. Intellectual debate is what we do at university. That so many were willing to recognise the inherently and intensely political character of the 'Empire' theme was greatly comforting, for I was shocked that so many of my friends believed that imperial 'opulence' might be celebrated by ignoring the link between such opulence and violent and racist exploitation. If we forget that luxury for the few and exploitation of the many were interdependent in 1899, we make it easier to ignore that wealth is still founded on exploitation – for I

trust no one believes that all in our society are currently fairly rewarded for their work. Many think our economic system is the best of a bad lot. But only a moral weakling thinks this justifies ignoring the nature of that system.

Yours faithfully,

Ricky Power Sayeed
Emmanuel College

A scientific blunder

Dear Sirs,

I was shocked by the fact that an “Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper” has called MRSA “a virus” [issue 690]. MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) is a bacterium, with multiple resistances towards antibiotics.

Yours faithfully,

Pawel Jasnos
Gonville and Caius College

In defence of 'Empire'

Dear Sirs,

The Emma May Ball committee made a mistake in providing a theme whose historical authenticity requires practical steps that are unworkable in today's multiracial environment. Yet, welcomed criticism of May Ball planning soon took the vehement tone of an outright condemnation of every conceivable evil of the Empire. The memory of an Empire that defended the world from the Kaiser's hubris and Hitler's atrocities deserves better.

Yours,

Arsenii Muntean
Trinity College

Corrections

Last week we incorrectly reported the name of Perdika Press poet Jacqui Rowe as Jackie Rowe. Also, in our Profile of Trinity Hall student Ali Moeen Nawazish, we called him Ali Moeen Nazawish. Apologies to both.

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

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Students urge University to enact ethical investment policy

» Hundreds of students gather on Senate House lawn to call for change on investment criteria

Beth Staton

Over 200 students assembled on Senate House lawn on Monday to call for an ethical investment policy for the University.

The event, organised by CU Amnesty and CUSU Ethical Affairs, is the latest in a long-lasting campaign which has received "overwhelming" student support, according to CUSU ethical investment officer Mischa Foxell.

"Almost a thousand people have signed our online petition, hundreds have sent actions cards to the Vice-Chancellor, and in a survey taken of 288 students 96% say they think the University should take ethical considerations into account when it makes its investments," she said.

The demonstration called for the University to implement a policy that prohibits investment in companies who fail to uphold basic human rights, including those who manufacture torture equipment, give support to regimes that enable human rights abuses, or

transgress labour rights.

As well as divestment from reprehensible corporations, the proposals would include screening and directly engaging with investment companies to encourage sustainable development, community investment and the promotion of human rights.

"The University's investments are one of the biggest contributions internationally," said Ali Masters, a post-graduate music student who was at the demonstration.

"When we look at recent international developments like the events in Gaza, we are seeing a situation which the University is funding through its investments."

Gathering outside the Senate House with banners and loudspeakers, the students joined in chants for socially responsible investment, including "Oxford has one, why don't we?"

Oxford adopted an ethical investment policy after sustained student-led campaigns.

Students also filled in "penny the Vice-Chancellor" cards, a CUSU campaign by which everyone sends a one pence piece to the Vice-Chancellor to encourage ethical investment.

CUSU's ethical investment policy claims that by funding certain companies the University financially supports actions that defy its education mission.

"To be a great educational institution the University has to pay attention to the pressing issues of education, human rights, and sustainability," said Foxell. "It is hypocritical for the University to profess to support these values whilst ignoring them when it makes its investments."

A motion passed by CUSU at the beginning of Michaelmas was apparently hindered by bureaucracy and a freedom of information request, requesting the release of investment information, was refused.

In response to the demonstration the University said they had approved a statement of investment responsibility in June 2008, which was open to con-

tinual review. The paper stressed the difficulty of placing ethical considerations over maximising returns.

After many years of pressure, however, it seems that the campaign may well have achieved some gains from the protest, and the University has committed to a process of further review.

The finance and investment directors, Andrew Reid and Nick Cavalla, have arranged meetings with CUSU prior to the annual meeting of the executive committee.

"The review has been arranged for April and the CUSU ethical investment Officer has the date in her diary," a spokesperson said.

Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, the committee deals mainly with donations, but also looks at investments.

Foxell described the developments as "a fantastic victory for legitimate student protest". She said they gave the campaign "a massive drive to keep on campaigning vocally and to maintain our momentum".

In Brief

Pools closed for half term

Parkside Pools has been forced to close amid concerns about the safety of water slides. The slides could be closed for some weeks whilst repairs are made to the cable fixings on the flumes. The timing is particularly unfortunate because of its coincidence with half term. A spokeswoman said, "We recognise this closure will cause considerable disruption and inconvenience and wish to apologise for this. However, the health and safety of our customers is of paramount importance and we must, therefore, take these measures." Labour councillor Lewis Herbert, who uses the swimming pools three or four times a week, expressed dissatisfaction about the state of the pool generally, said: "There has been a problem every week since Christmas. There is no sign that a number of these issues are being properly addressed."

New Museum Site stars in parking film

The New Museum Site will be starring in a soon-to-be-released feature-length film about a fictional row over parking arrangements between a Cambridge professor and a postman. Mediascape Productions are using the site to film scenes such as the suspension of a green BMW from a crane, which will feature in the film, about "two men from completely different ends of the social ladder", when it is released in 2010. The film's directors have said that there will be a "twist" at the film's conclusion. The New Museums Site, off Pembroke Street, houses several University departments, including African Studies and Chemical Engineering.

Malay ex-PM in Cambridge

The former Prime Minister of Malaysia visited Cambridge this week to deliver a lecture at Emmanuel College. Mahathir Bin Mohammed began his speech, entitled "Malaysia at the Crossroads", with the request that students withhold the urge to throw shoes at him, a misfortune which befell the Chinese Premier earlier this term. Aged 83, Dr Mohammed has enjoyed a long career in Malaysian politics, serving as Prime Minister of the country from 1981 to 2003. Despite his status as a controversial figure, he was supported by most of the audience and greeted by a standing ovation.

Male academics earn £10k more than women

» University says it will 'proactively address' issues of gender imbalance in higher paid posts

Continued from front page

But she cautioned that equal pay was only one aspect of gender inequality at Cambridge, and that attention should also be paid to the "shockingly" small number of women at the higher levels of the University.

This week's report was the first study published by the Equal Pay Group, a body set up to report on pay patterns across the University.

The average salary for women across all job categories was £28,247, com-

pared to £37,157 – a 31 per cent difference. The group's report ascribes this difference to the different numbers of men and women employed in higher pay grades.

A statement from the University said: "The University is committed to equal pay for equal-valued work, and in 2006 introduced a single pay spine to progress this."

"This report, commissioned by Cambridge to evaluate the distribution of pay by gender, indicates that pay dif-

ferential between men and women across all University roles is below 3%, with only a small number of exceptions where this is higher.

"The University intends to proactively address any issues revealed by the report, including the gender imbalance at the higher grades."

"This pay-review will be published annually as part of the University's broader commitment to equality of all kinds including remuneration."

Commenting on the difference be-

tween male and female average pay, the group, which includes University HR staff and trade union representatives said: "These figures reflect the imbalance in the gender distribution within the overall staff profile, ie proportionately more women are employed on lower grades and more men on higher grades."

"Within grades more men appear at the high end of the pay scale as they have longer service with the University."

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In Brief

Lost millionaire found

A missing millionaire philanthropist who helps disadvantaged young people go to Cambridge has been found. Sir Peter Lampl, whose disappearance on Sunday initiated a police search, was found yesterday sitting on a bench at London's Victoria railway station. The 61-year-old founded the Sutton Trust, an education charity campaigning against social inequality and brings students to the city. Tim Devlin, a spokesman for the Sutton Trust, said: "We would like to say we are very relieved to hear that he is safe. He was at Victoria train station at midday yesterday and I think he was having a cup of coffee. A woman at a table two tables away was reading a newspaper article about him and showed him the story." His whereabouts in the 48 hours he was considered to be missing are as of yet unclear.

Sewer repairs ruin trade

Emergency sewer works are cutting the number of customers on a busy street, according to businesses. Pippa Sandison, owner of Boudoir Femme on King Street, says she has only had "one or two customers" on some days this month. King Street has been closed to traffic, and the suspension of parking spaces on Jesus Lane has exacerbated the problem. A "business open as usual" sign has been put up at the head of King Street to encourage customers, but only after Sandison contacted Anglian Water, the company carrying out the repairs, to ask for one. She said, "The needs of retail businesses should have been absolutely paramount in the mind of the contractors at this very difficult time for trade." The works are an extension of those started on Hobson Street in October last year. A spokesperson for Anglian Water called the repairs "absolutely essential". "We apologise for the disruption but we are getting it done as quickly and as safely as possible," she said.

Clare awards "Alumnus of the Year"

Clare College has awarded the title of Alumnus of the Year to Stephen Jakobi OBE, founder of Fair Trials International and a tireless campaigner against miscarriages of justice worldwide. The award recognises contributions made by Clare alumni to society. Jakobi graduated from Clare in 1959 and founded Fair Trials Abroad (now Fair Trials International). He has since been awarded the OBE in 2004 for his efforts on behalf of EU citizens imprisoned around the globe. Master of Clare Tony Badger presented Jakobi with the award at Halfway Hall this term. "The award is conferred by the Alumni Council and signifies the College's pride in its alumni who make a positive contribution to society," said Dr Toby Wilkinson, Development Director at Clare College. "The award is also intended to serve as an inspiration to current Clare students."

Passive smoking linked to dementia

» Cambridge research warns that second-hand smoke increases risk of cognitive impairments

Lizzy Tyler

A study by a Cambridge researcher has found that high levels of exposure to second-hand smoke leads to an increased risk of dementia and other cognitive impairments.

David Llewellyn, from the Department of Public Health and Primary Care, and his colleagues looked at

almost 5,000 non-smokers over the age of 50. With readings dating from 1998, this study is one of the most comprehensive carried out in to the effects of second-hand smoke.

Having monitored levels of cotinine, a by-product of nicotine, in saliva, the research team then exposed participants to a number of neuropsychological tests. These tests

focused on verbal memory and fluency, numerical calculations and time orientation. Those who ranked in the lowest 10 per cent of these tests were classed as suffering from cognitive impairment.

The results showed that there is a 44 per cent increase in the risk of developing cognitive impairment when exposed to high levels of second-

hand smoke. One of the most significant of these cognitive impairments is dementia, of which Alzheimer's is the most common form.

Currently, more than 400,000 people suffer from Alzheimer's in the UK, a figure which is expected to rise sharply as Britain's population ages.

The findings were published in the *British Medical Journal* last week and mark the first large-scale study into the effects of second-hand smoke on cognitive abilities.

Dr Llewellyn commented that the results "suggest that inhaling other people's smoke may damage the brain, impair cognitive functions such as memory, and make dementia more likely".

The link between smoking and dementia has been recognized for a number of years, and this research adds to the growing body of work highlighting the risks of exposure to second hand smoke.

Llewellyn advised that "Given that passive smoking is also linked to other serious health problems such as heart disease and strokes, smokers should avoid lighting up near non-smokers."

This research seems to support the smoking ban which was put in to effect in July 2007, banning smoking from all enclosed public spaces.

This ban covers all of Cambridge's Colleges, where smoking is only permitted in designated outside smoking areas and some accommodation.

Despite complaints about civil liberties, the ban has received widespread public support in the two years since its inception.



MICHAEL DERRINGER

Sidney students claim victory after bar bust-up

» Hall strike averted after College reduces punishment after bop concerns

Benjamin Watts

A Hall strike by Sidney students for the future of its student-run bar was averted at the 11th hour after College fellows withdrew a week-long ban on third- and fourth-years.

The bar, one of only three remaining student run JCR bars in Cambridge, is one of Cambridge's cheapest.

The new Dean, Bernhard Fulda, along with the Manciple of College, Keith Willox, have made three separate closure orders on the bar this year after incidents of drunk and disorderly behaviour from College guests.

Fellows have threatened students with permanent closure of the bar if incidents reoccur. In recent weeks, Sidney's student union (SSCSU) complied with College demands and placed a duty staff member in the bar to enforce the signing in of guests and to comply with the measure to stop serving individuals at the first sign of trouble.

Relations between the student body and fellows looked tense on last Friday. The Dean and Manciple, who is the licensee of the bar, imposed an eight day closure to students after an annual dinner for all third- and fourth-years.

The dinner was followed by a bop in the bar, after which vomit was found in the toilets and music continued playing until midnight.

The College's alcohol and entertainment licence permits music and alcohol consumption only up until

11.30pm. However, Sidney Bops regularly don't finish until midnight.

SSCSU rejected the punishment as unfair given that College porters are aware of the finish time for bar bops and insisted it was a lack of communication between College staff.

One SSCSU member said, "It's really upsetting they could knowingly let us break the law like this and then suddenly punish us. With such great relationships between senior and junior

members of the College we thought we deserved not to be tricked out like this, and to have a collective punishment for individual misbehaviour."

Following negotiations with the College, the closure was relaxed to a selective ban.

A subsequent SSCSU emergency open meeting of 100 voted unanimously in favour of presenting the College fellows with an ultimatum of revoking the ban before 5pm on Mon-

day or face an official boycott of Formal Hall.

SSCSU scored a short-term victory this week after the Dean and Manciple completely withdrew the group punishment on Monday morning, punishing just those individuals who were disorderly on the night.

At another special SSCSU open meeting on Tuesday, staff clarified the licensing rules and reiterated SSCSU's responsibilities.



YANN FRAMPTON

Sidney bar on Wednesday night

Porn hackers attack tourism website

Beth Staton

Cambridge Tourism's website was taken offline yesterday after hackers replaced photographs of historic attractions with hardcore pornography.

Text encouraging visitors to "take advantage of the classic Cambridge experience" by entering into "the intellectual life of students" was accompanied with images of couples having sex or exposing themselves on camera.

An introduction to the town was also replaced by an explicit message describing Cambridge as a "very sexual city" which "can fuck you and you even dont see it" [sic].

An investigation has been launched to apprehend the hackers.

"The council takes this matter extremely seriously, given the number of visitors to Cambridge and the number of people who use the site, including, I am sure, young people," said councillor Rob Cantrill.

The glitch, however, has exposed the council to a barrage of complaints and accusations of careless internet security.

Nick Wright, who runs a guesthouse in Cambridge, described the incident as "ridiculous" and "a kick in the face for the city".

"We warned the council it was easy enough to put a link on the site and turn it into a porn site," he said. "That's what's happened".

A prospective Cambridge student told *Varsity* that he encountered the doctored site whilst looking around the web for information on student cities.

Visitcambridge.org currently says: "The Visit Cambridge Website is offline for maintenance. We apologise for any inconvenience caused."



In Brief

University must "adapt to survive"

A top historian has said that universities can only survive if they change, often radically, over time. In a talk arranged as part of the University's 800th anniversary, provost of the Gates Cambridge Trust and leading historian Gordon Johnson discussed the ways in which Cambridge has evolved in response to internal dynamics and external social, political, economic and cultural pressures over the centuries. He focused on the way in which the University allied itself with the changes associated with the creation of the Tudor state, and on how the 19th century pushed the University into becoming more like the institution as it is today, "a place where people are professionally taught useful things, and where research is a key part of the agenda", according to Dr Johnson. He also anticipated challenges ahead, saying: "The 800th anniversary is an occasion for some stock-taking, in the hope that this will allow us to think sensibly about the future."

Avoid 'flipping disasters', fire service urges pancake makers

Cambridge's fire service is urging pancake flippers to avoid becoming pancake tossers by taking care when cooking on Shrove Tuesday. According to the latest statistics, there were over 130 cooking-related fires between April and December last year. The warning pointed out that although "Shrove Tuesday means fun in the kitchen for adults and children alike, the novelty and excitement of making pancakes can make people less cautious with their cooking." A spokeswoman for the fire service said, "At this time of year, a common scenario can be families tucking into their freshly-made pancakes, forgetting that they have left their frying pan on the hob, burning away. Or they forget to turn the hob off and place tea towels over the hot plate or ring. As well as the obvious threat to life that a fire can cause, damage to your kitchen could cost hundreds of pounds."

Needles found in car park

Dozens of discarded syringes have been found in Adam and Eve car park in Cambridge, close to Parkside police station. The high numbers of discarded needles across the city, including 400 in Mill Road cemetery, have prompted police to launch the biggest crackdown on drugs the city has ever seen. Since then, drug dealing has dramatically fallen in Cambridge and surrounding areas with police catching up with 83 per cent of traffickers. Detective Chief Inspector Hutchinson issued a stark warning to dealers: "I have a clear message for those that want to deal in Cambridge - we are coming after you." One local resident said: "I am shocked. There are a lot of drunks hanging about outside and they have even urinated on our door - but this is dangerous. It's disgusting."

Police vehicles in midnight crash

Timothy Leung

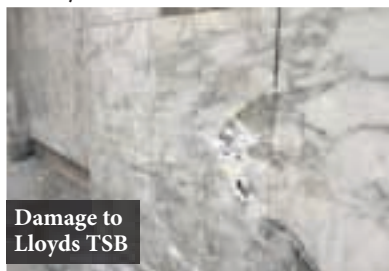
A police patrol car and dog unit collided on the junction between Hills Road and Regent Street shortly after midnight last Sunday.

Police have revealed that the "officers were responding to an emergency" when one of the cars was called to a separate incident. As it attempted to turn around, the Skoda Octavia estate and Mazda estate cars collided.

One of the cars slid up the pavement and crashed into Lloyd's TSB on Regent Street, damaging several external marble panels. The road was closed for two hours while the cars were recovered and investigators checked the scene for clues as to how the accident occurred.

Three officers sustained minor injuries and a German Shepherd in the dog unit at the time of the crash suffered from shock.

No pedestrians were injured and the officers were capable of taking themselves to hospital for a check-up. The dog was in shock and was later examined by a vet.



Kids born in summer 'less likely to succeed'

» Summer-born children will struggle more academically, research suggests

Anna Harper & Joshi Eichner

A study conducted by Cambridge academics has suggested that summer born children are less likely to succeed academically.

Reviewing the findings of 78 studies, Cambridge Assessment concluded that those born in June, July and August suffered from a "clear and long-term disadvantage in the education system" compared to their September-born peers.

Being born in the summer made



students more likely to fall behind, play truant, and even commit suicide, according to recent information submitted to an on-going primary education review.

Tim Oates, Cambridge's director of research, presenting the findings to a government inquiry on the issue, said that the report had strengthened points of consensus established by other investigations.

As the children in the studies aged, the differences lessened, but were found to remain "significant" through secondary school.

It was also found that "summer-borns are not progressing onto certain routes and into certain levels of education".

"That makes sense for me," said one summer-born Cambridge undergraduate. "In my first two years at school I was so far behind, they thought I was autistic."

The study additionally revealed that pupils born in September are 20 per cent more likely to go to university than those born in August.

Jenny Brandon, admissions officer at Peterhouse, played down the importance of the findings in the Cambridge's admissions process: "The potential educational disadvantage faced by summer-born children is not an issue which has ever been highlighted, as

far as I am aware, in our admissions process.

"We do of course look at lots of indicators of potential success, particularly AS-level and GCSE results, but this would not be one of them. At Peterhouse we have successful applicants who were very young for their school year as well as ones who were older than the average".

Ellie Lyons, a first-year student from Clare, said that the findings came as no surprise to her: "I was one of the youngest in my year at school and it definitely took a few years for me to catch up with the rest of my classmates. I can imagine that a lot of students might struggle without the private tutors that I had!"

These findings go against the latest recommendations of an interim primary education review, which proposed lowering the school starting age in England from five to four.

Oates cautioned against this move. "Leaping into inadequately researched remedies could exacerbate rather than remedy this problem within our system," he said.

Studies of the effects of birth date on athletic performance indicated that those who were old for their academic year tended to be more successful: far higher numbers of professional footballers in England and Holland were born in the autumn months than in the summer, a pattern also observed in Dutch youth tennis and Canadian ice hockey.



Seventeen firefighters called to tackle city centre blaze

Three crews of firefighters tackled a blaze for three hours in central Cambridge on Tuesday evening. A total of 17 personnel fought a fire on the second floor of a T-Mobile shop on Petty Cury, next to the Lion Yard shopping centre. Two crews from Cambridge, a crew from Sawston and a turntable ladder from Cambridge attended the scene at shortly after 6pm. The crews managed to contain the fire on the second floor, but considerable damage was caused. The room where the fire started was "totally destroyed", according to the fire service. The firefighters had returned to their stations by 9pm.

Professor tackles Greek myths

Varsity News

A Cambridge professor has argued that common perceptions of the ancient Greek civilisation demands reconsideration.

In his inaugural lecture on Monday, entitled 'Forever Young: Why Cambridge Has a Professor of Greek Culture', the University's new Leventis Professor of Ancient Greek Culture Paul Cartledge argued that our knowledge of Ancient Greek culture is riddled with factual inaccuracies.

His lecture challenged the commonly-held notions that the Greeks invented democracy, and that they were technologically backward.

"The Greeks are in many fundamental ways the key cultural ancestors of us in the West, particularly in areas such as science, politics, philosophy and the performing arts," Prof. Cartledge said.

"What we tend to forget is that their culture was also very different in fundamental ways. For example, many people fail to understand that there was no such thing as an 'Ancient Greece', but lots of different Greek communities and cities - about 1,000 at any one time. Each one of these had its own cultural identity."

Cartledge attributed misconceptions about the ancient civilisation to its various depictions by Hollywood directors. The classicist was himself



Professor of Ancient Greek Culture, Paul Cartledge

a consultant on the movie *300*, made in 2007, which portrayed the Spartan stand at Thermopylae as distortedly gruesome.

However, he also highlighted the role of these films in stimulating interest in and enthusiasm for the study of Ancient Greece. "Such movies can excite a genuine and ultimately even a scholarly passion for studying the ancient Spartans," he said.

"Since becoming involved with *300* I have had requests for copies of my book, *Thermopylae: The Battle That*

Changed the World, from US marines!"

The position Cartledge holds as Leventis Professor is a recently created one: never before has there been a Professorship dedicated exclusively to the study of ancient Greek culture.

The position is also the first chair in Classics to have been established at Cambridge since World War II. Professor Cartledge will study more than 1,000 years of Greek Cultural Achievements, highlighting the lasting influence that they continue to have on modern society.

Visa reforms 'could put off international students'

» *iCUSU to consult students on planned changes*
» *Students will have to register with local police*

Continued from front page

"Such wide-reaching changes need to follow an extensive consultation process," as they include a considerable "financial and administrative burden, especially in these increasingly difficult times."

Other barriers that will be introduced as part of the changes include having to register with a local police station and passing Foreign Office security clearance to study certain subjects. Biometric screening will also be introduced for those renewing visas, with the policy potentially being extended to all international students.

"It seems as if international students are just being used as guinea-pigs by the government," the spokesperson said.

The reaction among international students is likely to be mixed. One student said: "To be honest, to international students, the visa fee is only a small amount of money compared to the university fees we face,

which has increased a lot over the years. So I don't think the visa fee alone will deter international applicants."

"However, I do think that the number of other changes the UK government is implementing along with the visa fee increase, such as fingerprint checks and identity cards for foreign nationals, may give the impression that the UK does not welcome international students."

The student union's group for internationals, iCUSU, is currently conducting a survey and collecting the opinions of students on the issue.

Of the 1.6 million full-time undergraduate students currently studying in the UK, around 99,000 are classified as international students. The USA experienced a 30 per cent drop in international student numbers after 9/11, when visa rules were tightened.

If the same impact were to happen here, millions could be lost by UK universities from the lucrative overseas student market.



CHRIS EYLES



Varsity Profile

» Week 6: Rocco Falconer, charitable entrepreneur

“Whisky? Port?” Rocco Falconer offers as he sips his tea. He justifies himself, given the early hour: “You never know in Cambridge.”

It is difficult not to feel daunted by the sheer breadth of Falconer’s achievements before he has even reached his 21st birthday.

At the age of 18, he passed out of Sandhurst as an army officer. Since then, alongside his degree in English here, he’s set up a school, a farm and an internet café in Sierra Leone, and also volunteers at various local charities.

He wanted to use his gap year to see whether a career in the army was right for him. “I was becoming politically conscious, learning about Chechnya and how the Russians just burst in. I asked myself: ‘why did no one do anything?’” he says.

“I suppose it shows that there’s a point where just saying ‘Stop!’ is not good enough and you need to use force and that’s where the army comes in. That’s what I thought the army was about, and I wanted to see whether the reality matched up.”

After a four-week officer training course at Sandhurst, Falconer became a platoon commander in the 1st Battalion of the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters. He wanted to join the infantry because “that’s where it all happens – it’s the ideal place for peacekeeping since you’re wandering round the streets, essentially maintaining the peace.”

But, in charge of thirty soldiers, he quickly discovered that his ideas about

the institution were too simplistic. “Telling much older men than me what to do was very daunting. One guy told me his wife wanted to leave him. He was distraught, you know? It was really hard.”

In the summer of 2008, he decided to go to Africa. “I wanted to go to Sierra Leone. According to the UN, it’s the poorest country in the world.” Having “looked around to find something to do”, figuring that this was “the best way to find out about a place”, he met Eddie, a middle class local accountant keen to start up an education charity.

So ‘Planting Promise’ was born as the pair set up a summer school together, which soon developed into a permanent school. “The problem isn’t finding teachers, it’s paying them,” Falconer explains. “For the summer school I had to say: ‘Your interview is to teach in the summer school’. Perhaps that was exploiting them, but it did mean that the school could open in September.”

The school is funded by harvests from the farm, and income from the internet café, to which the students go once a week. “The children see the farm and the internet café as commercial enterprises,” Falconer says. He hopes that this will inspire them for the future.

Back in Cambridge, Falconer offers counselling for disadvantaged young people at Centre 33. “It can be really upsetting. It’s hard not to get emotionally involved,” he says.

Numerous phone calls to Eddie in Sierra Leone, Planting Promise commit-

4

Weeks spent at Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst

30

The number of soldiers under his command

288

The number of students enrolled at his school in Sierra Leone

tee meetings, and maintaining a long distance relationship with his girlfriend at Harvard, define Falconer’s week. “If I were a better person I could do it all in less time, but I suppose charity work is one of those things that is never done. You can always do more,” he says.

Planting Promise is holding a fund-raising lunch at the Café Project on Jesus Lane on Monday.
Caedmon Tunstall-Behrens



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Architect unveils zero-carbon home

» Cambridge don leads development of prototype eco-friendly house



Varsity News

Two Cambridge architecture lecturers have helped design and build a zero-carbon home in Kent.

Michael Ramage, a University lecturer and Director of Studies for Architecture at Sidney Sussex, and Philip Cooper, a visiting lecturer in the Department of Architecture, carried out the structural design for the eco-friendly home near Staplehurst.

The four-bedroom house cost almost £450,000 to design and build, but its architects hope that it will significantly reduce energy bills in future.

A heat conservation device has been installed, resulting in heat being retained within the building during the winter months whilst keeping the house cool in the summer.

The feature uses passive solar design to soak up as much energy from the sun as is

necessary without using other electricity powered devices. The system is the UK’s first example of a combination photovoltaic and thermal heating system.

Dr Ramage says that this prototype for a zero-carbon living space could be rolled out on a much larger scale in future.

“The design is cost-effective in that the home is relatively simple to build and, once you know what you’re doing, it’s quick,” he said.

“Many of the costs come from the new technology it uses for energy storage and generation. If those become more widely available, making a similar house cheaply in much larger quantities may be possible.”

The cross-sectional appearance of the house and characteristic arch has created a vault spanning 20 metres within which the various rooms are situated. This technique is called “timber vaulting”, originating from an historic Medi-

terranean tradition.

Plants and earth cover the outer extremities of the building, resulting in it being in tune with the natural environment within which it sits.

The use of lightweight materials such as thin bricks means that materials energy intensive to make, such as concrete, can be avoided. The designers have also tried, where possible, to source materials locally, such as the “Kent peg” clay roof tiles.

The architect Richard Hawkes said, “Although the cost may seem indulgent at the moment, in time, when the cost of manufacturing and installing solar panels comes down this house will save people a fortune.”

Hawkes said that the sustainable aspect of the project, and the fact that no gas is needed means “if we have built the thing right we will never have to pay for electricity again.”



MASONS NEWS SERVICE

Cambridge Spies



King's

Literary liaisons

On peering out of his bedroom one night, a fresh-faced lad residing in accommodation of royal descent happened upon a most becoming of situations blossoming in the reading-rooms of the neighbouring College. What appeared to be an innocent peck on the cheek soon developed into a raunchy melée of barely-clad bodies writhing on a book-littered desk. It can only be concluded that these students had taken inspiration from the centre spread of the last edition of our highly esteemed publication and decided to take the words "doing it by the book" literally to heart. One can only hope that a late-night book-burrower found to their glee that the pages of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* were being enacted to the last detail in the adjoining booth.

Cindies

Did she like it?

Our favourite night haunt last week saw two lascivious ladies taking their acquaintance to the next level as they petted each other on the edge of the dance floor. Caught up in the throes of passion, their lips were barely seen separated. One group of mischievous chaps happened upon said spectacle and couldn't believe their luck. "What ho," one said to the others. "Is that really cricket?" To verify their prized scoop, a light tap was emitted towards the fillies. When asked whether she knew that she was currently "batting for the fairer team", one of our heroines coyly refused to comment whilst the other fled into the crowded dancing floor. To be seen again.

Caius

Cocktease?

Bribing in RAG blind date was positively encouraged; however, our Romeo's attempts to hook his latest fancy were in vain. His investment having delivered our temptress for drinks, overcome by delight, Romeo proceeded to purchase several bottles of the bubbly to celebrate their acquaintance. Acclimatising herself to the perks of her chaperone's credit card, our siren "forgot" to inform him of her current squeeze. Moving the soiree on to Cindies, Romeo was thinking ahead later into the night when he chanced upon his girl locking lips with her, unbeknownst to him, special male friend.

Doctors hail peanut allergy breakthrough

» Addenbrooke's staff discover treatment for peanut allergy sufferers

» Treatment developed over six-month research period

Caedmon Tunstall-Behrens

Doctors at Addenbrooke's Hospital have found a cure for peanut allergies.

Four children, with potentially-fatal allergies, were slowly "desensitised" to peanuts.

The research was led over a six-month period and the children were fed peanut flour, the amount of which was incremented each session.

They were started on five milligram doses and by the end of the programme

were able to stomach 800 milligrams – the equivalent of five whole peanuts.

Dr Andy Clark led the research team at the Cambridge hospital. He said: "Every time people with a peanut allergy eat something, they're frightened that it might kill them.

"Our motivation was to find a treatment that would change that and give them the confidence to eat what they like.

"Peanut allergy is common – it affects 1 in 50 young people in the UK – and unlike other childhood food allergies, it

rarely goes away."

He stressed that it was not a "cure" as such: "It's not a permanent cure, but as long as they go on taking a daily dose they should maintain their tolerance."

The program has meant that the four children involved have developed a high tolerance. Even if they eat a peanut by mistake now, they will be safe.

The mother of one of the participants, Kate Frost, said, "It's very hard to describe how much of a difference it's made – not just in Michael's life, but for all of us.

"A peanut allergy affects the whole family. You can't go out to a restaurant because it's a minefield."

Clark said: "There is no reason why it shouldn't work with allergies to other nuts like Brazil nuts and hazelnuts."

The results of the initial trial are published today by medical journal *Allergy*.

The study was carried out in the hospital's Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility, and sponsored by the Evelyn Trust, a medical research charity based in Cambridge.

Bells escape the axe at Great St Mary's



MASONS NEWS SERVICE

Timothy Leung

Five bells at Great St Mary's church are to be saved, it has been announced.

It was feared that the bells, which ring out the same melody as Big Ben, were to be replaced, along with the famous jingle.

A donation of £350,000 given by Dr Martin C. Faulkes as part of the University's 800th anniversary has meant that they will be replaced with new bells that will still ring out as before.

Since 1722, the twelve bells of Great St Mary's have played melodies every fifteen minutes. The famous "Cambridge Quarters", originally composed by Dr Joseph Jowett in 1793, only requires the use of five of the bells.

This is the chime that was later imple-

mented at Big Ben and became known as the celebrated "Westminster chimes".

The twelve bells will now be replaced and installed on April 14th and the five bells engaged in the "Cambridge quarters" will remain on display and be used only to play the renowned chime.

A University spokesman said: "The University has repaired the bells on numerous occasions and it has got to a stage where we have had to weld them back together and risked them becoming unusable.

"It was a choice between making use of the bells so they play just the Cambridge Quarters or leaving them for general everyday use and having to replace them altogether. After exhaustive consultation we decided on the former."



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Dr. Olena Prystayko

Research Fellow, EU-Russia Centre (Brussels)

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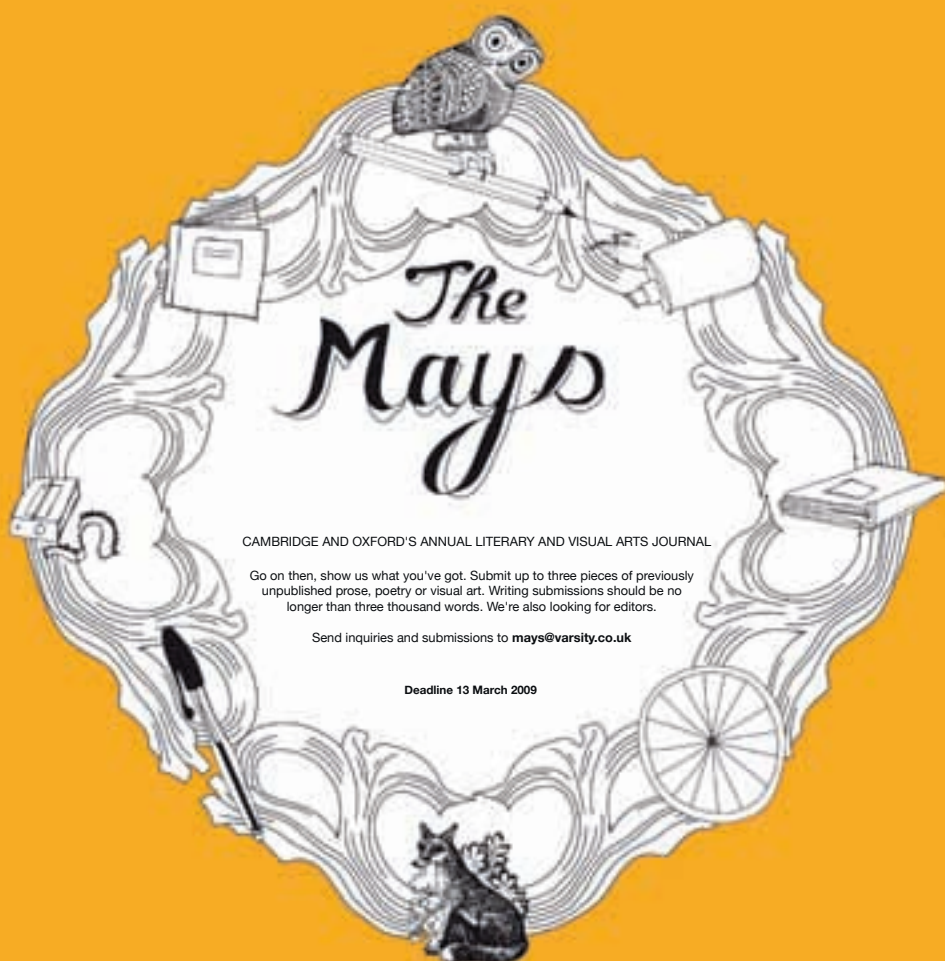
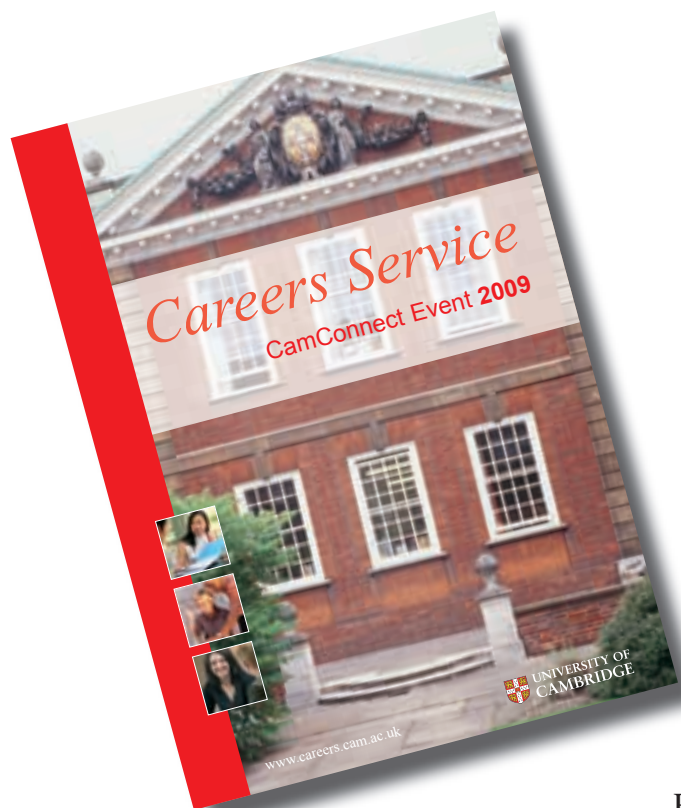
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The Essay



Where the Fellows Go Derek Matravers

Ever wondered where the Philosophy Faculty relaxes after hours? It isn't the library, says Dr Matravers, as he mourns the decline and fall of Soho's pubs and bars.



One of the many benefits of Cambridge's fast and reliable rail link is that it is easy to get to London for a drink. In London there is little chance of bumping into students; a good thing, especially if they have spent the evening more virtuously than I have.

Another reason is Soho; not the flamboyantly gay Soho of Old Compton Street, but the dying remnants of the 'old Soho' that had its hey-day in the fifties and sixties. I admit that the shelves of 'memoirs of Soho' probably ranks alongside the shelves of 'memoirs of Montparnasse' in the boredom stakes, and that I am more an observer than a participant, but it is still my favourite place (in this country at least) to waste a day or an evening.

I first started going there about twenty-five years ago when I was an undergraduate. My real introduction came through the great generosity of a fellow philosopher, Edward Winters, a man of vaguely Irish temperament, who seems to have been drinking and thumping people up and down Dean Street for decades. Together with his wife

Vanessa, he introduced me to the Colony Room, a dingy room up some stairs, founded in 1948 as drinking club and refuge for black sheep of various sorts. It had a reputation for fierce drinking at all hours of the day, bad behaviour, and good conversation. For some reason, it has always attracted artists who pay their dues by donating work, so it was fun to identify who did what with all the works hanging

behind the bar.

In those days the likes of Daniel Farrow and Sandy Fawkes were still around. The first line of the obituary of the latter gives the measure of the woman: "Sandy Fawkes, who died on December 26th aged 75, was found as a baby in the Grand Union Canal and later narrowly escaped death at the hands of a serial killer; she seemed a fixture in the public houses of Soho, but found time to follow careers as a journalist and author."

It is to her that I owe the thought that one should never ask a woman if she wants another drink, as that suggests she has had one already (advice which was delivered from a semi-prone position). These two, and many of the other people I met then, are now dead.

One of the odder facts about Soho is that the *Telegraph* is kind of the 'house' newspaper, and the obituary pages are one way of keeping up with events. (This is possibly because the editors of those pages seem to have been a succession of Soho luminaries themselves).

The peculiarly British form of public culture Soho exemplified is on the defensive. A few months ago, I heard the Colony Room was to close as the landlord wanted to turn the building into luxury flats. It is true that the alcohol-fuelled, literate, intelligent, witty yet unfeasibly cruel world still survives, but in a diminished and more geographically circumscribed form. Indeed, the French House is pretty much the only outpost of old Soho left. In addition, those who still turn up tend to be journalists, writers, and artists, rather than philosophers.

The reasons for this, apart from that of avoiding damage to health, are fairly obvious. The nature of the academic role has changed, in some ways (particularly from the students' point of view) for the better. The pressures involved in being an academic have increased, as have demands on academics' time. The nature of the writing has changed too, and the need for constant and careful referencing of others' work means it is difficult to write when not surrounded by books. We are all accountable both for our teaching and our research, and 'knocking about in bars' does not appear on

any workload plan. Most people would, I suspect, think that I would not be earning my salary if I emulated my forbears spending time in the French rather than answering e-mails.

In some ways, as I have said, these changes should be welcomed. However, there is also room to wonder if there has not also been a loss. Looking back at the philosophy that was coming out of London in the fifties and sixties (particularly by a denizen of the Colony, Richard Wollheim) it is not difficult to think they must have been getting something right. There is a welcome breadth to their writing, and an absence of worry about disciplinary boundaries. I think this is true in writing in normative ethics, but particularly so in my subject, aesthetics. There is a kind of worldliness, a sophistication that it is plausible to think came from their spending less time in their offices, and more time down the road.

Nostalgia is an easy sentiment to fall into, especially in the case of Soho when so much of what I have liked about it has passed on. (It is also worth remembering Daniel Farrow's quip: "They say Soho isn't what it used to be. But then again, it never was what it used to be.")

It would also be wrong to think that it has become a philosopher-free zone. One welcome development is Blacks, a club founded in 1982 in a lovely yet anonymous building opposite the Groucho Club. This has a great restaurant, a couple of good bars, and some strangely North African rooms in which to get comfortable. Ed Winters was a founder member.

It is cheering that more recent additions have included two decent and distinguished Cambridge philosophers who share at least some of my working habits: Emeritus Professor Hugh Mellor and soon-to-be Knightbridge Professor Tim Crane. I look forward to knocking back red wine either with or without them, taking care to avoid students on the last train home.

Derek Matravers is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the Open University.

Foreign Correspondence

Cambridge goes all over the world in a riot of semi-imperialist journalism



Week 6: Tokyo

Tokyo-themed posters have dominated Cambridge of late. I'm sure many had a good time at Churchill with their Valentine last weekend without the hassle of a twelve-hour flight. But the view from Japan itself is considerably less rosy. It is a country steeped in recession, with a government prone to occasional collapse. Stability is scarcely possible.

It's not much of a surprise that Tokyo-based musicians and DJs couldn't be hired. Travel would just be too risky to subsidise in this bad economy. And recent incidents show that the national Japan Airlines have had constant engineering faults; I guess that the committee wouldn't want to be responsible for someone's life.

You all know about the gorgeous gourmet from Tokyo. Not just the sushi and the sake, but exotic sweets such as the Petit Kit-Kat Caramel Frappuccino flavour, impossible not to buy. But those are luxuries, and luxuries that most Japanese can no longer afford. Food prices are soaring for the first time in over twenty years. Unlike Britain, all foods in Japan are taxed, which means that the unemployed and the elderly are struggling to eat well, or at all.

During the New Year, I saw that the intense competition between companies in Tokyo has become much more extreme. Economic woes haven't tempered corporate bloodlust; it's been increased. As companies fight for survival, limited edition goods and well-packaged foods are selling best. Japan therefore remains the most advanced and second richest country in the world. (The recent announcement of an Asia aid package at the World Economic Forum by Taro Aso, the fourth Prime Minister since 2006, didn't come as a surprise.)

But with an approval rating of less than 20 per cent, it's difficult to trust Mr Aso's decisions. The deadlock in the Tokyo-based Japanese government seems like a bunch of young children being rebellious towards their parents. In a culture that doesn't encourage individualism, the resignation of Mr Watanabe, a senior politician for the Liberal Democrats, did not move Japanese politics forward.

You might have been enjoying the luxuries of Tokyo, but Japan's current difficulties are going to make it painfully tricky to fight the recession.

Mari Shibata

Andrew
Wheelhouse



Making History

The Emma May Ball title change is a dangerous precedent

Commemorating and celebrating history is an odd and contradictory business. Every year on July 14th, the French celebrate Bastille Day, a day that marked the start of a conflict that would spawn the Napoleonic Wars, the bloodiest wars the continent had yet seen. Every July 4th, Americans celebrate the birth of a nation which bestowed fundamental and inalienable rights on its citizens with one hand, while with the other permitting man to enslave his fellow man and keep him as a possession with little more status than cattle.

On February 13th, the Emma May Ball Committee scrapped their 'Empire' theme in favour of the rather more sterile sounding 'Victorian Commonwealth' theme. No one would move to dispute the fact that the British Empire had a morally chequered past, but the furore caused by the selection of this theme reflects the tokenistic nature of supposedly liberal protest. It grossly simplifies the issues at stake and is more concerned with form than with content.

The 'Empire' theme of the Ball should have been a non-event aside from being a great evening of entertainment for the students fortunate enough to attend. Instead it was hijacked by petty agitation. The name change is the product of a shallowness of thought, for what was the 'Victorian Commonwealth' but a synonym for the Empire? If intended as a compromise it is one devoid of meaning that should satisfy no one.

The British Empire was a vast entity that included many different cultural

identities and races, albeit under the rule of Britain. During one hundred and fifty years of rapid expansion and (just as rapid) contraction, Britain powered the Industrial Revolution, dragging the world into the modern era through a combination of ingenuity, compassion-



ate ideology, and sometimes brute force. After the Second World War, in the face of changing moralities and economic circumstances, the British Empire became the first to dismantle itself peacefully.

The underlying point is that all this is

now a matter of historical *fact*. Which makes the snide suggestions from some last week all the more unpalatable. Re-create the 1919 Amritsar Massacre to fireworks and the 1812 Overture? Have blacked-up flunkies anticipate your every need in 'Raj Court'? No, please don't. That would be insensitive.

But the fact is that like Bastille Day, Independence Day, and a million commemorative or themed events in between, there is a side worth celebrating in the achievements and the aesthetics and the style of the British Empire, just as inevitably, as the 'fun police' endlessly reiterated last week, there is a side worth expressing regret about.

This problem is reflective of the way we approach such matters of controversy in our society. Instead of sophisticated and energetic debate on a given issue, we are instead obliged to toe the line of bland consensus.

It was not in the least bit surprising, but highly illustrative, that someone decided to throw in a line linking Nazi extermination camps and British internment camps during the Boer War, just in case someone was thinking of advocating an Auschwitz-Birkenau themed ball for next year. Without over-elaborating it is safe to say that the implication of moral equivalence implicit in this comparison is a gross over-simplification reflective of a shallowness of thought.

Such controversies are often indicative of a wider debate, as in this case. The furore over the Emma May Ball theme is partly the result of the attitudes of hand-

wringing, self-loathing pseudo-liberals, which tell a jaundiced account of this country's history, devoid of context and ignorant of current problems. Instead, they offer up pointless introspection and (metaphorical) self-flagellation for the wrongs of the past.

As some have noted, there was no similar protest over the theme of the Fitzwilliam College Ball entitled 'Dancing Beneath the Red Star' with a strong Communist/Stalinist influence in the aesthetics of the promotional materials. Does this mean that it is fine for us to entertain ourselves under a theme alluding to oppression and mass murder, as long as that oppression belongs to and was perpetrated by someone else? Of course not.

Most people are adult enough to realise that it is just a theme, a style, a brand of aesthetic identity that is not meant to allude to such things, and for which the negative connotations are not so raw or present as to make its use inappropriate.

The same is true of a British Empire theme. Those critical of it kid themselves that people at large, and people with a post-colonial heritage (of whom I am one) generally care what is going on in the cloisters of a single Cambridge College.

Every now and then the cultural baggage of the past must be jettisoned into history so that a nation can continue to progress in the world. It is sad that such petty agitating makes us deny the truth of a great chapter in our history, albeit one that should be considered long over.

James
Sharpe



In Defence of Doing Nothing

Inaction is the best way to deal with this recession

In the 1983 film *War Games*, the WOPR computer is about to deploy the USA's entire nuclear deterrent to destroy the Soviet Union. However, it is tricked into playing a game of Noughts and Crosses. Eventually the WOPR is forced to conclude that, since two good players have as much chance of beating each other in a game of Noughts and Crosses as in a nuclear war, the best move is to do nothing.

Unfortunately, however, there is always a problem with doing nothing: someone, somewhere, always thinks that something should be done. And so we had the arms race. Inevitably, if there is a perceived crisis and you do nothing about it, you're accused of being short-sighted, naïve, or even heartless.

Faced with the current economic crisis, the gut reaction has been to throw money at the problem. But, just as the arms race did not alleviate the Cold War, the bail-out has not got the financial system moving again. Indeed, is it in our interests to prevent the crisis?

The current crisis is necessary in order to correct an overvalued market; and by keeping credit going, the market is going to remain overvalued. Instead of getting out of crisis, this is merely going to prolong it. Besides, liquidity only works if people have the confidence to use the money. Why else has Alistair Darling's economic bail-out not worked?

Of course, this has not stopped the Labour Party persisting under the delusion that doing something, no matter how ineffective or costly, is innately laudable. The 'do nothing Tories' mantra is a common insult. But what is the value of doing something that will not help?

David Cameron and the Conservative Party come from the classical liberal tradition that the market will correct itself and that (most) public interven-

tion within that market will be ineffective at best and damaging at worst. The Conservative Party is derided for not having any policies. But to let the market run itself is a policy. To become a credible alternative rather than simply an opposition, the Conservative Party needs to construct a narrative against prevailing attitudes.

After all, it can be argued that the only reason that the current crisis has developed is because of government action over the past twenty years or so. It was

the government (albeit a Conservative one) that turned building societies into banks. It was the government (albeit an American one) that forced banks to lend to people with no assets and poor credit ratings. And it was the government (a Labour one) acting through the Bank of England that has kept interest rates artificially low for the past decade.

The problem is, however, that it is exceedingly difficult for the Conservative Party to claim that doing nothing with

is expected to deal with it. What can an MP do about someone who throws a cigarette butt in the park? Should the government really take responsibility for what every parent feeds their child? If an adult prefers to sit at home and watch television rather than going out and exercising, who cares? And yet thousands of words are wasted and gallons of ink spilled dealing with precisely these issues.

The economy is slightly more important. Nevertheless, although the call for inaction may seem heartless, in the current crisis it is not. It will allow the market to recover quickly and efficiently, and allow the government to focus on helping the individuals adversely affected by the crisis rather than worrying about a global market which is, frankly, too big for it to control. To think that anyone can end boom and bust is ludicrous.

But, then again, the tide is already turning. In the wake of the failure of the first economic bail-out, the Labour Party is increasingly behind in the polls. Indeed, senior Labourites like Tony Blair's former aide Benjamin Wegg-Prosser are urging Gordon Brown to drop the 'do nothing Tories' attack line. It seems that people may, after all, be willing to give doing nothing a try.

James Sharpe is the President of the Cambridge University Conservative Association.



ANNA TRENCH

Dan
Hitchens



The Slang of the Self-Righteous

Vagueness is damaging political debate

In these exhilarating times of Facebook protests and real-life demonstrations, when students band together to make things happen and supportive academics amplify the chant, what we really need is a reliable definition of the term 'self-righteous'. We should look for the symptoms rather than attacking individual cases, since no one is free from a tendency to self-righteousness.

For the self-righteous person, debate is above all a chance to reveal their own exceptional virtue. So they bypass morally neutral terms in favour of those which demonstrate personal integrity. Saying you espouse legal positivism or national sovereignty is pretty dull compared to saying you believe in human rights. The latter position is not so much an opinion as an assertion of your own identity, invulnerable to disagreement.

What does it mean to say you believe in human rights? Is it the same as believing in natural rights, in that particular philosophical conundrum? Or do you just disapprove of the use of torture? The term's haziness is its strength: if no one knows what you mean, they can't argue with you.

Similarly vague are those T-shirts disclosing that 'This is what a feminist looks like'. You are not meant to know whether a person wearing one is a separatist feminist or a sex-positive feminist or a transfeminist or any other kind of feminist. Nor does it matter whether their feminism is well-informed, or what they take feminism's implications to be. All you are invited to do is register that the wearer is a good person. The T-shirt campaign might be intended to bring together all those who sympathise with a

certain outlook or set of ideals. Yet that is precisely what it confuses, which is why so many of us have to say hesitantly: "I'm a feminist, but not, you know..." or "I'm not a feminist, but..."

Self-righteousness, then, attempts to replace the tedious back-and-forth of discussion and compromise with the thrill of self-expression. Hence there are no T-shirts reading, 'This is what a supporter of Home Information Packs looks like'. Because it is averse to difficult confrontation, self-righteousness has a fondness for meaningless terms. Current political discourse happens to be full of meaningless terms.

Take 'social justice'. No doubt good things have been done in its name. But what exactly does it indicate? At the moment, the phrase is taken to mean 'helping those who need help'. But that settles nothing, since it is everyone's aim.

If you want to expand unemployment benefit to assist those struggling to find work, you can call it social justice. If you advocate cutting benefits to incentivise employment, you can call it social justice. Abolishing private education might achieve social justice, by cancelling out undeserved privilege. Encouraging private education might lead to social justice, by cultivating a competitive environment in which the best will succeed. Who knows? As soon as you say 'social justice', the real debate is suddenly somewhere else.

Were meaningless terms simply blank spaces, we could work around them and silently substitute 'kindness' or 'good government' every time we heard 'social justice'. Unfortunately, most of these pallid expressions contain a little emotional

impulse of the kind which draws in the self-righteous archetype. In the case of 'social justice', this emotional prod gives the impression that somewhere or other, there is an injustice to be righted.

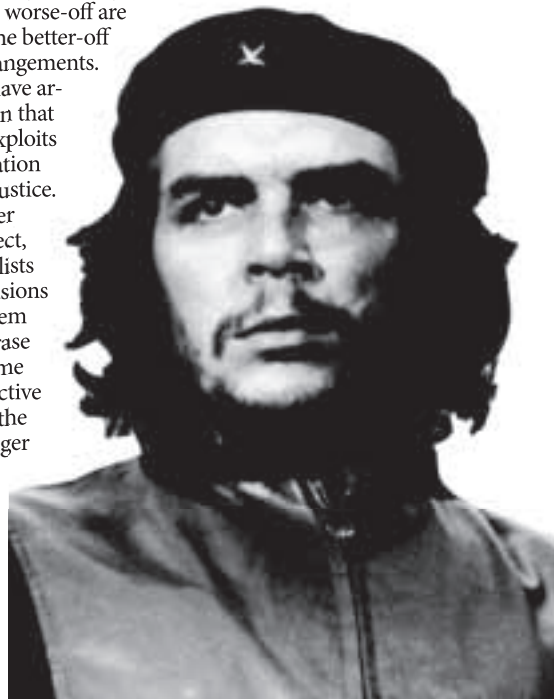
Being unfortunate – missing a train, hitting the crossbar, losing your phone – is not the same as being a victim of injustice. Now imagine we talked of 'social misfortune'. That would suggest that some people got a worse deal than others, as an unavoidable result of events which we cannot foresee or control.

'Social justice' is an entirely contrary idea: it insinuates that the worse-off are in fact victims, either of the better-off or of present political arrangements. Without knowing it, we have arrived at the Marxist notion that the underdog necessarily exploits the overdog. By implication 'social justice' is socialist justice.

The point is not whether socialist theories are correct, but rather that even socialists should prove their conclusions rather than concealing them in the false-bottomed phrase 'social justice'. And the same goes for other terms attractive to the deceitful as well as the self-righteous, whose danger lies in their vagueness. Notice that governments talk of a 'war on terror', signalling that terrorism is best combated through foreign invasion; that Cabinet ministers refer to 'the global recession', hinting that Labour can't

be blamed for anything that goes wrong; that civil liberties are expropriated on behalf of our ill-defined 'security'.

In his celebrated essay 'Politics and the English Language', George Orwell brilliantly showed that inexact, unthinking language reinforces illiberalism and injustice (the actual kind). The point must be made incessantly in every new political circumstance: all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to have no idea what they are talking about.



Spk yr brains

The Wit and Wisdom of the World Wide Web



Week 6: *Unruly children*

I remember Mr Costello, my history teacher, had developed his own unique method of dealing with the one or two (35 yrs ago!) disruptive boys in my class. Quite simply he would quite calmly say to them that he understood that they did not want to take part in his lesson. This being the case, he had no wish to force them to stay. Therefore lads, why don't you go out for a fag and a wander and come back in 40 minutes when my lesson is over. Problem sorted. Sadly today Mr Costello would be fired

Tracey Playle, HARLOW, ESSEX

A pre-requisite to dealing with unruly pupils must be to re-introduce two almost outdated tenets:
1) Personal responsibility.
2) Respect.

Voice_of_Reason, Sussex, UK

I don't buy into the whole 'broken Britain' thing - I happen to think I live in a great country! The majority of comments on here are heartbreaking - you're talking about children here, not monsters. No wonder they don't respect you if you don't give them a chance! If they're disruptive, I agree steps should be taken to find out why; and whether anything can be done to help, rather than as a lot of posters seem to want, beating them into submission! Don't forget, violence begets violence.

[supergossipLOL]

I say the thing to do is BRING BACK the cat o' nine tails. For 2 long, kids have been allowed to run riot in the classroom and on the streets. Get some respect back into the learning environment and it'll work wonders for the children. TOO many good kids are having their educations ruined by a small minority of misbehaving children, blighted by the PC brigade.

honesttaxpayer, bedford

Give power back to the parents and teachers and allow beating to take place, it's the only way they learn.

jabbah_teh_hut, Degobah System, UK

Misbehaviour is no excuse.

Debora, London

CUSU ELECTIONS

• NOMINATIONS OPEN: FEBRUARY 16TH • NOMINATIONS CLOSE: FEBRUARY 23RD



- PRESIDENT
- WELFARE
- EDUCATION
- ACCESS
- WOMEN'S OFFICER
- COORDINATOR

WWW.CUSU.CAM.AC.UK/ELECTIONS

YOUR STUDENT UNION
WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?

SUAD

THE DJ BATTLE

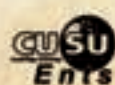
15 MINUTES TO IMPRESS THE CROWD

FEATURING DJS FROM: OASIS
QUEENS ENTS & REMIXOLOGY

REVOLUTION

THURSDAY FEB 26TH

SEE WWW.SUAD.CO.UK FOR MORE DETAILS



Bombay Brasserie offers an exciting fusion of sumptuous Indian food, friendly service and a vibrant atmosphere. Bring your own wine on student night or enjoy our special student meal deal. On Fridays and Saturdays enjoy a relaxing evening with our a la carte menu and a wide selection of wines. We can confidently recommend our Chicken Tikka Masala or Lamb Rogon Josh.



STUDENT NIGHT £12.50

Sunday's

Papadom and Chutney
Choice of Main Course, Pilau Rice and Nan Bread, Complimentary Bottle of Cobra (330ml), Glass of Wine or any Soft Drink. Bar Drinks from half price or Bring your own Drinks

STUDENT MEAL DEAL £10

Monday to Thursday

Papadom and Chutney
Choice of Main Course, Pilau Rice and Nan Bread, Complimentary Bottle of Cobra (330 ml), Glass of Wine or any Soft Drink. Bar Drinks from Half Price

FULL BUFFET LUNCH £6.95

7 Days a Week

Eat as much as you like!
Enjoy from our various selection of starters, main dishes, vegetables, sundries and salad.

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MAGAZINE



THIS WEEK IN THE MAGAZINE: NIAL FERGUSON ON RECESSION / STEPHEN CLARKE ON FRENCH SHIT / TIANANMEN SQUARE SURVIVOR / OSCAR PICKS / OBSCURE THEATRE SPACES / SURREAL TENNIS

Photograph of the week by *Narin Hengrung*



“This is a picture of 13 Chesterton Road, which lies just past the Colony site of Clare College. The house used to be hidden from the road by a huge tree so that if you managed to notice it whilst walking past, it looked as if you were peering at something that barely existed in the real world; a mirage that you were lucky to see and that would soon disappear again. Since the tree has been cleared, there must be someone who is now taking care of this place, but I still hope they don’t change a thing - it’s absolutely mesmerising.”

If you have a Photograph of the week, send it to features@varsity.co.uk



My week by Lucas Art Prew, ‘It’ Boy*

Thursday
Blairily (but beautifully) I awake, after a tiring DJ slot at Kambar. Played a safe mix of Belgian electronica and Jennifer Lopez. The morning sun shines on my collection of Rothko prints as I spend fifteen to twenty minutes considering my hairstyle; in the end I opt for James Dean crossed with Patrick Wolf. Go to lecture about the aesthetics of the Cold War, and sit on far right of the hall so my good side is displayed to full advantage. A buff history fresher who was almost certainly in *Tatler* last year covertly admires my jaw line. Success.

Saturday
Went to the gym at six this morning

and read an improving news article in the *Economist*. It is important to be beautiful in both body and mind. Later go to a dinner party hosted by a fascinating girl at Pembroke who is somehow related to Orson Welles. Throw ideas around with an interesting architect from Caius about a video installation on the Israeli conflict. Feel my cheekbones were not under the best lighting, but manage to make a witty comment about modern poetry. A moderately successful day.

Sunday
Varsity fashion shoot. The concept is a group of dashing fops frolicking across King’s lawn. I get stuck wearing plus fours because they are ‘P.G. Wodehouse vintage’, but feel distinct-

ly unconvinced. However my surly displeasure comes across well in the negatives. Return to the library but get distracted by my own reflection while in the Russian history section, and decide to email my DoS for an extension, citing fatigue and ennui. She fires back a flirty reply, and I promise to meet for tea the following week. Tuck myself into bed with carefully flossed teeth and fall asleep reading *French Vogue*.

Tuesday
Tiresome morning of May Ball auditions. I’ve been hired by a few of the better Colleges as a boost for the event; apparently all I have to do is wander around the grounds during the night, with a jacket slung over one shoulder, saying charming things.

Later I go browsing in charity shops for a few interesting pieces; I find an oversize knitted poncho which I think could work perfectly with the bowler hat I happened upon last week. Exhausted, I step into Pret for a quick lunch of sushi and fruit salad. I lounge in a chair near the window so people can watch me. Apparently women love to watch Brad Pitt eating, and I imagine the principle is much the same. Must ask a girl who isn’t in love with me to offer an impartial opinion.

Wednesday
Have lunch at Peterhouse, sharing a Winter Picnic Hamper with a burgeoning star of the Cambridge drama scene (and a minor aristocrat). She talks about *Hedda Gabler* while I

admire her perfectly formed clavicles and imagine how good we will look in co-ordinated outfits. She does have slightly fat ankles, but I can drop a few hints. We stroll around the Fitzwilliam and she talks about Titian while I daydream about starting a record label. Later I take my Polaroid camera to Kambar and take a lot of photos of my feet, along with snapping some of a girl with a well-cut fringe who I think is at Emma. We leave at three, followed by a few hangers on. One girl even has the audacity to buy cheesy chips on the stroll back, and I mentally strike her from my circle of acquaintance. Later I come up with a brilliant Facebook album title and my mood is instantly lifted.

*As told to Victoria Beale

Ed at large

EDITOR-AT-LARGE ED CUMMING GOES TO NEW HALL AND BEYOND TO INDULGE IN PAN-FRIED CORN-FED CHICKEN AT HOTEL FELIX

Sometimes, and in the nicest way, it's good to have one's limits stretched a little, good to get out of the comfortable areas. Not many people know this, but if you go out beyond the Great Curry Houses to the north of Cambridge, the city does not abruptly halt into countryside, but gently fizzles out like an open Coke in the garage. It's an easy mistake to make: until last weekend, I too was a non-believer. Aside from the occasional constitutional up Castle Mound, the furthest I had been was New Hall, before its name was changed to mislead idle listeners of University Challenge into thinking the tennis was on. Come to think of it, they'd probably get as many points if they fielded the British Davis Cup team, but that's a discussion for another time. Anyway, I found the trip up the hill with my rag-tag mob of a first-year drinking society quite as scary as anything I've ever done, scarier even than the first time I asked a girl (politely) to take her trousers off, which is to say very scary indeed.

For those who haven't been I'll try to describe what happens, though it haunts me to this day. It starts like this: on entering the premises you walk through a kind of bright tunnel, not unlike an aquarium. You think you are alone in this tunnel, but gradually you become aware of eyes, thousands of eyes, following your movements with a malicious curiosity evocative of the scene in the first Star Wars film where

the gay robots walk through the valley. On exiting the tunnel you are invited to a bar, which is not so much a bar but rather a kind of pit, into which unsuspecting males (i.e. us) are lured with cocktails to the final staging-place: the stately pleasure-dome sacrifice arena, a temple to carnivorous female sexuality whose leisure-centre ambience disguises a history of quite brutal violence. I suspect that in years to come, as is the case with Vietnam, say, those who made the journey will be spoken about with a kind of hushed reverence.

All of which leads me to say that, prevailing cardiovascular indisposition notwithstanding (gosh), you'll understand my nervousness about heading up the hill. Yet on Sunday I was taken beyond the pleasure dome, and discovered, with the surprise of someone who gets the train east from King's Cross to arrive at Homer-ton ("Ahhhhh, how interesting!"), that Cambridge just keeps going. This place is massive. We should all get out more. It would be good for our souls.

Anyway. A classicist pal

invited me out for supper, and luckily for him the venue was the Hotel Felix. This is one of those 'boutique' hotels which wins prizes, but what mostly appealed to me was its abundance of hilariously-phrased advertising, notably its claim to be the "first contemporary hotel" in Cambridge. What? What does this mean? I agree that it is pleasant when you go into a hotel and you don't immediately lurch forwards and backwards in time, but I didn't think it was so common. Perhaps it's an outside-of-Cambridge thing.

Anyway, aside from that, and the fact that it was all delicious, it also featured my two favourite restaurant-menu phrasings next to each other, the chicken being advertised as not only "pan-fried" but "corn-fed". Aren't you just sick and tired of having the following exchange:

"Excuse me, I like the

look of the chicken. But I was wondering, what do you fry it in?"

"Why, monsieur, we fry it in a little oil but of course."

"Yes, yes, but what do you fry it in?"

"Ah, bon. Well, monsieur, we fry it in a mug."

"A mug?"

"Yes monsieur."

"Have you no pans?"

"Non. We may fry it in a ramekin also?"

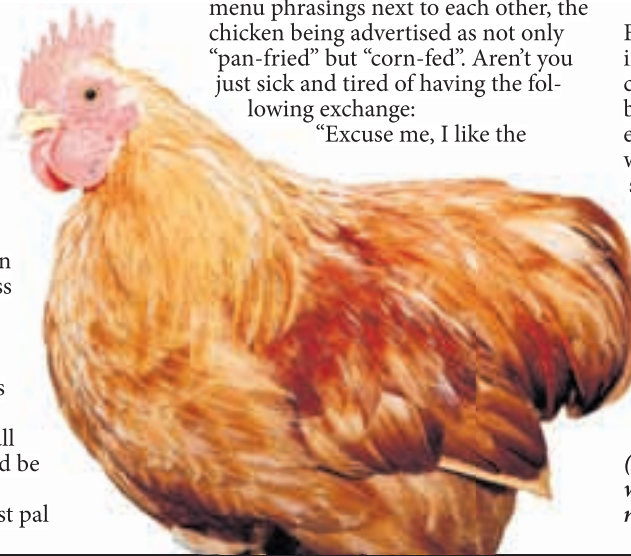
"No no, that'll be fine. But let me just check, did you feed this chicken corn?"

"Non monsieur. We've fed this chicken only spaghetti carbonara."

I certainly am. But the Hotel Felix put me at complete ease in this regard, and ought to be commended. If I'd stayed for breakfast I hope I could have enjoyed a 'water-boiled egg' with 'bread made from photo-synthesis-using wheat'.

There is stretching, and there is mock-stretching. The Hotel Felix should avoid mock-stretching us, and more of us might make the stretch to go and see it. Otherwise we students will still only get as far as New Hall: and that, for many, is quite a stretch in itself.

If you fancy going 'At Large' with Ed (and maybe getting a free meal) please write to large@varsity.co.uk with your name, College, year and suggestion.



DAISY BELFIELD AND FRIENDS SEEK OUT THE STARS OF THE CAMBRIDGE BREAKFAST CIRCUIT



All my friends bopped their way into double figures to the banger tunes of Mr Flipflop (a middle-aged, otherwise unemployed children's DJ who was, come to think of it, highly shift); I, however, was firmly told that I could "have a daytime party, dear". My parents and I reached an unorthodox compromise: a Breakfast Disco. The fancy dress theme was possibly misguided: three fried eggs, a shredded packet, some Worcester sauce and the Cereal Killer danced unenthusiastically to Aqua's 'Barbie Girl' (and other classics). At 9am we had breakfast, and then everyone went home to get ready for Georgie Stogden's "proper party".

Ten years later, I'm determined to revive early morning socialising. What better way to start the day than with a Breakfast Crawl? Every day for the past week, a dedicated Breakfast Team has been sampling, judging and weathering the food of various colleges, in order to bring you THE VARSITY "I'M HUNGERED", an attempt to list several of the most talented, influential and filling breakfasts in Cambridge*.

Let's meet the team: Reuben "fry me up" Binns (greasy spoon veteran); Emma "easy to please" Blythe; and Daisy "likes her eggs well done" Belfield.

1 Week
6 Colleges
100s of Baked Beans!!!

Day One: King's

First stop and wholly unremarkable. Hash browns were a thumbs up, but overshadowed by the outrageous price of the sauce (12p per sachet! Ouch!). The cups were shallow, the yoghurt selection limited, and the vat of fruit salad too communal. Marks for a fun toasting machine.

Day Two: John's

A breakfast fit for a King. A fine dairy selection – yoghurts ranged from Cadbury Flakes to Muller Lights, and the hot food was a joy to smell. Eggs were perfectly done (firm but moist), and the beans thoughtfully smoked. The team's verdict?

Binns: "That's a good, crispy bacon."

Blythe: "To be honest, I'm really impressed."

Moreover, the cups were deep and the sachets (including brown sauce) were free; very tempting to consider applying The Sixth Star here.

Day Three: Clare

A slither through the snow was met by bitter disappointment. A few flaccid tomatoes and greasy eggs, nominal yoghurt selection, and meagre array of cereal drove us to give it a Double Thumbs Down. As any

crawler must, we braved the cold in search of our food, and resorted to...

Sainsbury's (not quite a college)

... in which Binns was delighted to discover Sainsbury's own-brand 'Hunger Breaks', or Breakfast In A Tin. We began to fear for the cause, since at £1.75 he seemed tempted to abandon the crawl altogether. We read him the ingredients: baked



beans in tomato sauce, sausages, button mushrooms, chopped pork, fried egg nuggets, cereal and bacon. Safe to say, Binns was back on board.

Day Five: Pembroke Brunch

We've all heard the rumours about the superiority of Pembroke Brunch. And sure, there were pancakes and cappuccinos, marshmallows and squid rings. But with it all there in front of you, you can't help feeling a little let down. Blythe articulated the tension between legendary reputation and underwhelming reality perfectly: "Good. Yes, OK. Really quite nice, I suppose."

Day Six: Emma

Embarrassment ensued, as yet again we had to explain ourselves to a till-person: "No we have not got a college card, no we haven't got a friend at Emma, and no we can't really explain why we're here." The beans weren't worth it, although the airy turquoise dining room was rather pleasing.

Day Seven: Christ's

An intimate setting, and the option of crème eggs as well as fried or boiled was commendable. Hostilities arose when it came to payment. Project to be postponed until further notice...

*The team recognises that this report is not objective or infallible. There may well be other breakfast experiences in Cambridge that are worth cultivating and enjoying. We're just publishing the ones that have changed our lives in some (not necessarily positive) way.



Bircher Muesli

First invented as a cheap way to nourish patients back to good health by Swiss doctor Maximilian Bircher-Benner in 1900, Bircher muesli is a cost-effective and slow-energy-releasing breakfast. Perfect for students, then.

Simply mix approx. 30g rolled oats (82p/500g in unnamed Cambridge health food store) with a handful each of raisins (93p/250g, as before) and coconut chips (£1.25/250g bag, you know where from) together in a large bowl. Soak overnight in apple juice (a bargainous 56p/litre in Tesco's) and the juice of two oranges (4 for £1 in the market).

Traditionally served with milk or yoghurt, a drizzle of honey and grated apple. Save yourself more money and time by preparing a large batch and keeping it in the fridge: the muesli will last up to a week.

Clementine Stott



And the Winner is...

WITH THE ANNUAL ACADEMY LOVE-IN ABOUT TO COMMENCE, VARSITY FILM CRITICS IZZY FINKEL AND TOM MORRIS OFFER THEIR OSCAR PREDICTIONS

Slumdog Millionaire's chances of staking home the Best Picture statuette on Saturday night are almost as predictable as the film's own sappy ending. If this curried ham-hock of a movie likewise bestows upon Danny Boyle the gong for Best Director few eyebrows will be raised, and not just because of the jeroboams of botox concentrated in the foreheads of the Kodak Theatre audience.

If the BAFTAs and Globes are truly the tea-leaves in which the fates of the Oscar nominees can be read, the plot of this year's ceremony looks destined to follow the same deterministic principles as *Slumdog's*. Like the premise of that movie, the awards this year are inevitability trussed up as multiple choice. Ledger, Winslet and the aforementioned Bollywood barnstormer seem to have the major awards well and truly earmarked. Leaving aside the Best Actor category, that would mean that all the big winners are either going to British, or dead. So with such obvious recipients, are the possibilities of a major mishap limited to the caprices of Bjork's wardrobe...?

The answer is no, for one very good

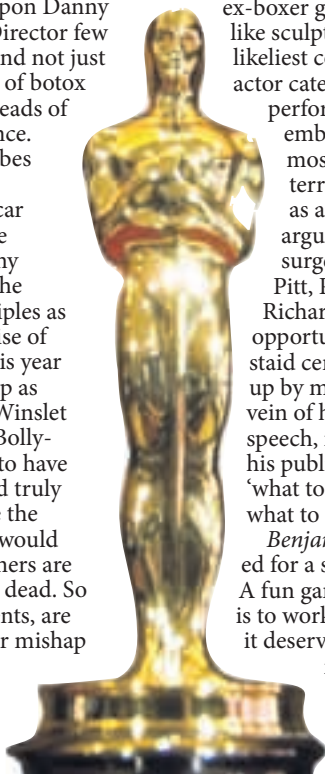
reason; Mickey Rourke. For Best Actor, the Academy is sure to smile on the reformed nogoodnick Rourke – let's just hope for the kiddies' sakes that he doesn't smile back. This ex-boxer gargyle with a face

like sculpted cat food is the likeliest contender for the best actor category. Put simply, his performance in *The Wrestler* embodies Hollywood's two most defining passions; terrific acting and, albeit as a cautionary tale, the arguments for good plastic surgery. If he does beat Pitt, Penn, Langella and Richard Jenkins, there's an opportunity that an otherwise staid ceremony will be lit up by more expletives in the vein of his BAFTA acceptance speech, in which he thanked his publicist for telling him 'what to eat, how to dress... what to fuck.'

Benjamin Button is nominated for a staggering 13 Oscars. A fun game for the next week is to work out which of them it deserves least, and you're not allowed to say all 13. Unfortunately, it isn't hard to imagine this dreary David

Fincher film stealing Best Picture or Director from its worthier counterparts, as the sight of a man getting younger faster than Joan Rivers plays squarely into the deepest desires of La-La Land's luvvies.

If, after the goody-bags have cleared and host Hugh Jackman has been sewn back into his Wolverine costume, *In Bruges* hasn't triumphed with its screenplay, we should all cry ourselves to sleep, or at least stare into the middle distance for a while. The omens aren't good for a black comedy though; much like the Wicked Witch of the West's problems with water, Academy voters have been known to dissolve upon contact with jokes. Show them a video of Groucho Marx, and they'd say he shouldn't be smoking on screen. On the other hand, give them Judi Dench as a Holocaust survivor who physically deteriorates before succumbing to dementia, and they'll be hurling statuettes down the red carpet. Why the discrepancy? Well, Oscar voters are just desperate to be taken seriously, at least on a par with their friends from drama school who now work in the theatre, wear cravats and tell anecdotes about when they met John Gielgud. So while they appear to love pain, sorrow and stammers, and hate romance, kittens and Will Ferrell, all they really want is a bit of respect... and a pat on



THE CAMBRIDGE INVADER

MISSION: TO DELVE INTO CAMBRIDGE'S SECRET ORIFICES
WEEK 6: DARWIN COLLEGE BAR

Darwin had never really been on my College radar before I was asked to invade it. It's not a College that regularly hits the headlines or carries any intrigue. Part of me wondered whether it was worth invading at all, but it stirred some excitement in J, who was eager to see how the graduates lived, and more importantly, drank.

Making my way down the Queen's Road I was unsure what to expect. Would the bar of a grad College be infinitely more sophisticated than those of our own Colleges? Would it be full of melancholy, aged scholars partaking of a small nightcap? Only time would tell. My earlier indifference turned to unease as I approached the Silver Street crossroads. The College was bathed in shadows and carried an air of hostility, as though it were willing us to carry on up the road to the bright lights of the Anchor. When we finally found the studded metal door (which wouldn't have been out of place in a 14th century fortress) we had to hover outside until we could slip inside behind someone in possession of a magic key.

I stepped into the hallway behind my J and all intrigue immediately vanished. The place looked like a well-lit conference centre, devoid of all signs of indi-

vidual College identity. No bop posters, ADC advertisements or boat club photos. I suddenly felt self-conscious and very young, stumbling around, adrift without the familiar detritus of an undergraduate lifestyle. We clearly weren't meant to be here and I guessed we would soon be found out. And turfed out. To be honest, we were hardly inconspicuous; I was over-dressed and J was wearing College stash.

I took control of the situation and strode confidently towards the bar but, as predicted, we were soon thwarted. "Are you from Darwin?" asked the barmaid, tersely, as we were still approaching. "Not as such..." We looked at each other nervously. She gave us a resigned look as if to say "Well. What exactly do you expect from me?" Strangely, help was at hand in the form of a girl (woman? It's hard to say) who offered to sign us in. I was suspicious of her motives.

Settling down at one of the many empty tables we took a look around. As though on some kind of academic safari, we began to spot the various species. A few old timers, grey haired and nervously clutching glasses of gin, a few men of indeterminate age wearing fleeces, that distinct sartorial signal that

one's youth is long past. No stereotypes here, then, and definitely not a pre-Cindies crowd. A few young graduates were dithering in a corner, stuck in that hinterland between undergraduate and 'real adult.' Not one of us, and not one of them. I tried to catch snatches of their conversation, but I heard the phrase "post-Bolshevik metanarrative" and had to tune out before my ears started to bleed.

Our conversation soon drifted elsewhere because, to be honest, there wasn't that much to hold our attention. We were abruptly punished for this by a four-second deafening blast of music which lifted us several inches from our seats. What was this, an under-30s alarm? No, only the barmaid scratching the needle while changing the record. Wait... record? Needle.

Nothing noteworthy happened in the rest of our evening apart from a cacophony of voices suddenly singing 'Happy Birthday.' It was unclear whose birthday it actually was, if anyone's. Perhaps it was simply the only song everyone knew the words to. This awoke us from our earnest, undergraduate conversation and we suddenly got the feeling we'd overstayed our welcome. We slipped out, unnoticed.



Competition ~~adc theatre~~

Each week we set a different creative writing exercise. The person who submits the winning entrance has their story printed in the next week's *Varsity*, and is rewarded with two free tickets to an ADC Theatre show.

Week 6: For this exercise, update a myth. Classical, Nordic, Aztec – it doesn't matter. Put your myth into a new time or place, or allow a different character's voice to predominate. Carol Ann Duffy has written an entire book (*The World's Wife*) in this style. Your myth can be poetry or short fiction, and should be no longer than 600 words.

Winner:

From 'Odysseus'

I have no name;
lying cyclopsed
By some steel
stinging touch
That cut a
cavern, deep into the bone:
A vivid horror
in a clean white crag.
Take beauty and
then twist: here lies a monster
But now he hides
in stiff white linen sheets.
I struggle up to
gasp as waves of shells
Crash down
around the bed - yet all is still
The
fear that bites blood from my lips in dread.
Will Warman

Runner-up:

Medusa - A Horror Story

I'm sure they used to be thinner. The snakes, I mean. I think there used to be more of them, more active. There was one who used to curl around my finger, firm and snug, and my fingers were only small, then. Now I've grown. My belly is engorged, massive. And they've grown, as my baby grows. I think they eat each other.

I've never seen them do it. I've never seen them. Sometimes, I think about looking in the mirror. I think I'd see them, just before I die. I'd look into their eyes as my own turned to stone. I wonder what I'd see there, in that instance. I can't do it, of course. My baby needs me, my sisters. But I wonder.

I can feel them, without seeing. They don't do much when I'm awake. They sprawl, like cats after feeding, bulging and heavy. Sometimes it'll be a whole week before one moves. I'll almost forget they're there. That's the worst. I've screamed before, feeling them suddenly up there, squirming between my ears, down to my shoulder blades. Sometimes they wrap round my neck. Generally, if I sit very still, they don't do it for long.

I find it hard to concentrate, since the change. I can feel them, up there. Sometimes I wonder if they can read my thoughts, or if they take them. I've never been told otherwise. They are so slow, so fat, they must be feeding on something up there. I wonder, if I saw them, what I'd see. I used to try to hear voices in their hissing, but I've stopped that. I tell myself that they're no more likely to talk than my statues are to be watching me, and I try to believe both.

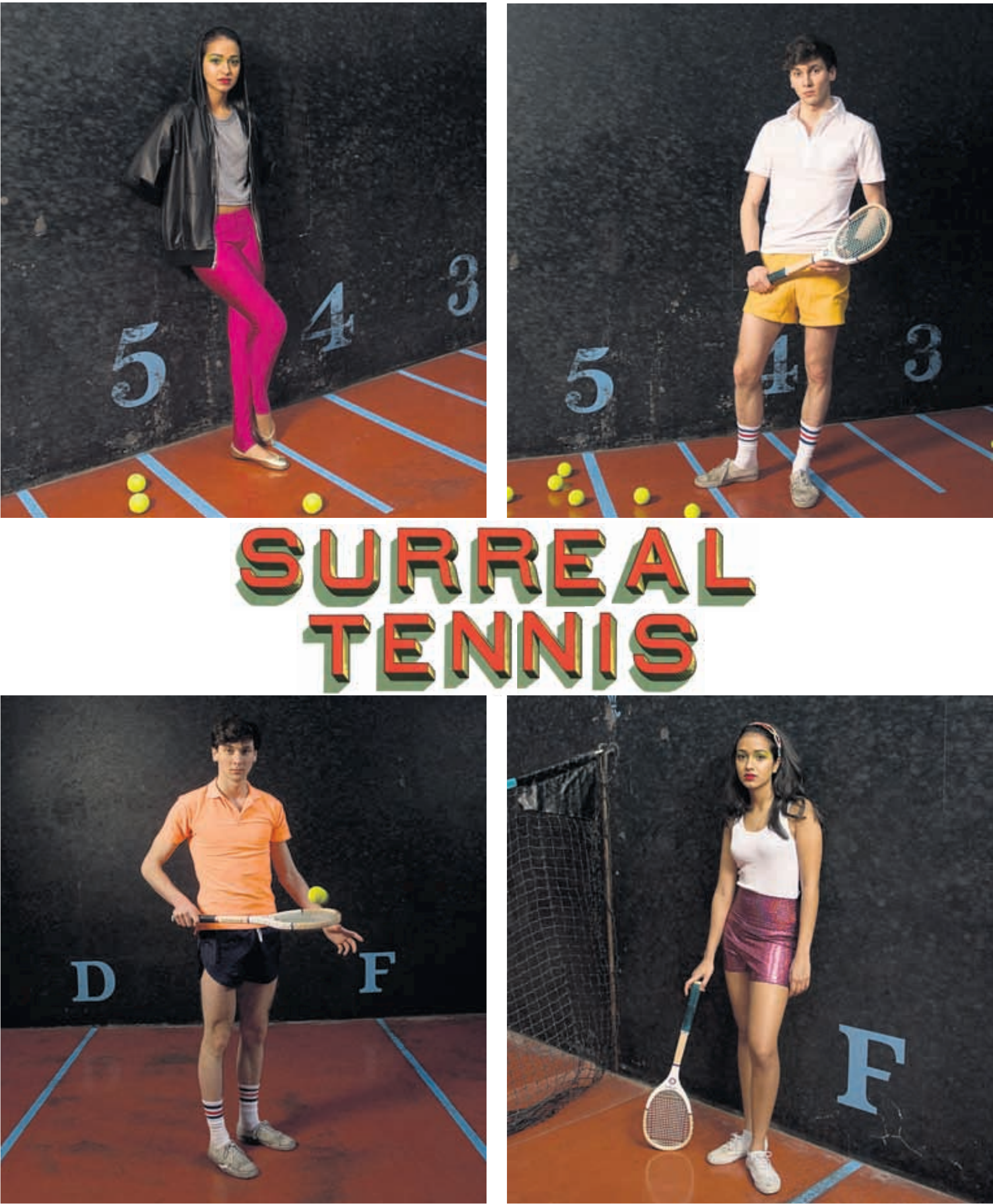
The statues bother me. I want to get rid of them smash them to tiny pieces and grind them into the floor. But they used to be living. Frozen, terrified, I can feel the life that filled them. The stone is cold, but at a distance, they look like living people. I've had nightmares where they're covered in snakes, smothered, glistening in a sick parody of life. I don't let my head get to close, stretching out an arm to just touch them, run my fingers over their cold grey faces. I pretend I don't notice when the snakes hiss louder.

They are so fat, now. I wonder if they get hungry? The other day, one of them bit me. I know it happened. I felt the fang sink in, in the silence before I screamed. The blood was bright red, like a snake's eye, glistening on the tip of my finger. I stared at it for a long time, then loudly complained about loose nails in this house. I don't think they believed me. I think about looking in the mirror a lot, now. What would I see?

Helen Craig

Next week's competition: This week, try to give a voice to an inanimate object, in prose or verse. Your object could be anything from a tub of lip-gloss to a block of flats – what would it think and say, if it could? Would it have anything to tell you, any hopes or fears? Send submissions to Colette Sensier at literary@varsity.co.uk no later than 9 am on Monday February 23rd for the chance to win two tickets to the following week's ADC main show, and see your work printed in our next issue.

CASINO ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 15): Whizz, fuzz, click: the suspense is unbelievable. Unbelievable. Where's the puck going to land? Where the hell? You say something to calm your nerves: "Alea iacta est," you pipe up. But what the fandango does this even mean? »p20 The die is cast. »p21 The cast is die.





New Year

While others promised parties, drinks and laughs, friends half remembered and half liked with few exceptions, you would offer more: asked us to find your home in deepest Cheshire (my first time) and climb a hill at night to watch the fire which burst in frost-swept skies. This I desired: to leave my house on New Year's Eve, to stand up, and be counted, in a freezing field; meet long-missed friends, and see a thing of beauty.

Snow blanketed the roads, and trees dressed up in snow, that blossomed leaves of white and made a winter-spring, lay all across Bramhall; but once we reached your town there was no snow, just treacherous ice.

And what an ice it was! A cold the clouds made way for, baring all the stars in heaven as we had never seen them. Beth could name the Plough, Orion and Big Dipper, but you hurried us along, as we had dawdled enough; and Happy New Year waited on that hill, and strained to hurtle on across clear skies.

We walked in darkness; but you'd brought a torch to be our star - though wise men there were few tonight - and guided us towards the peak where New Year would be born amid the glow of tinted flame exploding in the air. But ice was on the roads, and we'd not reached the top before I turned to find that you had slipped and fallen on your face; and as I moved towards you, I myself, the one who claimed to stumble often, rarely fall, put one foot very wrong indeed, and crashed just millimetres from your yet-unconscious form.

We tried to wake you up and not to panic. No room for New Year where we sat, in terror as we were; we knew, even when you woke, that you would have to go back home, and then from there to hospital. 'That was our night!' I would tell others, when they asked how I had spent December 08's last; but if my face showed disappointment, I had lied - that was a night I will not soon forget.

The New Year came into the world, I grant, to find its birthplace... not what you'd expect (later we were surprised to find that we were quite alone in Macclesfield A&E). But you were not concussed, just bruised, let's not forget.

Let's not forget, we'd welcomed New Year in with gold and frankincense (if myrrh as well) - and what a welcome! After all, we'd climbed so high:

with you holding the light, and us, our arms outstretched, we met the new-born year - head-on one might say... I just hope that you, for all our sakes did not begin this year as you mean to go on.

OKEY NZELL



MATTHEW DRACE

Swansong

That morning when the sun rose
I was happy, then I opened the lock
Of memory and cried. I gained the top rung
Only to face an endless no and fall
Into the blank, imagining the flies
Above my body broken in two.

The guilty book, its letters in rows
Ages me, like a tree in the fall
I die without ever a bell being rung
And nobody knowing. At the edge of the loch
Do you dwell upon it too
And sigh as the swan further away flies?

Would you wish for a lock
Of my hair when it is out of sight, to
Remember? No, comfort yourself with the Fall
And know you're right, hands unwrung,
No tears. And so withering our rose
Dies, and the swan no longer flies.

RUTH DEWHIRST



ADAM HINES GREEN



Treesong

The trees are singing. On this day, the trees are singing. This morning I have woken up to a world blanchéd more white than ever I could imagine. Not snow, but white that streams from such a bright above it burns your eyes. White world burning cold.

The heavy, broken, sackcloth curtain. It slumps from one remaining hook down the side of the window. A giant hairy false moustache slipped from the nostrils of the pocked ceiling. Light pours onto the floor. The world is an almond plopped into the pan. It has shed this one, dark, lopsided piece of skin, and the rest is bleached blanchéd blanché.

And the trees are singing. Today the trees are singing. Not all the trees. But the two that stand cylindrical by my window, cylindrical as if you'd piled dark toilet rolls of foliage atop each other. Tall fat rounds of green, even these gleam silver today. Silver song.

These two, just these two. They hum and buzz a hundred different hymns. The low belch, a laughing cheep, the trickle of a cry; the half-mouthed squawk, the chant that opens up the colours of the rainbow and makes a xylophone along your spine.

In my mind I climb inside these trees. Maybe 'hedge', more than 'tree'; no branches, just a thickness of prickle that presses its glassy bottle green into pink flesh. I see the birds; a congress.

Some small and fat are painted with the Sistine Chapel, cerulean blue, and naked cherubs hanging wing on wing. One is rich; is tawny brown, reaping coloured autumn in long silky feathers. Russet, mustard, thickest mud and sun-warmed earth. A pair swoop from high above of lettered silk, Chinese characters that flick and change with each pluming shuffle.

Most beautiful is the queen peacock. Jewels encrust her break to tail. Smooth flat rubies danced about with diamond. Sapphires swirl across her white and naked skin; emeralds dropped like pebbles into golden sands; a spectrum of violets; dazzle, shine. She smiles with tears of liquid pearl, and her crest is a tiny tinny coroneted crown.

Treesong swells inside my breast and pinches at my ribs. Top to toe, beak to tail, they sing my sun-dewed bed.

When I walk across our bare floorboards, and down stone stairs that stab my naked feet with cold, it's you I see and not the birds. You slumped across the table. Your bottles glinting in the sun. Your cans a rainbow in aluminium. You haven't drawn your curtain either. The mirror dances white across the ceiling. Motes twirl in its path. I see my puffed and purple eye, and mildew, green, on the back wall. Your knuckles are encrusted with fresh scabs. Your grunting snore makes every flap of peeling paper tremble on the walls. Your sharp intake of breath, my naked fleshy skin.

The house is very silent when you wake, and look me in my eye.

The trees are not singing now.

FRANCESCA WHITLUM-COOPER



DANIEL STRANGE

Moments

I never noticed my moments with you
Wash away.
There were always plenty of smiles
To go around, always more
Bottles to be passed around, always
Another story to be told.
This day and the next,
Each moment meant nothing but
A ticket to the next,
Between bed sheets
Between scores
Streaming past us, following
The contours of our bodies.
We were embers glowering in the emptiness

Holding out against the emptiness
Holding each other in the darkness.

You started crying. I never really
Thought about it.
But I stopped to write it down.
Lest the moment slip my memory.

MATTHEW CHILD



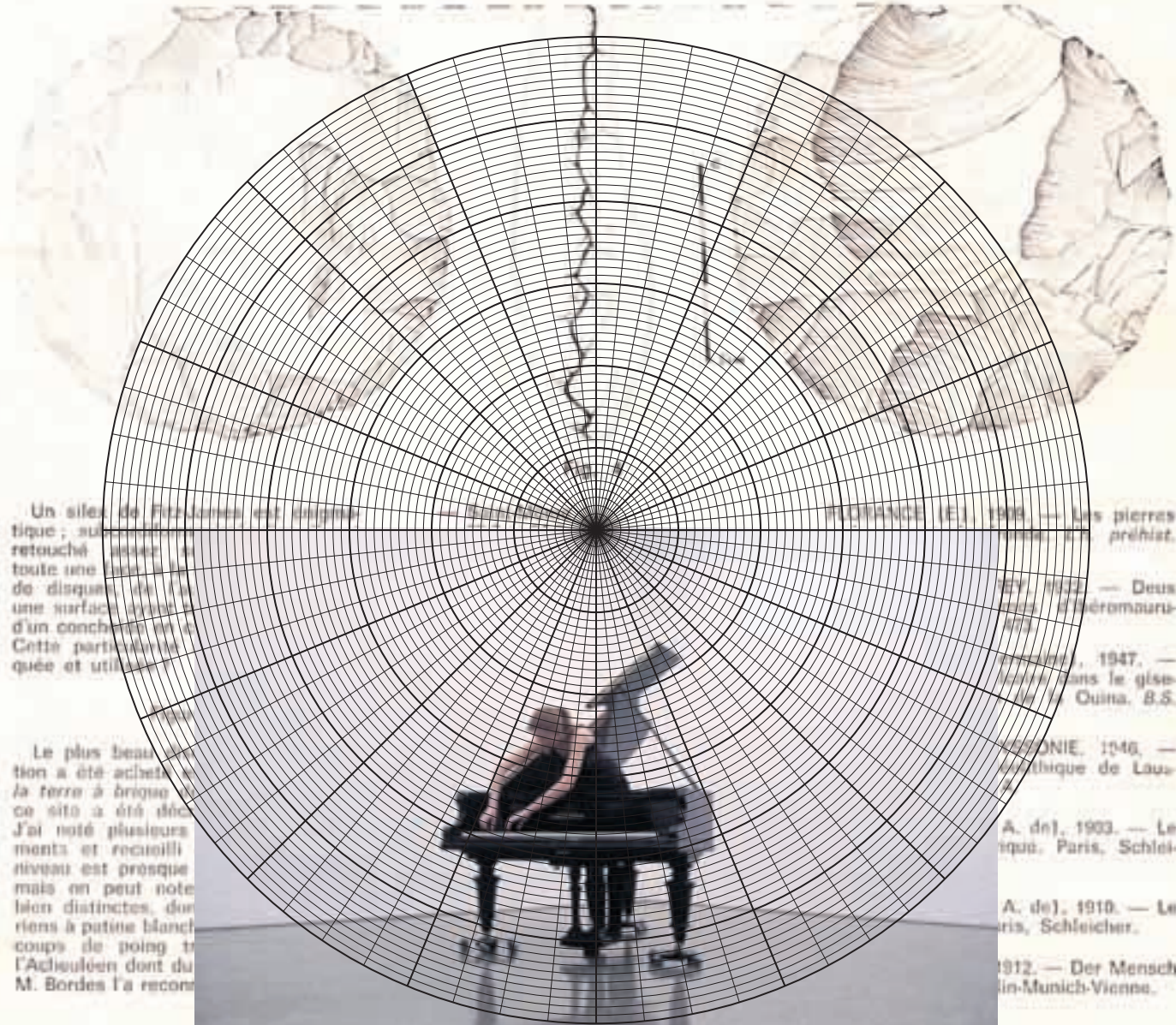
EMMA LOUGH



38 x 27

73.4 x 61.3 = 20.0

tarêches: B.S.P.F., p. 582.



THE VARSITY WEEK

THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS

Theatre

Friday 13th & Saturday 14th
Ongoing:
Three Sisters
The Big Book for Girls
Suits of Solemn Black
Waiting for Godot
Eugene Onegin
See the reviews on pp28-9.

Sunday 22nd
Tickle the Bishop
Selwyn College bar: 8.30pm (free)
A sizzling new comedy night.

Tuesday 24th
Richard II
ADC: 7.45pm (£6-£9)
Shakespeare's classic history play.
Runs until Sat 28th.

The Goat or Who is Sylvia
Corpus Playroom: 7pm (£5-£6)
A blistering tragicomedy. Runs until Sat 28th.

Night Breath
Corpus Playroom: 9.30pm (£5-£6)
A tale about three women subjected to the horrors of an ethically divided society. Runs until Sat 28th.

Wednesday 25th
The Tempest
ADC Larkum Studio: (£5-£7)
The Bard's magical last play. Runs until Sat 28th.

Medics Revue 2009
ADC: 11pm (£4-£6)
Because doctors-to-be are funny. Runs until Sat 28th.

The Heights
Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio: 8pm (£4)
This new student writing is a story about the House in the Wilderness. Runs until Fri 27th.

Crystal Maze: The Musical
Robinson College Auditorium: 8pm (£6-£10)
A musical inspired by the cult '90s game show. Runs until March 1st.

Music & Nightlife

Friday 20th
John Cooper Clarke
The Junction 2: 8pm (£15 adv.)
The punk poet formerly known as Lenny brings his verse to Cambridge, embarking on a "polysyllabic excursion through Thrillsville".

Boiler Room Ent:LIVE
St. John's: 8.30pm (£3)
Enjoy three hours of music from Chunky and the Rest and Boy Mandeville, as well as some of the cheapest drinks in town at this brand new John's night.

Saturday 21st
Green Mind 8th Birthday Part 1
The Portland Arms: 6pm (£6 adv.)
To celebrate their octennial anniversary, Green Mind Gigs bring you a night of musical gold, featuring The Joy Formidable and It Hugs Back.

Sunday 22nd
Late Of The Pier
The Junction 1: 8pm (£9 adv.)
Combining elements of disco and rave with their noise-pop sounds, the indie-dance four piece (below) will be supported by Connan Mockasin and Michachu.



Wednesday 25th
Sisters, Such Devoted Sisters fundraiser
Kambar: 10pm (£3.50 before 11, £5 after)
See Pick of the Week.

Art & Classical

Ongoing Exhibitions
Fitzwilliam Museum (free):
• 'I turned it into a palace': Sir Sydney Cockerell and the Fitz (until March 17th)
• The Immortal Stone - Chinese jades (until May 31st)
• Changing faces: Anthony Van Dyck as an etcher (until May 31st)
• Kachōfūgetsu - the natural world in Japanese prints (until May 17th, below)



Kettle's Yard (free):
• The Roundhouse Of International Spirits (until March 15th)

Saturday 21st
CUWO and OUWO
Trinity College Chapel: 4pm (£3 student - £7)
The Cambridge and Oxford University Wind Orchestras come together for one day, performing Copland and Williams.

Mozart's Requiem
The Dome, Murray Edwards: 8pm (£2 student - £5)
The Orchestra on the Hill combines with members of the hill college choirs to perform the 'Requiem in D-minor'.

Sunday 22nd
Brahms, Wagner and Long
King's College Chapel: 8pm (£5 student - £10)
The Orchestra of the King's College Music Society and King's Voices perform, featuring student composer James Long's 'Chaconne for Eight Winds and Percussion'.

Talks & Events

Saturday 21st
Varsity Trampolining Match
Ley's School Sport Centre: 10am (free)
Come out and show some support to the University's competitive trampoliners.

Popping Workshop with Special K
School of Pythagoras, St. John's: 5pm (free)
See Pick of the Week.

Fitz Sessions
Fitzwilliam Bar: 8.30pm (free)
This week's Sessions features stand-up comedy, poetry readings and folk music. Come for the music, stay for the drinks.

Monday 23rd
'How moral is bioethics?'
Pharmacology Lecture Theatre, Tennis Court Road: 8pm (£1, free to BioSoc members)
The BioSoc present this talk from UCL's Professor Lewis Wolport.

Tuesday 24th
Assessing Our Legacy
Fisher Building, St John's: exhibition 5.30pm, lecture 7.30pm (free)
As part of the University's 800th year celebrations, Cambridge University International Development is publishing a special edition of their magazine Vision, 'Assessing Our Legacy'. To launch it, they will be hosting an address by Professor Keith Hart, as well as putting on an exhibition to complement the issues raised by the magazine.

Wednesday 25th
Trinity College Literary Society
The Old Combination Room, Trinity: 7.45pm (£1/free for Trinity Members)
With a growing sense of a new direction for British poetry, TCLS showcase three young poets, Emily Berry, Sam Riviere and Jack Underwood, reading from their forthcoming publications.

Film

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Arts Picturehouse: Fri/Sat 12pm, 5.30pm; Sun/Tues 8.15pm; Mon, Wed and Thurs, 3.30pm
Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett tick all the Oscar boxes.

He's Just Not That Into You
Vue: daily 11am (Fri-Sun only), 2.15pm, 5.15pm, 8.30pm, 11.20pm (Fri, Sat and Wed only)
An excremental convocation of Hollywood artistes who presumed themselves heavyweight enough to dabble in this schlock untarnished. They shouldn't have been so sure... Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7C6ym5gf5s> to laugh at, not with, them.

Revolutionary Road
Arts Picturehouse: daily 4.30pm (until Wed 25th)
Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet shout at each other and make up, then shout at each other and make up. For two hours.

Three Monkeys
Arts Picturehouse: daily 12pm (not Sun/Wed), 2.15pm (not Sun), 6.45pm, 9pm
Cannes-approved thriller. Themes include evil, adultery and murder. Don't expect big laughs.

Vicky Cristina Barcelona
Arts Picturehouse: Fri/Sat, 3.15pm, 8.45pm, 11pm; Sun, 1.15pm, 3.30pm, 6pm; Mon/Thurs, 1.15pm, 7pm, 9.10pm; Tues, 11.30am, 3.30pm, 6pm; Wed 11am, 1.15pm, 7pm, 9.10pm
The latest offering from Woody Allen. One of the wryest and least sentimental films with Oscar buzz surrounding it. Did we mention Penelope Cruz and Scarlett Johansson have a snog...? Goodo.

St. John's Films
Sunday 22nd: 7pm and 10pm
The Spirit
Thursday 26th: 9pm
Happy-Go-Lucky



Sisters, Such Devoted Sisters fundraiser
Wednesday 25th
Kambar: 10pm (£3 before 11, £4 after)
Skinny jeans are banished, as Kamar descends into cross-dressing mayhem. Cambridge's finest will be spinning Electro, Disco and Sleaze to the gender-bending crowd at this fundraiser for a play of the same name. Good, clean fun for straight boys, gay girls and everything in between.



Popping Workshop with Special K
Saturday 21st
School of Pythagoras, St. John's: 7.45pm
Do you know your toprock from your freezes? Fancy yourself as a b-boy or b-girl? The popper Special K was the winner of Urban Sinfonie and UCF Sheffield, and will be holding this dance workshop for the University's Breakdancing Club. Come along and learn some of his recent techniques and routines!



Money Troubles

THE BLOCKBUSTER HISTORIAN AND PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL NIAL FERGUSON WAS BACK ON OUR SCREENS THIS WINTER WITH A NEW SERIES ABOUT MONEY. FROM HIS OFFICE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, HE TALKS TO ROB PEAL ABOUT THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

"I'm sorry to say that the interview will have to be next week," Niall Ferguson told me over the phone in his trademark doleful burr, "but I am sure the financial crisis will not be over by then."

The next Thursday I rang him back, looking over the morning's news: Analysts at Business Monitor International predict unemployment to hit 11 per cent next year; global demand for oil faces biggest contraction since 1983; Bank of England launch a policy of 'quantitative easing' in response to 'a deep recession' - that's printing money to you and me. His prediction had not been wrong.

However, this was far from the most impressive of Ferguson's recent predictions. Watching his Channel Four series *The Ascent of Money*, I realized that to have timed his documentary's arrival on TV so perfectly, he must have seen the crisis coming. He tells me this was absolutely the case. "Not to blow my own trumpet, but a relatively small number of mavericks,

about the second quarter of 2007."

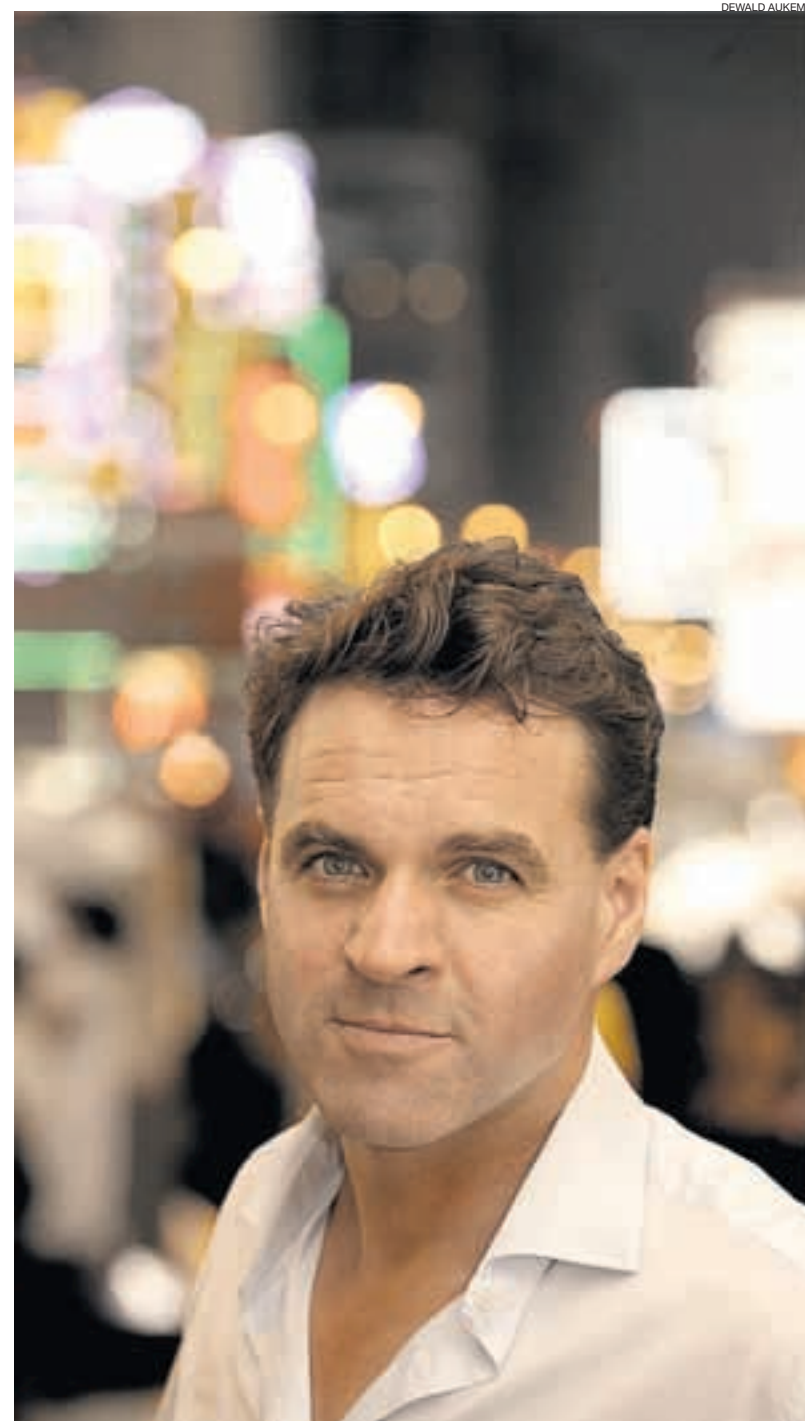
However, a pessimist was clearly not an easy thing to be during the euphoria of the noughties' boom years. "People were in denial, it's a psychological condition. If you are making tens of millions, or even hundreds of millions of dollars, it's because you're a genius, rather than because you are lucky. You're not really going to pay much attention to some academic who stands up at a conference and says 'this is not sustainable'". This is a key argument in *The Ascent of Money*: however much those in the financial sector want to imagine the good years can keep on coming, markets will never escape their natural fluctuations. "The masters of the universe were in some measures victims of hubris, you spelt it out to them in black and white: 'this is what happens in financial crises, they happen very often, this is what history tells you is going to happen now'. But it was very easy for them to retort: 'what's history got to do with us? We're somewhere new,

are either supposed to write about Tudor monarchs, or dictators, or social change, or...' he pauses to contain his irritation, "gender. But banks, the bond market? I mean most of my colleagues just thought I had flipped."

Ferguson's ideas have found a far more welcoming audience at his new home in the United States. He even holds advisory roles within the financial sector, something extremely unusual for a historian. However, Ferguson's time at Morgan Stanley and GLG seems not to have been completely to his liking: "One of the characteristics of being an advisor is that nobody takes your advice." I ask him what the best historical comparison is for the state we are now in, and his voice shudders as if he was about to inform me of the death of a relative. "At the moment the magnitude of the contraction of global trade is beginning to look reminiscent of the 1930s, it's really very disturbing. We are certainly in the worst economic crisis since the thirties now, there's no question."

The obvious difference between now and the thirties is the level of government activity trying to mitigate the damage, although Ferguson seems dubious about the possibility of any success. Despite believing that "the United States is in a better place than almost all the other countries in the world", Ferguson believes Obama has a stonkingly difficult task ahead of him. "Even before he entered the White House there was a commitment to a deficit of at least 8 or 9 per cent of GDP, and the stimulus packet and other measures will make that closer to 13 or 14 per cent of GDP. A deficit like that hasn't been run by the United States since the Second World War." Ferguson is fearful that Obama's biggest achievement will always remain getting into office. "Although he is a deeply impressive politician, and symbolises a fundamental change in attitudes towards race in the United States, Obama is still the man on the bridge on a ship in the midst of a perfect storm with a pretty substantial hole in the hull." The cultural impact of Obama's reaffirmation of the American Dream will not, Ferguson tells me, have any tangible effect. "Financial markets moved down on the day of his inaugural address so there hasn't been an Obama bounce. While it is extraordinarily pleasing to see that American voters are able to overcome centuries of racial prejudice, it has zero economic significance. Zero."

Whilst seeing him on the television, and reading his newspaper columns, it is sometimes easy to forget that Ferguson remains a full-time member of the Harvard history department. His role as a popular intellectual has led to a few jibes from fellow academics about his commitment to genuine academia, something Ferguson finds highly frustrating. He tells me with complete conviction that his role as a television historian is perfectly complementary to an academic career. "I think it would be



DEWALD AUKEMA

"OBAMA IS STILL THE MAN ON THE BRIDGE ON A SHIP IN THE MIDST OF A PERFECT STORM WITH A PRETTY SUBSTANTIAL HOLE IN THE HULL"

of whom I would say I was one, went around in 2006 saying something wicked this way comes, and we were somewhat lampooned for this."

Back in the heady days of early 2007, most of us still believed the guff about our modern economy having evolved beyond the age of boom and bust, but with the gift of retrospect it now appears we were listening to the wrong dour Scotsman. An episode from the documentary involved Ferguson strolling through Memphis and Detroit, bemoaning the American housing market. However, he tells me this sequence was filmed in early 2007, at a time when Northern Rock was still best known for sponsoring Newcastle United, and 'subprime' would have been assumed by most to refer to the grade of meat in Big Mac. "For me the Ah Ha moment was seeing a chart of subprime mortgage resets in New York in 2006; that was the easy predictor of this crisis. The chart showed that interest payments would jump upwards after a one- or two-year tether period, and it was clear that a whole number of people would suddenly just not be able to pay their monthly mortgage payments starting in

this time it's different." You could ask for no better demonstration of Bernard Shaw's adage that we learn from history that we learn nothing from history. As Ferguson tells me in grievous tones, "I don't think I persuaded many people."

For Niall Ferguson, when it comes to global finance, history could not be further from Henry Ford's consignment as 'bunk'. "What else do we have to go on? All the other economic models turned out to be crap! So we don't really have much more to go on than history." However, an understanding of financial history amongst members of the business world is "conspicuously absent". This is something Ferguson finds difficult to fathom, as he is adamant that financial history is central to understanding the modern historical process. This was an argument Ferguson first made ten years ago when he published *The House of Rothschild*, a history of the banking family, and argued that you could not understand the nineteenth century if you did not understand the bond market. "Very few people in Britain accepted that point, and I was regarded as a little odd for wanting to write the history of a bank. Historians

The Ascent of Niall Ferguson

1985	Graduates with First Class Honours from Magdalen College, Oxford.
1987	Joins Cambridge as a research fellow at Christ's.
2002	Leaves Britain for the United States.
2003	Presents six part series <i>Empire</i> on Channel Four, and the accompanying book is a bestseller in both Britain and America.
2004	Named in <i>Time Magazine's</i> list of the world's 100 most important people.

CASINO ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 15): Yup, the cast is die. Or, in better English, "the cast have died". Which is fuckin annoying considering that this is *Casino* that you're trying to film here. You know: Scorsese's mid-90s Vegas-set Mafia classic starring Robert De Niro. Or at least, you bloody should know: you are, after all, the Associate Producer on this joint. Anyway, De Niro's dead. »p24 Call up Pacino. »p25 Call up Joe Pesci.

Theatre of the Obscure

TIRED OF THE ADC? EMMA HOGAN IS YOUR GUIDE TO CAMBRIDGE'S BEST ALTERNATIVE THEATRE SPACES

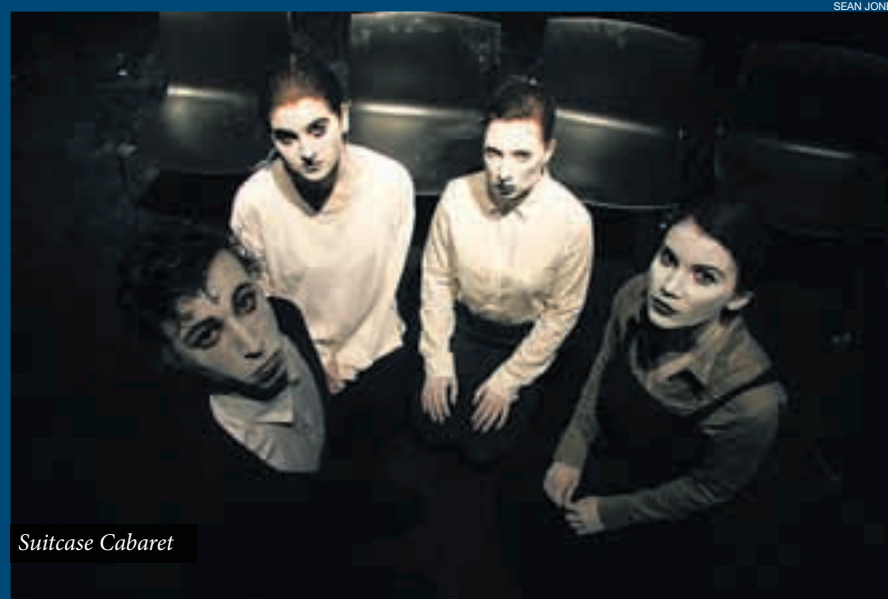
Charles Larkum Studio



SEAN JONES

is already promising to be a great student space, as a platform for both new writing and more experimental theatrical adventures. Named for the former Chairman of the Executive Committee of the ADC, Charles Larkum (1946-2006), the Studio is, true to its namesake's vision, a step into the future for Cambridge student theatre's oldest and most comfortable home. Upcoming shows to watch out for: Oscar Toeman's version of *THE TEMPEST* in Week 7, and the brilliant ten-minute Caryl Churchill short on Gaza, *SEVEN JEWISH CHILDREN* (March 4th-7th).

Cambridge student theatre is exciting. Sometimes, almost too exciting: often, unless you spend every night at a different venue, you can't see everything on in a given week. However, away from the big ADC blockbusters, Corpus mainshows, and late-night Smokers, there are small venues that are becoming increasingly popular with student directors, actors, dancers, and musicians. Although these spaces rarely get the publicity they merit, or the audience members they deserve, they offer fun (and often very cheap) evenings of entertainment and theatrical risk-taking.



SEAN JONES

Suitcase Cabaret

The Shop, XVIII Jesus Lane

18 Jesus Lane has become synonymous with Cambridge's creative community, holding exhibitions, gigs and life-drawing sessions on a weekly basis. However, it is also an incredibly exciting place in which to perform, its bare, blank walls and exposed metal beams giving it a peculiar sense of atmosphere. Chairs – always helpful – have recently been added.

Tucked into the familiar ADC complex, the brand-new Larkum Studio

Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio



SEAN JONES

The father of alternative theatre spaces has to be the Judith E. Wilson. Down in the depths of the English Faculty, it is one of the best-equipped but least known spaces in Cambridge, and has been the venue for some of the most exciting performances to have been produced

in the city over the past couple of months. From Josh Seymour's SUBMERGE (where only one audience member could enter at any time) to David Brown's THE CEMENT GARDEN and Ed Kiely's recent FILM NIGHT, the Judith E. Wilson's versatile black-box space has presented works that are constantly, consistently exciting and new. This term a piece of new writing - Jess Hyslop's THE HEIGHTS - can be seen in the Studio, while from March 11th-13th the space will be home to the MISCELLANEOUS THEATRE FESTIVAL, where new works and performances, ranging from improvised mimes, abstract musical pieces to play readings and half-hour productions, will be performed for free. The Judith E. Wilson will be transformed every night in an exciting venture whose goal is to break the bounds of what conventional theatre in Cambridge can be.

College Spaces

Unlike the usual May Week fare, which usually involves students running bacchanically about the Backs in Shakespearean garb, Finn Beames' recent production of LE FIL took the King's Fellows' Garden and did something interesting with it - using shadow puppets, torches, trees, rope and rubbish bins.

LE FIL showed that Colleges are, then, full of such potential performance spaces: whether in a garden, a random room, or the bar. The Pembroke New Cellars, a simple studio-like performance space with no wings

but plenty of versatility, consistently presents a wide range of student theatre, especially pieces of new writing. Newnham Labs, which resembles in many ways a Victorian school from a Thomas Hardy novel, also holds small-scale productions, while the School of Pythagoras in St John's boasts an 800-year history - maybe making it more appropriate than one of Cambridge's more modern venues for last term's production of TROILUS AND CRESSIDA. Queens' College's Fitzpatrick Hall is the biggest of them all: used by rowers in

the daytime, it is transformed by night, and in Week 7 it will play host to a production of Shakespeare's 'lost' play CARDENIO.

The versatility of College places was perhaps best shown by the recent whistle-stop tour of SUITCASE CABARET, which performed at Jesus Chapel, Clare Cellars and The Shop. The face-painted Cabaret crew showed that, with a

trolley full of props, some lighting, an excellent live band, and the willingness to experiment, seemingly simple venues could be brought to life for even a single night.



SEAN JONES

The School of Pythagoras at St John's

Pardon My French

STEPHEN CLARKE IS ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST NOTORIOUSLY FOULMOUTHED EX-PATS. HE TELLS LIZZIE DAVIS HOW HE'S MANAGED TO TEASE THE FRENCH WITHOUT HITTING A NERVE

I hope you won't misunderstand me when I say that Stephen Clarke writes shit titles. He is the author of the series which begins with *A Year in the Merde*, followed by *Merde Actually*, *Merde Happens*, and...well, you get the idea. Clarke is unconcerned by the popular association of his name with the French word for 'shit': "It's my brand name. My mum thinks it's very funny that now, in publishing circles, and in lots of different countries, my name is associated with the French word for shit. She says, 'that's not why I got you educated,' but it suits me fine."

Wearing checked trousers and a velour jacket, and sitting in a particularly plush chair at the Union, Clarke looks the epitome of an Oxbridge intellectual, which of course he is. Now fifty, he studied modern languages at Christ Church, Oxford, although prior to that he was, he says, "just a sort of middle-class kiddie... it was a big shock to be with all these Hooray Henrys." He began writing at Oxford, where he and some friends founded a magazine, which was promptly banned after one edition on account of improper jokes about the Dean's 'organ'. ("We were very proud of ourselves," Clarke brags.) After Oxford, he worked for HarperCollins, putting rude words into their French dictionaries – 'motherfucker' apparently was one of his.

"THE ENGLISH CHANNEL IS TWENTY MILES WIDE AND A THOUSAND YEARS DEEP"

As far as his Oxbridge education goes, Clarke is full of praise: "at Oxford they train you to defend your opinion, until someone can prove that you're wrong. But it's that kind of intellectual exercise which you don't get in France [at university] at all."

And here we encounter the contradiction in Stephen Clarke, one which appears in his books, which comes across in conversation, and which reared its head in the talk he later gave at the Union: he doesn't seem to like the French. He claims to like them, of course, and is very quick to remind me that his books are a big

hit in France. But he always presents French culture as something very alien, something entirely incomprehensible to 'the Brits'. So incomprehensible, in fact, that we need a guide book to help us out. Luckily, Clarke has one on hand: one of his recent works, *Talk to the Snail*, is a list of eleven commandments to help a Brit survive in France.

Despite his protests, one can only come away from Clarke's books with the distinct impression that the French are a nation of rude, opinionated, snail-eating, sex-obsessed hypochondriacs. On his website, Clarke does admit, "There are lots of French people who are not at all hypocritical, inefficient, aggressive, arrogant, adulterous, or incredibly sexy. They just didn't make it into my book..." Nevertheless, after reading *A Year in the Merde*, I did wonder why Clarke had chosen to live in France at all: while he insists that "the French have got it right," he writes on the second page of *A Year in the Merde* that "the French are hell to live with."

But live with them he has, for fifteen years, nor does he have any plans to move back to England. "I'm very happy in France," he says. "I have my own little cottage industry really, with me in Paris. It's a great base; I know France much better than I know England now." When asked about his daily routine, he

says, "My ideal day would be to get up, go and have a quick cup of coffee at the café on the corner, standing at the bar. Come back and write, just write – that would be my ideal day. But it varies enormously." Idyllic. But there is something, at least, that he misses about England – "Marks and Spencer's Wensleydale and carrot chutney sandwiches. You can't get Wensleydale, in fact, you can't get any sort of crumbly cheese in France." And beer.

After 15 years on the continent, then, what has Clarke learnt about the French national character? "They're very French, they say they're being taken over by Anglo-Saxon culture, but it's complete nonsense. It's not an island, but they're like an island race. Their national character is unchangingly, unthinkingly French."

There is a self-satisfied tone discernable in Stephen Clarke's speech, especially when he makes sweeping statements about the French, which he often does: for example, "The French aren't fascinated by money," and "They love it when you talk about them." The fact is Clarke has made a living for himself through being, as he puts it himself, "an Englishman in France. Being an Englishman in England is not – well, the

market's flooded really." Clarke is a self-styled saviour for British tourists and ex-pats in France: he has to make the French seem incredibly foreign and difficult to understand ("the English Channel is twenty miles wide and a thousand years deep") because otherwise, he'd be out of a job. If every British person could cross the channel, integrate easily, get on well with French people, and pick up the language, Stephen Clarke *would* be well and truly 'in the Merde'.

Clarke is adamant that his books are affectionate in their teasing of the French. "They take it very well, but *only* if what you say is true." Leaving aside the definition of "true" for the moment, Clarke continues, with some examples: "Parisians do drive through red lights, they do let their dogs poo on the street, they can be really awful at service although they can be quite good as well." The French apparently lap this stuff up. So do his books help improve Franco-British relations? "It would sound a bit arrogant if I said yes [pause] but I'm going to have to say yes. Because people have told me that."

Much of Clarke's books are dedicated to recounting fictional protagonist Paul West's successful and not-so-successful encounters with women: the married woman at the office, the forgotten one-night stand, the boss's daughter. When asked if he thinks his books appeal more to men than women, however, Clarke says "I don't actually think of an audience when I write, I just write what I think is funny and what I think is true. There's no audience. At my readings [the audiences] vary enormously, you know, a couple of old ladies, men who think they're the hero."

I couldn't help wondering whether said old ladies had read his books properly, given that his books contain passages such as "a chocolate sponge pudding that, like the beef, was uncooked in the middle. It was like oral sex with extra cocoa butter," and "[she] left me nailed to the table by a hard-on that it would have taken a UN resolution to disarm."

Stephen refused to be drawn on the question of male humour and sexism, saying simply that he thought his books would appeal to "anyone who's interested in France and wants a bit of a laugh". Any objections I have to these passages are obviously due to a very British, misplaced sensitivity. While I harbour such views, I can only ever dream of being one of the "totally unpolitically correct women with great underwear" who people Clarke's France.

Already having guessed the answer, I asked whether his next book will have the word 'merde' in the title. "Oh, most definitely. I spend most of my life trying to think up new book titles with the word 'merde' in them." Sadly, I don't think he was joking.



In the Shit

Stephen Clarke's *Merde* series comprises four books:

A Year in the Merde (2004)

Merde Actually (2005)

Merde Happens (2007)

Dial M for Merde (2008)

He is also author of
Talk to the Snail (2006)

For more information and to join
Clarke's online mailing list, visit
www.stephenclarkewriter.com

CASINO ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 15): You give Pacino a tinkle. He picks up. "Pacino," you say. "Pacino." (Always get the name right first). "Speaking," he responds. "Pacino, I've got a proposition for you." "Ah, yes?" (This is quite a repartee you've got going). "Yes, I want you to play De Niro's part in *Casino*. You look really similar." Bad move. "Piss off," he posits. Why so pissed? »p30 He doesn't do sloppy seconds. »p31 He missed the urinals.

Chinese Democracy

IT HAS BEEN ALMOST TWENTY YEARS SINCE THE TIANANMEN SQUARE PROTESTS. ZING TSJENG TALKS IDEALISM AND REVOLUTIONS WITH WANG DAN, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS DISSIDENTS INVOLVED IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS

Wang's attitude to his past is characteristically blasé, and it feels bizarre to be in the Cambridge Union bar, interviewing a man who calmly tells me how his best friend was killed in one of the most famous government massacres of the century. I want horror stories; I want tears and shaking of fists at the Chinese government. In short, I want to be re-fed the comforting Western narrative of valiant personal struggle against cruel dictatorship: Wang Dan versus the Machine. The truth is not that simple, and as it turns out, the truth is what Wang feels most strongly about.

The softly spoken academic in front of me was born in 1969, a year of upheaval and change in the West. The Beatles played their last ever concert. Man landed on the moon. Hundreds of thousands protested against the Vietnam War. In China, the 60s were relatively quiet, although the early part of the 70s saw a young man discover a book of essays by Soviet dissidents in his high school library. This boy would later become the Peking University undergraduate who topped the list of most wanted 'counter-revolutionaries' published after June 4, 1989. At the time, Wang Dan was only 20. After a year of hiding, he was arrested and sentenced to five, then eleven years in jail. Just before then-President Bill Clinton's visit to China in 1998, Wang Dan was conveniently released into exile in the United States.

The Tiananmen protests began as a vigil on April 15th for Hu Yaobang, the reformist Secretary General of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and quickly spiralled into a protest of over 10,000 students and workers marching for reform and democracy. It encompassed a hunger strike that grew to include over one thousand people and expanded across China, reaching even the then-British colony of Hong Kong, where 1.5 million people marched in support of the students. On May 20th, martial law was declared and the army was sent in. Armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and armed troops with bayonets approached the Square on 3 June. Foreign correspondents present described "indiscriminate fire", Chinese soldiers using AK-47s on crowds of protesters. On June 4th, the Square was cleared. The era-defining image that emerged was that of a lone protestor who stood in front of a column of tanks as it approached an intersection on the Chang'an Avenue. In English, its name translates to 'The Avenue of Eternal Peace'.

All of this feels like a book we've already read. But to hear Wang tell it is to hear a story of a sudden twist of fate in the life of a young, politically aware university student; one that would eventually lead to exile from the country he fought for. "We never planned for it to be so big," Wang says. "In the 80s, there were a lot of student movements. I thought it would just be another protest. The situation gradually got out of our control." Wang was never

a diehard activist in the first place. He gradually became a high-profile student activist, but only received cautions from the university office, and vague threats of the police getting involved. He dismissed them, and even now, continues to dismiss the threat of Chinese surveillance. Wang wasn't even in the Square when the massacre occurred – he was back at his university. Now 40 years old, he lives in America and is the head of several Chinese pro-democracy organizations. I ask if he thinks he will ever return.

"Sooner or later," he says immediately. "I'm prepared for that day." Exile has been kind to him; during the talk, I watch him charm the mainly Chinese audience with quips and jibes at the current Chinese government. It's a talk he's given many times before: Wang has been campaigning ceaselessly for over two decades. His easy-going demeanour only drops when somebody accuses him of being disloyal to China. I get a fleeting glance of the Wang from decades past – fiery, idealistic and impassioned with the utter truth of his beliefs.

What few people understand about political activists and dissidents is their optimism for a better world. Wang, despite joking that he might not "recognize anything" should he return to China after all these years, loves his homeland. The fierce disappointment that China has not done better by its people is what drives him: "Chinese people are human beings. They deserve to have their dreams. Under a dictatorship, people can't fulfil their dreams. We aren't animals. If we were, we could eat, we could drink, but we're not – we need something more than just a good standard of living. We deserve to expect more from the government: we deserve to live freely. At least in a democracy that might happen."

I suggest that democracy might be quite unnecessary in China, given that it's managed to leapfrog from a third world state to one of the world's biggest economies with little but a cursory nod towards liberalization. Perhaps sooner or later, real political reform will just naturally occur?

Wang shakes his head. "We have a market economy under a one-party system. We have had economic reform for 30 years, but it has never led to democracy. It won't start now."

He doesn't just stop at criticizing the government, either; for Wang, one of the worst crimes is that the Chinese people allowed an authoritarian government to come to power. "If the people cannot take on their responsibility, we cannot put hope in our leaders. We cannot rely on leaders to do our thinking for us." The truth is that few of us in the West, let alone in China, dare to directly challenge a government when it fails its people. We hide behind online forums and hastily scribbled petition signatures. We take the piss out of those in power but never lift a real finger to act, let alone throw a shoe (I ask Wang about the shoe-throwing

incident in Cambridge. He shrugs it off as one of the more amusing pitfalls of having free speech). More often than not, we go along with whoever's at the top and complain afterwards. In the process, we conveniently obscure our own complicity in acts we later find horrifying.

For Wang, one of those acts is the Tiananmen Square massacre. Another is the Cultural Revolution, the campaign to rid China of its "liberal

history, glossed over by the Chinese government, and handily ignored by first-world nations who fall over themselves trying to make business deals with the world economy's newest kid on the block.

"The whole nation should know that the Cultural Revolution occurred because the Chinese people actually supported the Communist Party," Wang argues. "There was collaboration between the people and the author-

ity. It is a huge historical legacy. If the Chinese people really want democracy, we should take our part of the responsibility, and then we can criticise the authority. The important thing is, we cannot cover up the truth. Without truth, there is no space for forgiveness. If you want to go towards the future, you have to know your past."

The activists campaigning for a more democratic China are those who know the past all too well: most of

"HIS EASY-GOING DEMEANOUR ONLY DROPS WHEN SOMEBODY ACCUSES HIM OF BEING DISLOYAL TO CHINA. I GET A FLEETING GLANCE OF THE WANG FROM DECADES PAST – FIERY, IDEALISTIC AND IMPASSIONED WITH THE UTTER TRUTH OF HIS BELIEFS"

bourgeoisie" elements. The Cultural Revolution brought almost all economic and social activity to a halt: millions of people were displaced from their homes, and countless ancient buildings, books and works of art were destroyed. In some of the most extreme cases, the Red Guards beat so-called 'counter-revolutionaries' to death, and ate their flesh and liver.

Now the Tiananmen and the Cultural Revolution are whispers in

International Human Rights Day. The Chinese government celebrated by detaining several of the people involved. Despite this, Wang remains optimistic: "The Chinese people are getting braver to speak up for their rights."

It's easy to see China as a country poised on the brink of unspeakable wealth; but it is also a nation with an unspeakable past and an unimaginable future. It's up to people like Wang Dan to dream of where that future might lie.



ZING TSJENG

Food Colouring

TO LIVEN UP THEIR DIETS, LAST WEEK **KIRAN MOODLEY** AND **LAUREN SMITH** LIMITED THEMSELVES TO ONE COLOUR OF FOOD A DAY, A CHALLENGE WHICH BROUGHT BOTH UNWANTED RESULTS AND UNEXPECTED REVELATIONS

It struck us exactly half way through the first triangle of a cheese toastie. Not the texture or the taste, but the colour. Our lunch was completely yellow. Right there, in the history faculty tea room, we made our pact. Over five days, we would discover what it would be like to eat just one colour of food. This challenge was not entirely whimsical; for Kieran it was a response to recent jibes at excess flab, with one friend coining the rather hurtful nickname 'Moob-ley.' Could a colour-a-day diet be as successful as the meaty and buttery delights of the Atkins? It would certainly be more inventive. Such a task would need solid rules: we were allowed to consume colourless liquids, not allowed to eat the same food all day, and not allowed to dye food the desired colour. We were determined to succeed and neither surrender nor starve before the week was out. It was a serious test of endurance, and this is our story.

Monday

LS: Naively, we thought red would be an easy start. It wasn't. Sneakily, most red food actually is not; see red cabbage, red lentils, red kidney beans. My delicious fruit breakfast was followed by tomato soup, while dinner was tomato sauce (Lloyd's very own) with pepperoni and red peppers. No carbs, no caffeine. Just all the strawberries, cherries and cranberry juice I could stomach. So understandably, one glass of red wine and I was pretty tipsy. I collapsed in a heap hoping that the future really would be brighter with orange.

Tuesday

KM: I had initially feared orange would be the most difficult, but after the carb-sparse Monday it was heaven. Two oranges were sufficient for breakfast, and then Lauren and I enjoyed one of the best lunches of the week: orange pasta, Red Leicester cheese and smoked salmon (deemed orange, justifiably I feel). In the evening, Clare Buttery rose to the occasion providing sweet potato and carrots, finished off with an orange melon.

Wednesday

LS: Yellow Wednesday started in the Vaults when I had to persuade the barman to make me a yellow cocktail, involving copious amounts of pineapple juice mixed with some undecipherable alcoholic concoction. After indulging in a trip to the van for cheesy chips at 2am (it was yellow day after all), banana, cereal and vanilla rice pudding provided a much-needed breakfast. Parsnip soup was lunch; chickpea, potato and sweetcorn curry, dinner and maderia cake, custard and grapefruit dessert. All in all, yellow is pretty tasty.

KM: I always knew I'd enjoy this day, especially since Michelle Obama's yellow inauguration outfit has made it the colour of the season. A banana managed to see me through the morning, until a rather hefty lunch of potato, quiche and pasta. My sister visited in the evening and was greeted with the unusual phrase, "Oh Katherine's cooking us a yellow dinner. I can only eat yellow, you know." An eggy-rice, chicken and onion dish finished off the most stomach-filling day of the week.

Thursday

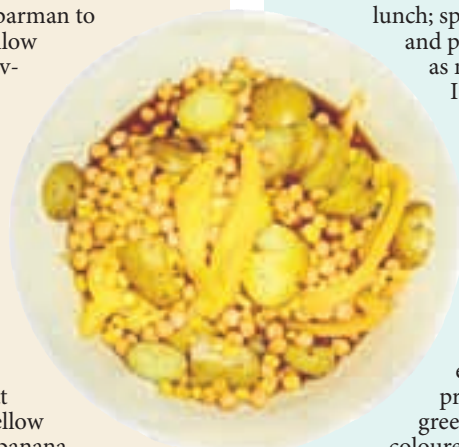
LS: A kiwi and green tea breakfast; avocado salad and pea soup lunch; spinach pasta, peas and pesto dinner and as much celery as I could munch. Green day was flavoursome and healthy. A successful day was topped off with the obligatory Kam-bar applesourz at the (wait for it) Go Greener event. I am now pretty certain that green is my favourite coloured food. I swear I had a slight metallic taste in my mouth after dinner though. Is it possible to overdose on iron?

KM: Green day presented the first dilemma of the week: a 21st meal in the evening at Pizza Express. This was when I realised how difficult diets can be to your social calendar. I was reminded of a Channel 4 documentary on 'Raw Foodists', where one woman had given up on any social activity due to her sole reliance on raw food. While I managed a kiwi for breakfast and green peppers and salad for lunch, come dinnertime I spoke to Lauren and we agreed that I could take the evening off just this once. Sorry people, but in my defence I did have applesourz later in the evening to make amends.

Friday

KM: One of the staples of my diet is a few helpings of Coca-Cola per day, and I don't think I'd been without it for so long since an attempt to give it up for Lent in 2004. Early morning tea with a croissant was the perfect cure after the previous late night. Somehow lunchtime seemed to pass me by; I managed to survive on a Snickers and two cans of Coke. This may sound unhealthy, but according to US government school meals policy, Snickers are allowed because those venerable peanuts contain sufficient nutrients. Dinner was by far a highlight of what was a bizarre week. Wholewheat pasta, mushrooms and lamb mince was a good end to a week which was at times memorable, and at times just plain hard. What's the overall effect on my body? Well, I've just posted my faeces to Gillian McKee, so I'll be sure to let you know.

LS: Finally, I could have a cup of tea. Brunch was a beef sandwich and raisins, and for dinner I went flavour crazy with a splash of soy sauce on my lamb and mushroom pasta. We may have been severely lacking in our five-a-day quota, but brown was a decidedly good finale. So, what did we learn? Although I wasted a lot of time in Sainsbury's manically scanning the shelves for the desired colour, it was, excluding Monday, fairly easy. My jeans even got a bit looser. Having said that, as I tuck into a multicoloured lunch, I have to say, I am glad it's Saturday.



Local Heroes

JOE HUNTER TALKS TO POLLY HODGSON, CURATOR AT THE CAMBRIDGE AND COUNTY FOLK MUSEUM, ABOUT SOCIAL HISTORY, FOLKLORE, AND SKIPPING

The Cambridge and County Folk Museum is on the way up the only hill in Cambridge. You cross Magdalene bridge, and reach the crossroads. As you wait for the traffic lights to change, look across the road and to the left at the strange, misshapen building on the corner. For 300 years, this was a pub called the White Horse until in 1936 a well respected figure in the local community, Catherine Parsons, turned the old-fashioned watering hole into a repository for the artefacts of working class life in Cambridgeshire.

"A lot of students must cycle past the museum every day and have no idea what's inside," laughs curator Polly Hodgson, "but it's like the Tardis in here!"

It is indeed, I thought. We were nestled underneath the ancient ceiling beams in the third floor administrative office. On our way there, passing through a labyrinth of small rooms and terrifyingly steep wooden staircases, I had been mesmerised by a collection of artefacts on a scale I had not expected. Each room was an Aladdin's cave; but rather than diamonds, gold, and jewellery I was confronted with the tools and incidental details of the daily life of the Victorian working man and his family. With (of course) a local twist. The museum is also concerned with folklore and mythology: Polly informs me that one of the founding members, Enid Porter, was an expert in Cambridge-shire folklore and wrote several authori-

tative books on the subject. The main aim of the museum, however, is to show the daily lives of the local townspeople from the Victorian period through to the Second World War. With a collection amounting to over 20,000 items it is, Polly assures me, one of the largest museums of its kind in the country.

I wanted to know what kind of significance Polly thought the museum could have for the undergraduates who pass through the University year after year. Was it realistic to expect them to identify with the town and its social history? She looked pensive. "I suppose what we can offer students is the opportunity to gain an understanding of how this city came to be the way it is today. We are concerned with the social history of Cambridge, so of course the idea of Town versus Gown is a big part of that."

Sensing that she had more to say about the relationship between the student populace and the museum, I asked about volunteering. "We currently have two students who volunteer here, and that's a really great way to get involved." As an entirely non-profit organisation, the Folk Museum relies upon volunteers (as well as the modest admission fee) to stay open.

One of the main ways in which Polly and her colleagues reach out to the local community is by running events, such as 'Skip, Skip, Hooray!' which will take place on Parker's Piece on Good Friday. "We've got quite a few students helping us organise that," she tells me.

Intrigued by what such an event could be about, I enquired further. It seems that there was an old fertility ritual in Cambridge and the surrounding areas, where families would gather on Good Friday for an afternoon of skipping and the learning of skipping rhymes. "We re-established the event last year, and it proved very successful."

As we began to wrap up our conversation, Polly reflected upon the other ways in which the Folk Museum could prove a worthwhile enterprise for students to get involved in: as researchers, or in order to learn the skills of curation. However, as I ducked the low beams and squeezed through the narrow doorways on my way out, I couldn't help feeling that this was a somewhat cynical way of looking at things. Ask not what the Folk Museum can do for you – ask instead what you can do for the Folk Museum? Perhaps not. Most of us are not inclined, or are too busy, to offer our services as a volunteer. Fair enough. But the least we can do is take the time to appreciate this town for what it is: a real, thriving city with a complex and interesting social history. A history in which each of us is only a small drop in a very, very big ocean.

If you want to find out more about the Folk Museum or their upcoming events in Cambridge and the surrounding area, pay them a visit at 2/3 Castle Street or go to www.folkmuseum.org.uk



Death or Glory

BRYAN OLIVER IS A WRITER, ACTOR AND DIRECTOR. HE HAS SEEN SUCCESS IN ALL THREE AREAS. HIS MOST RECENT PLAY, NIGHT BREATH, PREMIERES AT THE CORPUS PLAYROOM SOON. LAST WEEK, HE SPOKE TO ROBYN HOEDEMAEKER

"I was about eight or nine when I started writing and drawing my own comics," Bryan begins. "I entered a newspaper story competition when I was about eleven and although I didn't win the money prize, I did get a certificate of merit. This was sent to my school and although my story was read out to different classes, the certificate

got lost or stolen and I never saw it! I started writing plays when I was at drama school."

I ask about the inspiration behind *Night Breath*, and get a graphic response.

"One of the images that moved me to write *Night Breath* was of a church with piles of human bones still littered

about the floor and bloodstained walls. How could people, many of whom had been friends, suddenly turn against one another and commit such atrocities? I then researched into the events. Amnesty International and Medical Foundation were very helpful."

Continuing the line of questions, I ask for more information about the play's setting (which is never specified for the sake of the audience). Is the ambiguity intentional? Bryan says yes, "It's intentional. Although the play is based on events that happened in Bosnia and Rwanda, I think that civil war, genocide, and ethnic cleansing can happen anywhere given certain circumstances and triggers. Living in a democracy doesn't make us immune from cruel and savage behaviour. Hitler came to power through a democracy, and we know what happened next."

Such topics as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and Hitler's rise to power bring on the next question—is *Night Breath*, then, a piece of 'political theatre'? Bryan is quick to qualify: "Certainly not in any party political

way. The play doesn't propose any political solutions, but takes us on a dark, emotional journey, one that hopefully moves and pricks the conscience of the characters, actors, directors, audience and myself. Through a night of confession, confrontation and redemption, three women uncover the truth about horrifying events that change their lives forever. It's about human behaviour in extreme circumstances and how ordinary people can become both the victims and the victimisers. One could have a large debate on what is political theatre."

My final question about the play concerns the process involved in creating *Night Breath*'s intricate female characters. Is it difficult for a male author to craft the persona of a woman? "I try to write through a human perspective," Bryan states. "I think the similarities between the sexes far outweigh the differences. We all feel pain, have desires, hopes, dreams, etc. I think being an actor also helps me touch base with my emotions when I am writing. The original title for the play was 'Testimony Of The Dead', and

the three characters came to me like ghosts with their individual stories to tell. I was emotionally moved writing the play and audiences have been emotionally moved watching it."

A successful playwright and screenwriter, Bryan certainly has plenty of new projects on his plate. "I've just finished writing for a medical training DVD about Self Harm Minimisation," he tells me, "and will be playing a doctor in it. I'm working on *The Poetry Show* for poet/actors Laura Bartholomew, Anna Lindup, Mike Shannon and James Windsor. I compile their poems, write links, direct them – and also throw in a few poems of my own. I've also written a theatre play called *Scars* for TV's *Waterloo Road* actress Eva Pope. The play explores personal loss and its implications through the lives of three women who have been shaken by events such as the London bombings and the war in Afghanistan. We have a London Theatre pencilled in, so fingers crossed."

Night Breath is showing at the Corpus Playroom next week from Tuesday 24th to Saturday 28th at 9.30pm.



CASINO ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 15): You send James Gandolfini over to do the business. not only can he hold his own among Mafia types, but he's absolutely spoiling for a job - he's been out of work since the last episode of *The Sopranos* (6.21: *Made in America* - a classic). He renders the bathroom spotless and Pacino is mightily pleased. So pleased, in fact, that he rings you up and asks to resume negotiations. »p28 *Sure, Al.* »p29 *Choose Gandolfini instead.*

View from the Groundlings



James Sharpe tells us what's what in theatrical week 5

Well it's Week 5 and as we all breathe a collective gasp of despair, some people may be thinking about escaping the pain and suffering of essay crises for a blissful night at the theatre. Unfortunately, this week's Mainshow is merely going to accentuate the gloom. Yes, it's Chekhov; *Three Sisters* to be precise. It may well have been a comedy in Chekhov's days, but now such self-indulgent feelings as personal meaninglessness are very important indeed. Suddenly we all need to escape the drudgery of provincial (suburban) life for something more meaningful, such as a Bohemian lifestyle. In America, the pursuit of happiness is written in their constitution, and they achieved it through capital, not by buying organic clothing.

In such a vein, judging by the publicity material, seriousness and anguish will be the watchwords of this production, already creating something akin to hype on the Cambridge theatrical scene: great cast, challenging director, and a new translation by Rory Mullarkey. This is definitely one to watch.

After last week's superb production of *Death of a Salesman*, and with this week's dose of Chekhov, we have Shakespeare's *Richard II* to look forward to next week. In effect, these three plays have divided all the best actors and technicians in Cambridge between them. As such, look out for the knives as they act and tech their way to theatrical glory. *Varsity 100* may now be a whole year away, but don't think they haven't already got their eyes on the prize.

Elsewhere, just when you thought your life may still have a vestige of meaning, *Waiting for Godot* is on at the Corpus Playroom to confirm your utter worthlessness. To complement the Chekhov, West Road is hosting its own Russian tragedy *Eugene Onegin*, surely featuring some of Tchaikovsky's best music (not to mention roundly completing the battering to our will to live).

Nevertheless, there is light at the end of the tunnel, *Big Book for Girls* is the ADC's Lateshow, reminding us of our simpler schooldays when all one had to worry about were midnight feasts and fitting in. After you've had your existential being smashed, at least you can then have a jolly good laugh. And next week there's *The Medics Revue*, a run that is always hilarious.

Finally, I'm hearing great things about *The Tempest* on in the Larkum Studio next week. There are only thirty seats a night so book now.

THEATRE

Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov, translated by Rory Mullarkey

ADC Theatre, February 17th-21st

Dir. David Brown; CUADC

★★★★★

"It's a dreary world we live in, ladies and gentlemen," but at least there is fantastic theatre on at the moment. Like everything in the news this play is relevant to the credit crunch in its depiction of a decaying, privileged class bored of reassessing meaning in their world.

Rory Mullarkey's translation is modern, accessible, and engaging. Whilst *Three Sisters* is a serious piece about the hopes and frustrations of life, Chekhov believed comedy to be at its core. Mullarkey has excelled in this regard, the script clearly benefiting from his comic background. Contemporary vocabulary choices such as "overdose" instead of "poison" are used effectively whilst avoiding destruction of the historical setting.

Praise must go to Georgia De Grey

for her engaging set design. As soon as I see a stage laden with structures, and numerous candles, I tend to recoil and fret. "Is this really all necessary?" Thankfully, I worried in vain. The set created mood effectively to correlate with changing spaces and settings. The changes were by no means swift, but made pleasurable by a trio of talented musicians in rustic waistcoats.

"*Three Sisters* is a play that is about people," writes David Brown in his director's notes. It is due to his understanding of them that Chekhov is so captivating, demanding that a production's talent is sufficient to showcase the play's characters realistically. This is achieved partly due to the fact that casting of the major parts was perceptively executed, often playing to individual actors' strengths. Misha Verkek played the

elder Chebutykin with apt subtlety, Bea Walker played Natasha with precision, and Ed Martineau brought great comic energy to his interpretation of Kulygin.

The monologues and duologues perceptibly stood out against the busier scenes, where the sense of cohesion, a probable result of extensive ensemble work, felt occasionally unnatural. Josh Higgott tackled Andrei's monologue in the final act with impressive dexterity, whilst the scenes between Masha (Stephanie Bain) and Vershinin (Partick Warner) were the sexiest I've seen onstage since a scantily-clad Cirque de Soleil. For a second I wanted to be a restrained woman in a long skirt in provincial Russia to feel the arousal she did from a kiss on the hand. A new take on a classic with a stellar cast, *Three Sisters* is not to be missed. **Laura Andrews**



TIM JOHNS

The Big Book for Girls by Joe Richards

ADC Theatre, February 18th-21st

Dir. Nick Waters; CUADC

★★★★★

"Latecomers will be placed in detention," warned the flyer. As an avid Enid Blyton fan in my childhood (and, let's be honest, in my adulthood), I rocked up to the ADC in my metaphorical navy gym knickers with a feeling of great excitement. And I was not disappointed.

The Big Book for Girls follows the students from Whitegates School for Girls through teacher crushes, a school thief, midnight feasts and cricket games, "all culminating in a dénouement of ludicrously (and bloody funny) improbable coincidences." It is simply full of laughs; the bursting cackles with your head thrown back, the tittering nervous giggles that make you check the person next to you is laughing too, and the quacking squeals of pure shock.

This is largely down to the brilliant girl-power cast. Tamara Astor as Lesbia was incessantly superb, Victoria Ball played the perfect head girl and Méabh Maguire just epitomised double-breasted tweed and pleats. As for staging effects, keep an eye out for human toilets and choreographed confectionary. Fantastic.

At first I thought the play was a caricature that didn't take itself seriously and therein laid the charm. However, the last thirty seconds of action changed this all around, saying something more profound than "golly gosh" about the English mentality of the late 1930s, as the Austrian Jew gets sent back home to meet her fate. This ending is quite horrific after watching ninety minutes of farcical humour, but brings an element of hard reality to what would otherwise

be a mere cartoon.

The Big Book for Girls is penetrated with innuendos and jam-packed with some awfully spiffing language, what what. It may not be Shakespeare, but it ticks every box it sets out to. There are hardly any criticisms I could make, and those I could, I don't want to. Frankly, it's a huge success.

So, would I recommend that you see the play? Yes, if you went to a girls' school and miss lacrosse sticks and singing hymns. Yes, if you want to see Charlie Lyons wink seductively at you (and the rest of the audience, unfortunately). Yes, if you secretly always wished you went to boarding school. And even if you don't fit any of the above criteria? Yes. Or, I should say, rather!

Lauren Davidson



ZING TSJENG

RAG Stand-Up Comedy Final

ADC Theatre, February 17th

★★★★★

I was looking forward to the *RAG Stand-Up Comedy Final* because I thought that all the performers who made it this far would be at least vaguely entertaining. And I was right. I suppose part of what makes stand-up exciting to watch is the fear that at any moment the whole thing may descend into the hand-bitingly awkward; that the skilful orator guiding us to dizzying comedic heights might suddenly become just a flailing little figure on stage. Luckily, nothing on Tuesday night had this punch-yourself-in-the-face quality, so my first box was well and truly ticked.

On to the main matter at hand: was it funny? The short answer is YES, but with 250 words to go, I'll continue.

The show was made up of six separate routines so obviously some were brilliant

and equally, there were some weaker moments. Promising freshers Phil Wang and Dannish Barber managed to work the oft-time deprecated genre of the 'Cambridge joke' through well-thought-out observations (no lazy references to Facebook friends here) and because they were both just plain likeable.

Indeed, if there's one thing we learnt last night it's that getting the audience to like you works. That's what competition winner (the artist formerly known as Daran Johnson) did so well. His intelligent routine varied from simple observational anecdotes to a funeral speech and a reading from his "erotic-novel-cum-pornography." And when all's said and done, his delivery and accompanying Gervais-esque lupine grin was just really funny.

I think Johnson deserved to win but I actually found Liam Williams' set the most interesting to watch. His onstage persona (or perhaps just personality) managed to be vulnerable, chaotic and slightly crazed all at once.

Last mention has to go to the calm professionalism of host Keith Akushie (right) who told us about his rap/physics cross-over film (E = MC Hammer). With all this gushing praise that I'm throwing about you're probably wondering – why not more stars? It's really no reflection of the show's best moments but as a whole there wasn't the consistency needed for a higher rating. One raucous audience member in the front row should be thanked for distracting from lulls in pace with bolstering cackles. **Catherine Crosse**



SEAN JONES

Film Night ★★★★★ Kings' Jest ★★★★★

READ ALL THE REVIEWS ONLINE AT VARSITY.CO.UK/REVIEWS

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett
Corpus Playroom, February 17th-21st
Dir. Patrick Garety; Clare Actors
★★★★★

Last week's rant was supposed to be about the Corpus Playroom – encouraging all of you douchebags to get off your arses and see what theatre's like at a more intimate venue. Unfortunately, last week's show was a teeny bit gash, and so that was sort of stopped in its tracks.

But relax! This week, the rant can continue. Because this production was 100 per cent definitely the best thing I've ever seen in Cambridge, and I can guarantee that it will 100 per cent definitely be the best thing you'll see in Cambridge this term.

It's a notoriously difficult play to put on – owing partly to Beckett's arsey conditions for performance, but also to the fact that it's a play that verges on the deliberately boring. And yet director Patrick Garety has worked wonders with

what is, admittedly, a fairly good script (nice one, Samuel). The stage is almost bare, as Beckett demands (the directions read "A country toad. A tree. Evening."), but somehow the whole show manages to appear fresh and interesting and – most importantly – funny.

Praise is due for the whole cast (all five of them). From Charlie Lyons' wonderfully surly boy to Paul Coles' sweat-drenched, magnetic Lucky, everyone played their part, and to as high a standard as I've seen in any Cambridge venue.

Special mention must go to the play's three largest parts – Ben Kavanagh as Vladimir, Alex Lass as Estragon and Simon Haines as Pozzo. Haines was impeccably chilling as Pozzo, veering from charming member of the gentry to brutal shitbag in a single expressive twitch; Lass provided some of the play's

biggest laughs with perfect comic timing; and Kavanagh delivered the single best performance this jaded wanker has seen for a long time – a ball of nervous energy, hands clenching, eyes flickering, all the while making new sense out of some pretty dense material.

I'm not normally this effusive. Please don't take this as a sign that I'm all soft and mushy in the wake of Valentine's Day. Instead, realise that this is me begging you to go to a truly slick, professional, and entertaining show, and re-joining that the Playroom has finally put something on that does it justice. There's only one must-see show this week, and it doesn't feature a new translation or RSC-style face-shots on its publicity. Put simply, this is unmissable – rather aptly, it's just what we've been waiting for.

George Reynolds



PATRICK GARETY

Context



Week 6: The Goat or Who is Sylvia

Dealing with animals in theatre is something I know a little about. The challenge of keeping live lobsters (alright – crustaceans, not strictly speaking animals then) for a three-week run of *Dinner* at the Fringe last summer certainly added to my Edinburgh Festival experience, but I think I would draw the line when it comes to, say, a goat.

The Goat or Who is Sylvia, on at the Corpus Playroom next week, is a chaotic play even without the demand for an animal on stage.

"There is chaos behind the civility, of course," reads a stage direction in *The Goat*, and while, like all Albee's many stage directions, it is dauntingly specific to the lines that follow, it is also not a bad summary of a typical Albee play. *The Goat* is in many ways a distillation of Albee. Like his work as a whole it is discomfiting and experimental. The main plot line does, after all, concern a fêted architect who falls in love with, you guessed it, a goat. Yet the play is about much bigger issues than goat-sex: tolerance, revenge, love, and more. It's also very, very funny.

"All of my plays are funny," responds Albee, in a *Washington Post* interview. "My characters have senses of humour... I love the laughter that finally catches in the throat, and you suddenly realise, 'I'm not supposed to be laughing.'"

Often, that means laughing in the face of inappropriate and challenging issues. Albee remains fearless in his embrace of any taboo, especially sexual ones. Though this can certainly be a difficult pose to hold, he manages; recent works include fantasias not just on bestiality but anal rape, voluntary mastectomy and reverse circumcision. "I will go absolutely anywhere," he says. Clearly.

The Goat received mixed reviews when it first opened in the US, and that too is typical for an Albee play – it also received a Tony Award for Best Play. *USA Today's* Elysa Gardner called it a "self-indulgent mess", a "cynical, disdainful view of family life". Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* thought it contained "some of the most potentially powerful scenes in the Albee canon," but a "lack of emotional credibility is a problem throughout." However, the *Guardian's* Michael Billington believes that it is Albee's best play. "It's powerful and moving. It had a much more shattering effect on me than *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*"

Good reviews or bad reviews, I look forward to the chaos, goat-sex, love and all. Is it wrong that I'm really, really hoping the goat is real? *Tim Checkley*



ZING TSJENG

Suits of Solemn Black by Adam Hollingworth
ADC Larkum Studio, February 18th-21st
Dir. Adam Hollingworth; Pembroke Players
★★★★★

Tragedy is written in the title. I won't be robbing you of the twists and turns by telling you that. I'll just be preparing you for maybe a little too much tragedy.

I've begun on a downer which isn't fair. Hollingworth proves his aptitude for writing within the first ten to fifteen minutes. The despondent dialogue is masterfully peppered with light hearted one-liner jokes for a bit of harmless, gentle comedy. One of my favourites being one about a strawberry sundae being shortly followed by a death (context guys, it was funny!) and whilst I'm letting the English student within me get carried away here, praise is due to Hollingworth. Emulating realistic dialogue is no easy task.

Actors too! The naturalistic dialogue

was given life by the performances of the cast. Yet I have an idea that Hollingworth probably had great input on their characterisation, being both writer and director. That being said, Susie Chrystal's interpretation of Judith, the mother of this broken family, was subtle and convincing. Nervous hand rubbing, a downcast look in her eyes and a "weeping smiling" look across her face (yes, the English again... this is a Shakespearean quote), was there throughout the entirety of the piece. Frasher Mashiter also deserves praise. His distinguished voice and his brilliant control of posture and space in his interpretation of Mark all render the play a success. All the actors deserve considerable praise in fact. Bravo to the cast!

But, and it's a big BUT. Why did it all

go so Eastenders-ish? Maybe it's just my personal qualm with plots that are reminiscent of GCSE drama devised pieces but, without giving it away, it all got a tad too melodramatic for my liking. For a piece that started so subtly how did it transform to something so extreme? I do not know.

However, artistic decisions were well executed. The claustrophobic set coupled with the amber wash of lighting all ticked the symbolic boxes and the minimalistic piano piece captured just the right tone. Can I have the sheet music please?

I should think I am being too harsh; I just can't bring myself to accept the soap opera element. Definitely worth a watch be prepared... it is dialogue and drama heavy! *Gemma Gronland*



TIM JOHNS

PREVIEW

Eugene Onegin by Pyotr Tchaikovsky
West Road Concert Hall, February 19th-21st
Dir. Rosalind Parker; CU Opera Society

Thanks to print being a characteristically sluggish medium, there was no time to see the opening night of *Eugene Onegin*. Instead, I had to settle for the dress rehearsal.

I turned up to meet a bevy of rag-tag Romany peasants milling around the foyer. Interesting crowd, I thought. After negotiating my way to the auditorium, I saw enthusiastic techies slinging yards of coiled cables over their shoulder and clambering up huge aluminum ladders; then a lady in glasses asked me who I was. Crikey, I thought, this is avant garde! Not one to be outdone by a bit of freaky theatre, I was about to answer in character when my friend butted in:

"We're from *Varsity*."

"Oh, I see," she smiled, "just find a place anywhere."

No, it wasn't avant garde, they were just setting up. Of course.

Anyway, the house lights were still up and people were buzzing around, when those aforementioned peasants tottered on stage for a big number. The orchestra struck up: rich strings zigzagged to crescendo, and the voices burst over the top. In one second all the cables and techies, the lights and the scattered props, just didn't matter a fig: it was beautiful.

Up next was Tom Furness' Lensky who looked like a mix between the Artful Dodger and Flasman out of

Tom Brown's School Days. The skill and emotion which he laid into his aria was remarkable, even in rehearsal. Eugene himself is played by Gareth John. Donning a rather sinister cape; his rich baritone filled the auditorium effortlessly.

What else? Well, the female lead is played by Joanna Songi. Those of you who were lucky enough to catch the fantastic *Così fan Tutte* last month will know the outstanding seraphic purity of her voice.

So, though it's not finished yet, I'm willing to bet anyone a penny to a bag of wine gums that *Eugene Onegin* is going to be a big fat Russian triumph.

Nathan Brooker

iWatch

Week 5: The Gangster and the Pervert Peer, Channel 4, Monday 9pm, Available on 4oD.



For a brief period during the mid-nineties after I found out about the Kray brothers through the Blur single 'Charmless Man', I entertained the thought of becoming a gangster. From my house in rural Hampshire, I dreamt of running the meanest protection racket in 'ackney, lording over the criminal underworld of London's East End. Maybe I could have made a career out of it, had Guy Ritchie not got there first.

On top of a chance to return to my childhood dreams, the salacious tabloid title of this documentary immediately attracted it to me. In many ways, it was justified – the story of how London's meanest gangsters avoided prosecution of the whole of the 1960s is astounding. Ronnie Kray was a boxer from the East End who, alongside his brother Reggie, rose to become the most powerful member of the London underworld. David Bailey's iconic photograph of him reveals a heavy set man with small black eyes and a look that says, "I'm sizing up to murder you". He was also, in the words of rival gangster George Cornell, a "fat poof".

At a time when homosexuality was still punishable by prison, Ronnie Kray used his affairs with high profile politicians to protect his criminal activities. Having befriended the gay Labour MP and respected intellectual Tom Driberg, he moved on to a high profile Tory Peer. Lord Robert Boothby was the Boris Johnson of his day; a flamboyant, fun loving, jovial Tory with a drinking problem and a trademark bow tie. He offered Ronnie Kray protection from the law in return for working class rent boys and invitations to orgies in his East End Flat, Ceder Court. When the *Mirror* came within days of breaking the story in 1964, the political world on both sides of the party divide made a concerted effort to cover it up. Scared of their own vulnerability due to Driberg, the Labour Party gave Boothby the services of their crack lawyer, Goodman to turn the story around. He ensured a public apology and £40,000 in damages from the *Mirror*. They even managed to halt a Scotland Yard investigation into Kray's racketeering activities.

What was most remarkable about this documentary is it showed just how enormous the gap is between the truth, and the publicly acknowledged truth. It revealed a world of open secrets and unspoken dalliances which were just too shocking to allow the public to get hold of.

MUSIC & LITERATURE

Fine Fascination

Red Light Company

Lavolta Records, out March 2nd

★★★★★

Red Light Company. Does the name ring a bell?

Since their formation in 2007 the London-based five piece have hardly established themselves as indie's new (and much-needed) heroes; but on first listen, what is most surprising about their debut LP *Fine Fascination* is the number of recognisable tracks present. A slew of singles keenly supported by Zane Lowe and circulation on MTV have seen them creep into public consciousness.

Opener 'Words of Spectacular' bursts into a melodious flurry of pounding drums, driving guitars and soaring vocals. You may have heard the festive sounding 'Scheme Eugene' before; a single last year employing a nifty xylophone introduction and featuring lyrics that

name-check the Broken Social Scene. It's an obvious standout, although any comparisons to the cult Canadian collective stop there, with accompanying press notes shamelessly defining RLC's sound as 'arena-rock'.

I'm all for new bands showing a bit of ambition, but the record's expensive grandiose production, which seems targeted at securing stadium support slots with U2 this summer, is completely lacking in character. *Fine Fascination* is not, by any means, a bad album. However, when one hears the potentially brilliant 'With Lights Out' attempting to replicate Kings Of Leon, you can't help but think how much more exhilarating a direct, stripped-down version would sound.

As indicated by the half-naked couple

embracing on the cover, *Fine Fascination* is a record of passionate love, ill-fated relationships and teenage angst. Its lyrical content doesn't try to be original, a typical example being: "New Jersey television / Paris kept you sentimental / easy to forget yourself." But singer Richard Frenneaux's commendable vocal delivery, a bizarre Anglo-American accent, manages to pull it off. An impressive falsetto even creeps into new single 'Arts & Crafts' with great effect.

As indie continues to self-destruct into a faint whiff of 2004 and bright pop stalwarts are feverously tipped for success in 2009, Red Light Company's place in the UK music scene remains uncertain. Ironically, their refusal to reinvent the genre is refreshing and with their solid



debut clocking in at only ten tracks and 37 minutes long *Fine Fascination* doesn't outstay its welcome; just like any good company. **Paul Smith**

Instrumental Award Scheme Showcase Concert

With Kausikan Rajeshkumar, Kate Whitley, Guy Button, David Foster & Cordelia Williams

Friday February 13th

★★★★★

The Instrumental Award Scheme matches up Cambridge's best players to form chamber ensembles, which then rehearse intensively and receive training from professional musicians. Last Friday's three gilded performances were bursting with talent and were a showcase of the continued presence of Cambridge in the top rung of musical excellence.

Though Kausikan Rajeshkumar has only recently arrived in Cambridge from Purcell School, his duet with Harry Winstanley was played as if they had been doing so for years. The serenity of Rajeshkumar whilst playing contrasted with Winstanley's dramatic and engaging freedom of movement, to achieve a balance with which to convey the watery themes before them. Hours of scale practice certainly paid off, with the



Cordelia Williams

flautist rising to the heavens in the blink of an eye and the pianist rippling about the keyboard with the nimblest of fingers. This gave way, in the second movement,

to a luscious bluesy piano interlude with the blissful purity of the lazy flute tune wandering atop it.

Brahms's op. 120 consisted of two sonatas for clarinet and piano but was transcribed later for the viola, an instrument which explores the same range of pitch but which sadly lacks some of the doleful beauty of the clarinet. Nevertheless, Rosie Ventris gave an intensely passionate performance with ample style and poise, delving deeply into the different character of each movement. Kate Whitley summoned a dark Brahmsian sound from the nether reaches of the piano and proved a sympathetic accompanist to all. The *Vivace* was a splendid finale with some spiccato relief from the intensity of the sonata romping straight through to magnificent spread chords.

The second half of the concert was quite possibly the best chamber music in Cambridge so far this year. David Foster had stepped in to play the cello at the last minute and came off the bench to score a hat-trick, matching the sensuous romantic sound which Guy Button produced when he truly gripped his G string. Cordelia Williams enthralled the audience with the powerful sound of the Steinway and this joyous keenness to get her hands on those ivories could probably only be outdone by a Kenyan elephant poacher.

The highlight of the concert, though, was the *Scherzo* with its cheeky recurring motifs; nuanced and challenging to the listener, showing off each players' virtuosity in turn.

Andrew Browning

Darwin: A Life in Poems

Ruth Padel

Chatto & Windus, out now

★★★★★

This year is Charles Darwin's bicentenary. Along with Christ's, where he studied Divinity, unveiling a new statue, Ruth Padel, his great-great-granddaughter, has written a book of poems to celebrate the occasion. The poems are mainly from Darwin's perspective (with occasional additions of his wife Emma's viewpoint, as well as Alfred Russell Wallace, the man who developed a theory of natural selection at around the same time as Darwin) and draw heavily from his memoirs, sometimes directly quoting.

Padel knows how to select the poignant, poetic detail and well-turned phrases from the memoirs and letters – "I never spitted a living worm", "the world fills like an expanding well", "The ovaria / a great mass of rose-coloured spawn". Her own words – "Words form / on her lips like miraculous fish", "Religion: the burned heart in its thorns" – give a vivid shine

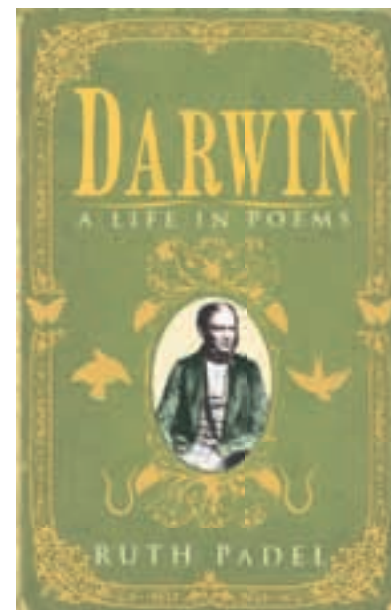
to Darwin's. Padel takes us on a journey through a life scented with the gap year that Darwin never got over, even through marriage and rearing ten children. Her words on Darwin's home and family gain an added vibrancy, as Padel talks of her cousin Randal showing her round Down House, Darwin's home. However, she leads us with equal care through the development of Darwin's thoughts and their permeation through his daily life.

This story has its share of tragedy. Padel writes bleakly, including extracts from their letters, of Charles and Emma's ten-year-old daughter's death while Emma was pregnant; a death made bleaker by Darwin's theories – "My dread is hereditary ill-health. / Are marriages between first cousins doomed / to deformity and illness?" His beliefs also caused tension between himself and his wife (and cousin), a fervent Christian

who found problems with Darwin's revolutionary ideas of creation and rejection of a benevolent God.

However, in this joint presentation, Darwin and Padel reveal his version of creation as not only terrible, but also truly beautiful. "Nature...scrutinizes every muscle, / vessel, nerve" for "the most exalted end / we're capable of conceiving: creation / of the higher animals!" Padel fills her book with enough Victorians – Jenny the orangutan, an obstetrician's guide ("A newly-married woman dreads examination") – to take us into Darwin's world, from childhood to death, but her poetry gives a vivid life to two-hundred-year-old history. This book is a marriage of art and science, and Padel fuses them with skill, speaking of the "photochemical exchange / on the face he's known since he was small."

Colette Sensier



CASINO ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 15): Not technically, no. But he will for the right price. So you're at it again: "Pacino, I hear you, but I also understand that you'll star in any poor-as-wank shite for the right amount of Euro these days." "That's true," the P-Man replies. "You'll have seen, I'm sure, *Righteous Kill*, *88 Minutes* and *Gigli*, to name but three recent poor-as-wank shite film in which I played a prominent role." : »p28 Yes. »p32 No.

ART & FILM

Changing Faces: Anthony Van Dyck as an Etcher Fitzwilliam Museum Until May 24th

★★★★★

How our modern curators love to fawn over celebrity portraitists, devoting retrospectives to Mario Testino, Annie Leibovitz and David Bailey. But these twenty-first-century photographers aren't fit to hold a flashbulb up to history's greatest portrait painters. Mert Alas' and Marcus Piggott's photographs of Madonna trussed up in leather bondage gear fail to muster even half the imperious, laconic brilliance of Ingres' Madame Moitessier. When Sam Taylor Wood turns her camera lens on the heart-throbs of the day, the Daniel Craigs and David Beckhams, they do not even begin to command the broad, pompous, sense of entitlement of Holbein's Henry VIII. And when Testino, the most feted of star-snappers, immortalises Prince William, is he not vapid compared to the shrewd, keen-eyed heroes of Van Dyck?

Few artists have matched Van Dyck's ability to convey quick wits and an incisive intellect in their portraits. Rembrandt, before his *oeuvre* entered its scruffy, scuffed, scumbled phase, was a master of the astute Dutch businessman, his eyes pinked from late nights at the accounts, but still bright and avariciously keen. Ingres had the newly moneyed bourgeoisie down to a tee, drawing out the bluffness of a man who has hauled himself up by his boot straps, made-good and put on three stone of well-fed upholstery in the process. But it is Van Dyck who most adeptly sizes up his sitters' intellect, who captures an inquiring mind or who skewers a lugubrious bore. 'Changing Faces: Van Dyck as an Etcher' at the Fitzwilliam Museum is intelligently and unassumingly put together. The portraits are seductively



conversational. There's a misconception that all Van Dyck's sitters look alike – it's the curse of fashions in facial

hair – but the men in these etchings are fiercely individual. Lucas Vosterman has something of the swagger of the highwayman and a wary, haunted look about the eyes while Adam van Noort has the benevolent air of a St. Nicholas on Christmas Eve. Paulus Pontius is a man in the Tim-Nice-But-Dim mould: damp, plump and self-satisfied. His counterpart is the impossibly handsome and seductive Frans Synders whose cruel and supercilious twist to the lip is somehow irresistible. No one does middle-age like Van Dyck: a sagging jaw, a receding hair-line exposing an oily forehead, a certain grisliness of skin, or a gouty, barrel chest. Go for the exquisite way Van Dyck handles a ruff, for the donnish, pensive sitters and for the magnificent, gravity-defying moustaches.
Laura Freeman

He's Just Not That Into You Dir. Ken Kwapis

Starring: Jennifer Aniston, Drew Barrymore & Ben Affleck
★★★★★

At first glance *He's Just Not That Into You* looks like it could be a good film. It's got a cast full of heavyweight lightweights like Jennifer Aniston, Drew Barrymore and Ben Affleck. They all look happy and shiny, and the poster promises us a US version of *Love Actually*. What we actually get is a vision of modern America so hollow, consumerist, and gently prejudiced that it makes *Sex and The City* look like *Born Free*.

Everything about this film is gut-wrenchingly, bowl-emptyingly awful. It begins with a montage of women from around the world moaning at each other about men, including some black people living in straw huts and foraging for food. We are then introduced to the main character, Gigi, who is obsessed with



whether or not men will call her back after dates. She is so weak and pathetic that your only wish is for someone to put her out of her misery, preferably on screen and with a bolt-gun. All of the other 'storylines' follow a similar pattern. The female

characters are neurotic idiots who can't do anything without a boy-friend. They work in colourful offices full of dried flowers and mincing gay men, and spend 98 per cent of their time checking their voicemail. The men, on the other hand, all work as builders or bartenders or macho estate agents, and like to go sailing or shout at televisions in their spare time.

Here's some typical dialogue:
Woman 1: I'm, like, soooo confused about this guy! He said he hates me, but maybe he loves me! What's up with that?!
Woman 2: Well if he's ugly, it means he hates you, but if he's on the poster, then it's all a clever sub-plot and he'll be back at the end to sweep you away! Also, don't you just hate

minorities?!
Woman 1: Oh yeah, especially filthy Hispanics!
Woman 2: Does this Klan hat cramp my bangs?
In a futile attempt to add some interest, the director, Ken Kwapis, sprinkles a few direct to camera interviews into the narrative, featuring mmhmm-sister finger-clicking black women offering high-larious dating advice.
This film has no redeeming features. It's a steaming pile of racist, sexist, vacuous twaddle suitable only for war criminals. You'll have a much better two hours watching a loop of Bambi's mother getting shot with your eyes pinned open. Much better.
Tom Morris

Vicky Cristina Barcelona Dir. Woody Allen

Starring: Penelope Cruz, Javier Bardem & Scarlett Johansson
★★★★★

Which brings us to the more cerebral of this week's chick-flicks. *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* is awkward to describe in those terms at all – if only because many of the characters are only superficially chicks and by their mannerisms really just younger, prettier avatars of director Woody Allen.

The awkward manner they assume and many of the conversational set pieces are recognisable from his movies as far back as the seventies. But while the self-conscious patter and lampooning of bourgeois stereotypes harks back to the days when Soon-Yi was only his stepdaughter, the Allen cabal has moved south and this time the set is sunny Barcelona.

Two best friends are visiting Spain for the summer. Vicky – the serious one – studies the absurdly-termed 'Catalan

Identity', and thinks she knows Exactly What She Wants. Lackadaisical Cristina (played in a fervent sulk by Scarlett Johansson) knows exactly what she *doesn't* want when it comes to men, and has to confront the realities of the bohemian ideals she has willed upon herself in the form of Javier Bardem and Penelope Cruz.

Cruz's portrayal of a temperamental artist has been drawing in accolades from all quarters. She stands out in this film because she has the least of Allen in her, and also (in a grateful coincidence) because she wears the least clothes. As the man pinning together this farcical love-in, Javier Bardem has got a haircut and put down his bolt gun, and it's good to see Cambridge alumna Rebecca Hall sink her teeth into a role more meaty than the one she played in *Frost/Nixon*,

where she has little more to do than bite her lip and simmer.
This film is very measured, from the voiceover that frames each episode, to the clinically composed scenes which might not sate the Hispanophile who craves more than just the front drives of the well-to-do and a few shots of the Parque Guell. Allen is very keen to assert his autonomy as a director and this comes through in visual jokes – a contorted kiss moves out of our sight as the camera stays frustratingly stationary – as much as via the acerbic one-liners. This movie is never going to win round determined haters of the little man with the clarinet...



But at least they can be pleased he's ceded his on-screen function to a cast of young actors, and is indulging his anarchic tendencies only from behind the camera.
Izzy Finkel

Take V Cartoon characters



Five of the Best

Snoopy
A lazy beagle, combined with a yellow bird named after a hippie festival and the kind of jokes that no-one ever really got makes for illustrated gold.
Homer Simpson
Believe it or not, Homer was voted the 'greatest American of all time' in a 2003 BBC poll, beating to the title other big names like Martin Luther King, Jr, Abraham Lincoln and Bob Dylan. Oh, and Mr T.

Pink Panther
Da-dum, da-dum, da dum da dum da dum da dum da dummmm, da da da da dum... great theme tune, great pink cat, great show.

Peter Griffin
Okay, so very similar to Homer Simpson, but it's hard to exclude a man who comes out with lines like "I've got an idea – an idea so smart that my head would explode if I even began to know what I'm talking about."

Shrek
Wayne Rooney's doppelgänger brought on the new wave of computer-animated films. *Wall-E*, *Finding Nemo*, *Ice Age*? Cheers! *Cars*? Hmm, not so much...

Five of the Worst

Pokemon
Not only was this video game-cum-cartoon-cum-irritation utterly terrible, it also spawned 12 movies (that's right, 12) and numerous offshoots – *Dragonball-Z* anyone?

Arthur
You know it's bad when the opening song is the best thing about the programme.

The Jetsons
Man 1: Sorry mate, we can't commission this cartoon, it's just like *The Flintstones* but worse.
Man 2: Well, how about we set it in space?
Man 1: Now I'm listening!

Powerpuff Girls
This just confirms that Cartoon Network is very much the ITV of the children's TV channel world.

Snorks
For replacing arbitrary words with 'snork' is bad enough, though the fact that they were essentially the Smurfs, but underwater, earns them a place in the bottom five. See *Family Guy* for an excellent parody.

Great Works Of Art In Cambridge
#24: The Annunciation by Domenico Veneziano
Fitzwilliam Museum

Veneziano is a third-drawer-down artist. We don't know, or care, much about him. He taught Piero della Francesca and Andrea del Castagno. The ominously boring chronicler Vasari alleged that del Castagno killed his master (untrue). In the illustrious upper drawers of art history, one can find Dürer, Bosch, van Eyck, Ghiberti, Holbein, van der Weyden and da Vinci working at the same time. Quite a cast. The case for Veneziano's promotion isn't helped by the decidedly inconvenient truth that most of his work is banal and medieval: flat, dank, and crushed with religiosity.

And then, tucked in a corner of the Fitzwilliam, his *Annunciation* sits devastatingly still. It's a luminously cold painting, ephemerally traced onto panel. Shifted off-centre, the first thing one notices are the nightly squares mouth-ing out at you, sirenic blanks pulling one's eyes leftward. Around them, the quietly pencilled furniture seems unreal, like the residue of an old dream.

And then there are the figures. Mary's meek acceptance; the heart-draining bowing of her head. She has been disrupted by history and cast down by

duty. Her diaphanous blue-brown robe twinkles against the sadness. Gabriel replies with an angelic sneer, pointing cruelly upwards to the impassioned Christ. (This is part of a predella to the

Magnoli Altarpiece.) His wings, cruelly feathered, are animal. His protrud-ing foot is dead brown. The flowers he brings wilt toward Mary, on a morose trajectory. Veneziano's Mary is a woman broken by fate; his Gabriel is a demonic nasty wrapped in serene and milky flesh. They look horribly alike.

Our eyes tumble unbearably out to the snatched glance of garden at the painting's rear. The pale richness of the sky and the orange wall are a shock, like

a sudden walk into the sun. The bolted door is Veneziano's brutal tease. Every-thing is in perspective, and out of kilter.

In the Fitzwilliam, *The Annunciation* is hung next to another Veneziano, his *Miracle of St Zenobius*, a hideous crowd scene with ghastly, ruined faces on snarled bodies. You see it, you look back on the ruined Mary, and you realise the price of the Christian saviour-tale. This is religious art at its self-lacerating best.

Robert Stagg

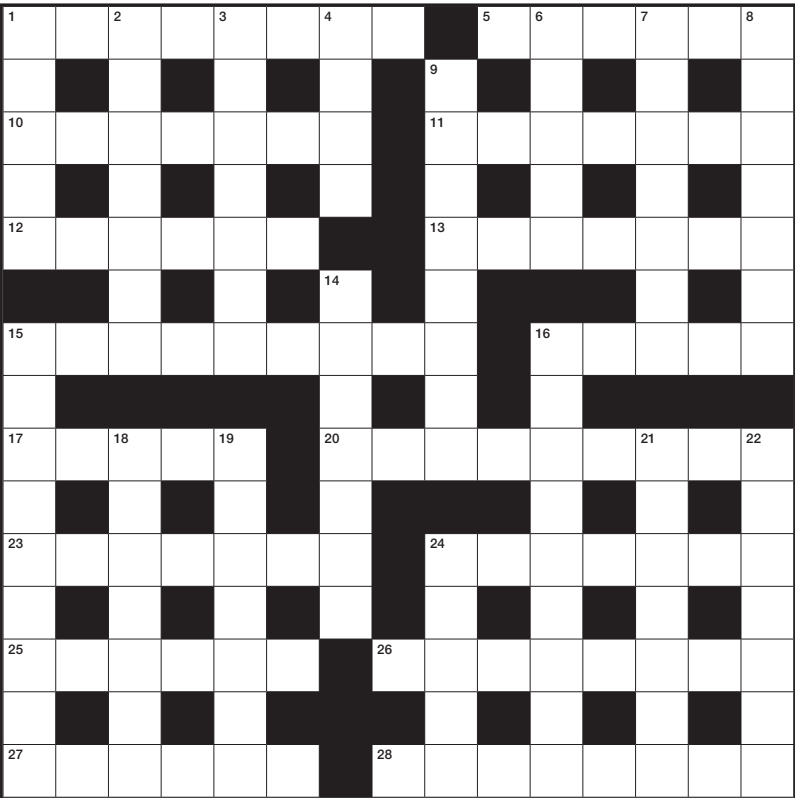


COURTESY OF THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

Games & puzzles

Varsity Crossword

no. 500



- up, but you can't fight in there. (3,4)
25 Relations in the north – that is one hundred pills. (6)
26 Sex act on weatherman is deadly if performed incorrectly. (8)
27 I hear an original song – it's so liberating! (6)
28 These are confused, below par, back-ward – a number of offenses. (3,5)

Down

- 1 I'll make minced meat of this hopeless romantic. (5)
2 The quick-witted crossword solver may recognise this sort of epithet - as would 15. (7)
3 I took nine vehicles, and had a whale of a time getting there. (7)
4 Speaking of sex... (4)
6 Girl in West Coast city causes a flap. (5)
7 Purchase TV show and become confused. (3,4)
8 Northern bird is jailer. (7)
9 Chop up Gaza for a dish best served cold. (8)
14 Murder monarch. Know why? It's satisfying. (7)
15 Note with cooker (along with a couple of very common elements) - 'Don't get in the bath'. (9)
16 Strokes with a bar will leave you reeling. (3-6)
18 The teas tend to be a little weak in parts of the capital. (4,3)
19 A degree of both east and west, she was no angel. (3,4)
21 Admire lazy eyes, I say. (7)
22 I'm short, and the River's come up. This will be difficult to pull off. (3-4)
24 My mother-in-law is like a hornet - without that, she's like Fred's wife. (5)

Set by Hythloday

Across

- 1 Film noir has confusing hook - find Queen's treasure. (3-1-4)
5 LGBT hijinks spread disease. (6)
10 Men break into song – country, of course. (7)
11 Makes judgment on pirate ale, I hear. (7)
12 Be quiet, Karl, it's a Tuesday. (6)
13 He's proud – mostly it's a piece of cake. (7)
15 Hythloday is an Anglo-catholic – but without the tang. (9)
16 This man's set up as crazy singer. (5)
17 Dined early, had tea. (1-4)
20 Seems like he's untruthful about his member – it's much more bumpy. (9)
23 Isn't pee strange? It produces musi-cal insects. (7)
24 His usual way with a dart is messed

Answers to last week's crossword (no. 499)
Across: 1/25 Double decker, 4 Oracle, 8 Divulge, 9 Caprice, 11 Eyepatches, 12 Milk, 13 Worsé, 14 Copulate, 16 Minstrel, 18 Vicar, 20 Spot, 21 Interprets, 23 Grenade, 24 Strop-py, 26 Picnic. Down: 1 Dairy, 2 Usurper, 3 Light-year, 5 Roads, 6 Caramel, 7 Escalator, 10 Chocolate, 13 Whispered, 15 Pavarotti, 17 Satanic, 19 Cartoon, 21 Indie, 22 Topic.

Sudoku

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

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

www.puzzlemk.com / MADE BY GARETH MOORE

The Varsity Scribblepad

Last week's solution

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

Sex in the Univer-City



Week 6: Cumming in bed

These columns so far have been written by aggressive women, who describe their sexual victims much as they might a new pair of shoes. They tend both to glamorise the enjoyment and gloss over the important practicalities of carnal congress, and to this end I'd like to offer a male counterpoint.

If I can be forgiven for extending a slightly abstruse and implicitly misogynistic analogy, I've always approached sex much as I imagine a new attaché might have approached a tour of Tanganyika in about 1895. Though I enjoy the experience, the process itself can be quite hard on the nerves: even after you've taken off your panama and had a stiff drink to steady the hand, the whole thing is uncomfortably hot and sticky, and comes replete with an array of local customs which to my senses are disorientatingly smelly, odd-tasting and glutinous. Whilst I'm pleased to have been there, I'm happiest when I get to go home and show the boys at the club some daguerreotypes of myself in the thick of things.

Quite aside from these physical difficulties, I also find it to be a minefield of etiquette and social convention. Traditionally I respond to all forms of physical confrontation with an apology, a rapid flight from the scene and an offer to pay the assailant off, none of which have ever been met with much approval in the field of sexual battle. Although that said, most girls seem to appreciate the gesture of an apology, particularly if they've just been offered payment.

One is also obliged to take things very seriously, which is difficult for someone as acutely conscious of the bare facts of the situation, which are obviously very funny. There seems to be an assumption that because the act you're engaged in is so very unpleasant, it should be treated with a kind of moribund reverence. What happened to a bit of gal-lows humour? But I've discovered that comic quotations ("It is a far, far better thing that I do...", "Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant", "This is Sparta!") go down worse than STD-related jokes ("Does it sting yet?"), and they go down very badly indeed.

Yet despite all this, I can't help but feel a bit responsible and sorry for what I've done to the natives. Though reflex is to text my male friends with a triumphantly precise breakdown of what happened, and then see about a sandwich, I have to fight it; instead I offer reparations and rehousing, and we're back, as ever, where we began.

Ed Cumming

REPORTS

Cambridge seconds claim first Varsity scalp

» 2nds and 3rds on top form to win overall in tough Varsity encounter

Becca Langton

Five months of preparation, hundreds of hours of training, and thousands of miles run culminated in the arrival of four of the Oxford Hockey teams in Cambridge for the highlight of the second and third teams' seasons. With the banners set, the pitch swept clear of snow and the sidelines crowded with spectators, the first to play were the Cambridge women's third team, the Bedouins, and the Oxford Hos. With a ten-year unbeaten record to uphold the pressure was fierce. However the Bedouins stepped up to the mark and



Cambridge 2nds sneak a tight victory

JAMES GRAVESTON

Cambridge	3
Oxford	1

dominated from the whistle. It was clear that the Hos had very little to offer and with beautiful linking passes down the line the Bedouins carried play deep into the Oxford defence securing the lead almost immediately after Rhiannon Evans buried a slipped pass into the back of the net. This lead was capitalised on with real style, defensively solid at the back, woman of the match Tess Maddock was superb at

picking up stray passes, and with further goals from Emma Withycombe and Hannah Wilson the Bedouins secured their tenth win with an absolute decimation of the Hos. The second teams to play were the men's thirds, the Squanderers against the Infrequents. Nerves clearly high, the standard of hockey suffered somewhat but the game was still an exciting one. Ed Hyde was first to the ball and stole Cambridge the lead. The advantage was short-lived, however, and the scrappy style of play gave Oxford a second opportunity to even the scores. James Hindson was unlucky not to nick the win as an impossibly angled air shot struck the backboard as the whistle blew, and a 1-1 draw left Cambridge with the technical win having been the last team to do so. The women's second team, the Nomads, took on the Oxford Monkeys, a strong team with a Blues-dominated middle. The Monkeys put Cambridge under immediate pressure and took the lead from a short corner deflection within the first five minutes. The game took a worrying turn when star defender Eleanor Wiseman took a stick to the head, leaving the pitch for Adenbrookes and the Nomads seemingly unable to recover from the loss of such a key player. Although the Light Blues put some good pressure on the opposition defence with searing runs through the middle from Nuala Tumelty and wide distribution from captain Sarah Donaldson, a

second goal following the break gave the Nomads little hope of recovery and the final score was a 2-0 defeat. The most exciting game of the day, however, was the last, with the second men's team the Wanderers playing the Dark Blue Occasionals. The standard of hockey was high and the play consistently intense. Cambridge were quick on the attack and, with a rebounded drag flick neatly pulled back and flicked over a helplessly stranded keeper, Constantin Boye opened the scoring in Cambridge's favour. But a lapse of attention left the defence vulnerable and Oxford pulled back an equaliser and then the lead within the first thirty-five. The unusually difficult task of coming back from behind gave the Wanderers a lot to do, but it was not long before Jez Hulse found the equaliser to take Cambridge back into the game. The Wanderers consolidated on this momentum, and with a diving deflection, Reverend Chris Lee took Cambridge back into the lead. The advantage was stretched with a fourth from Rob Mahen and although the Occasionals managed to pull one back before the final whistle, it was Cambridge who claimed the 4-3 victory taking the overall scores to 3-1 to the home sides. Cambridge undeniably demonstrated the winning support, out-cheering and out-abusing the Dark Blues hands down, in great preparation for the 109th Blues Varsity Match to be played at Southgate on March 3rd.

Mixed emotions after Varsity squash match

» Men's team crush their Oxonian counterparts to make up for women's loss

Varsity Sport

It was a nervous Cambridge team that awaited the start of the Varsity Match this Saturday down at the Royal Automobile Club in London. Having taken apart their Oxford opponents last year 5-0, you would have thought the men's team would have been confident. But rumours had reached the team about Oxford's two new players, both former top-ten-ranked England juniors. The women were also cautious. A successful season ending in a closely fought victory over Durham saw them promoted to the BUCS Premier League, but a disappointing Varsity result last February obviously still rankled.

Cambridge Women	1
Oxford Women	4

Karen Hird, already a real tennis and badminton Blue, was playing in her first squash Varsity Match. Though Hird gradually found her form, it was not enough and she lost 3-1. Captain Kate Mason faced Oxford's Jenny Brown, hoping to avenge last year's 3-0 defeat. At first it seemed she might do just that: for two games Brown simply had no answers. But as Brown staged a comeback in the third, Mason's confidence faltered and it ended in a disappointing 3-2 loss.

Cambridge Men	5
Oxford Men	0

Cambridge number two Alex Bryant struggled initially against Varsity veteran Sarah Blakey. But with her characteristic tenacity, Bryant dug in, playing some stunning tight rallies and attacking her more experienced opponent. Playing her best squash so far this season, she took the match 3-2. It was number one Ann Babbie's sixth and final Varsity Match, but she could not find her true form to defeat Oxford captain Aly Hollington, and the match end-

ed 4-1 in Oxford's favour. It was up to the men to teach Oxford a lesson. And so they did. At number four, Captain Mike Mackay had his opponent on a string, repeatedly making tight shots and exploiting his superior fitness to win 3-0. New boys Tim Helme and Craig Winthrop played great games on the unforgiving RAC courts, while Jamie Douglas' fourth Varsity match was an intense display of shot-making and brutal rallies. His fractured finger only seemed to make him more determined as he overpowered Oxford's Simon Roach to win 3-0. In the end, the Cambridge men lost only a single game in their 5-0 victory.

Varsity Preview

Netball

So Oxford were on winning form last time around, but the most recent confrontation between the two resulted in a high-scoring draw. Oxford are not on their best form and are looking vulnerable, but the girls will have to pull out something special if they want to come out of this one on top. Your support could be crucial.

Sat Feb 21st, 3.30pm, Ley's School Sports Centre.

Varsity Preview

Trampolineing

Cambridge dominated this event last year, winning in both the Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced sections to take the overall victory by fifty points. Head Coach Joel Taylor will be looking for a repeat performance in this year's confrontation. Spectators are encouraged to cheer on what should be a winning team.

Sat Feb 21st, 10am-12pm, Ley's School Sports Centre.

Varsity Preview

Fencing

The Cutthroats and Women's blues start the day's fencing, while the Men's Blues and Women's 2nds follow at 2pm. An inexperienced women's team hopes to overcome the odds against their Oxonian counterparts, while both men's teams hope to avenge the narrow defeats they suffered last year.

Sat Feb 21st, from 11am, Exam Schools, New Museum Site

Varsity Preview

Basketball

Despite missing key players at various points of the season, the Blues have an impressive home record. They have already guaranteed their place in the Midlands Division 1 next season, and qualified for a place in the last sixteen of the National Trophy competition. Their form bodes well for the Varsity Match.

Sat Feb 21st, 12-5pm, Kelsey Keridge Sports Centre.

Quick Catch-up

University Catch-up

Polo Nationals

Three Cambridge teams were in action at the recent BUCS Polo Nationals, with mixed results. The Novice firsts and seconds got off to a slow start, with both teams losing the first two rounds of chukkas. Poor teamwork and sluggish rental ponies combined to hamper these early encounters. By the third round, however, they had found their stride: the Novice firsts beat a strong Newcastle opposition thanks to a winning goal from Sarah Beament, before annihilating St Andrews 5-0 in just seven minutes in the next. The Novice seconds fought hard in their third chukka, but lost out on penalties despite several promising breaks from Laura Cadzow. But some strong defensive play in their final round led them to a consolatory victory. The Beginners' team enjoyed a mixed occasion. Unfortunately to lose their first round, they fought back brilliantly to take the second from Exeter 3-0. Particular highlights were a terrific defensive backhand from India Martin, and two goals in quick succession from Louise Zemlik. Nonetheless the game was not without confusion as a pile up resulted in Zemlik's mallet anally penetrating an opposition horse, which unsurprisingly stopped play. Crushing Loughborough in the third round, only tired horses in the final chukka saw the Beginners lose out. Cambridge still finished a creditable 10th overall.

University Catch-up

Women's 2nds football

The Eagles' match against Leicester on Tuesday was a bit of a grudge match, the Cambridge women looking to deal out a little revenge for the 3-1 defeat inflicted upon them in the last encounter. Affected by the same weather problems as many other university teams, both sides started the match looking quite rusty. A defensive lapse soon cost Cambridge as Leicester took the lead with a soft goal. However, Cambridge threatened more in the second half and finally made their mark on the match. Two goals in quick succession from the dangerous Cat Murphy put them ahead with thirty minutes left to play. Leicester kept surging forward, but some stalwart defending and a couple of brave last ditch tackles in the Cambridge eighteen yard box saw them through safely to the final whistle. The final of the BUSA tournament is next week and if the Eagles ride their luck they may be in with a chance of victory. It will also provide good quality preparation for the upcoming Varsity Match on the 28th of this month.

Sport Feature: Science In Sport

Mind over Matter?

JENNY MORGAN TAKES A LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF BRAIN VS BRAWN

We've all seen it. The careful placing of the ball, the certain number of steps back and to the side, the clasped hands, the blank face. As Jonny Wilkinson kicks for goal, he sees a girl in the crowd – Doris, he's called her – and everything else fades out. He hits the spot nearly every time.

Psychologists say he is in some sort of self-induced trance, a hallucination almost, the product of an amazing ability to channel his mind to the task in hand. As sportsmen and women around the world catch on to the benefits of a psychological edge, more and more are looking to the sports psychologist to help them get it.

Along with endless physical practice (even on Christmas Day, it has been reported), Wilkinson uses imagery techniques to achieve his unparalleled consistency. The benefits of such a tactic reach far beyond the rugby field.

By practising moves and routines perfectly in the mind, the nerve pathways in the brain that control the execution of the particular skill become programmed and strengthened to perform it more exactly. It can also create the feeling of having been there before, making the highly pressured sports star feel confident and at ease. Moreover, imagery gives you the opportunity to 'train' even when you are physically tired, or when adverse weather conditions or injury prevents you from getting out onto the field.

And it's not just in the mind. Simulation is an obvious next step, whereby

the ability to develop stress management skills and push through the pain barrier is learnt from a multi-sensory experience, rather than just imagination. By simulating crowd noise, spectators, bad referees or flash cameras at normal training sessions, athletes get used to blocking out their surroundings and focusing on their game.

Psychologists also recommend training in bad weather and when tired, so that you are able to work out coping mechanisms before coming up against this in a match situation. And in certain sports, simulation can be even more realistic: Lewis Hamilton made copious use of the McLaren simulator to 'drive' the Canadian Grand Prix circuit in a variety of different circumstances long before he actually arrived in Montreal.

Psychological techniques force the athlete to concentrate on perfection. It has long been normal practice to film matches or races in order that they might be run through with a coach the following day. But what if you could visualise your technique? Slow it down, check for faults, analyse your strengths: the serious sportsman could work on improving even when at work, on the train, or before going to sleep at night.

Sports Psychology Consultant Gary Baker says teams are taking note. "Mental skills training is gaining increasing recognition as its value becomes apparent – the British Cycling team in Beijing for example, credited

much of their success to the team's sports psychologist."

Moreover, he argues that all levels of sporting enthusiasts should embrace the techniques. "Most people seem to wait until something goes wrong before they



get help, for example an injury or slump or nerves before a big competition, when in fact it would be better to have all the skills to deal with it before it happens, and possibly prevent some of the negative consequences." Athletes need to start thinking about the mental side of things while things are going well, not wait for them to run off course before seeking help.

On the day itself, when races are won and lost by hundredths of a second and when every point matters, it is important to use the focus and confidence established in training to maximum effect. A pre-competition ritual is essential, whether it be listening to music or playing a computer game, down to putting your socks on in the right order and tying double knots in both shoes. The key is to get into a routine, which might be different from one person to the next, but which helps to get you into the zone on competition day.

It is also useful to come up with an on-site psych plan: list anything and everything that might happen between you arriving at the venue and starting to compete, and appropriate responses to it. This can also be used in sports such as tennis when rain stops play. Whether you go into the changing rooms on a high or struggling a few points behind, whether you will be in there for half an hour or half a day, if you have prepared for every eventuality there will be nothing to worry about and you can maintain the relaxed focus you had on the court.

How to do it...

Sports psychologist Dr Victor Thompson recommends the following to develop imagery techniques at home.

Part A: Imagine you are in your room sitting on the bed. Look around and take in all the details. What do you see? What does the bed feel like? What sounds do you hear? What is the temperature like? Is there any movement in the air? What do you smell? Use all your senses to take it all in.

Part B: Later when you actually are in your room, sit on your bed in the way you had imagined in the exercise above. What do you see, smell, hear and feel? Were you correct? Do you notice details that you didn't call up when you first imagined the scene?

Over the course of time, repeat A (and B again if you like) and see how your ability to generate vivid and detailed images improves. Try it in different places, try getting quicker, and then try adding motion to the picture, rather than just sitting down.

Eventually the same technique can be used to visualise your success on the sports field.

Goalie Psychology

In research conducted on 286 penalties in top-level matches, some surprising results have been reached. When goalkeepers stayed in the centre of the goal, they saved 33.3% of the shots, as opposed to just 12.6% when they jumped right, and 14.2% when they dived left. However, the psychological strength to stay still rather than actually doing something to reduce the risk proves too much for the majority of keepers. Through match analysis and imagery, they could improve their ability to stay calm, and stay still.



BUT WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE NUTRITION?

It is surprising how literal the term 'running on empty' can actually be. Sports people have long been aware of the need for plenty of carbohydrate and hydration, but when, what, and how to take it has become a lucrative area of sports science with some interesting and controversial results.

There are three basic states that an athlete can be in at any one time: pre-workout, during workout, and post-workout, with different nutritional requirements for each.

For the first, the key is to increase the carbohydrate load but without too much bulk, especially as the race or match gets closer. Gels or energy drinks are the best bet, but only those with complex glucose polymers such as maltodextrin to achieve the optimum osmotic balance between the stomach and the blood. Simple glucose-based drinks can actually end up drawing in water from the body, causing further dehydration.

During the workout, depending on how long it lasts and how hot the conditions, the athlete needs to replace lost fluid, salts, and carbohydrates. For the first two, electrolyte drinks must be used: it has been estimated that the amount of sodium lost by each player in a football match can range from 1g all the way up to 6g.

Moreover, losing as little as 2% in body weight through dehydration can reduce performance by around 25%, so an isotonic gel or energy drink will be required to ensure an athlete's peak performance.

Once exercise is complete, there is

a need for protein and carbohydrates to start the regenerative process. With more time to digest at this point, larger volumes of complex carbohydrates can be consumed, and a protein drink before sleep has been shown to help reduce muscle fatigue the following day.

But no one athlete is the same, and it is important to build up an individual nutrition plan suitable to the type and intensity of workload and personal lifestyle. Different people may have different reactions to certain compounds so it is worth experimenting during training to find what works in plenty of time for the big occasion.

This area is not without controversy either. As illustrated by the strict regulations imposed by the governing body of each sport, messing with nutrition can be complicated.

With most serious sportsmen and women taking over the counter supplements as a matter of course, it can be easy to forget how some innocuous things can contain banned substances. Linford Christie tested positive after drinking ginseng tea for example, and

several others have been caught out by cough medicine or nasal inhalers.

And it can be difficult to draw the line between chemical substances used legally to supplement a diet, and those that are deemed illegal by their potentially damaging side effects.

Moreover, there is no standardised procedure for those testing positive for substances: after all, who would have guessed that rugby union is the biggest culprit in Britain in the last five years, with 62 positive tests by UK Sport. Football is not far behind with 54. Apparently the step up from creatine and protein supplements to illegal substances is much smaller than might previously have

been thought and is shrinking.

All in all, an equilibrium must be reached. Sporting people on the lookout for an edge must be prepared to embrace anything it takes to get it, and not be afraid to tailor advice to their own individual needs. Somewhere between Doris and maltodextrin; therein lies the balance.

CASE STUDY

Blues Rugby

After the final match of term, the Blues rugby team had a twelve day run up to the big Varsity confrontation. During that time, their schedule resembled that of a professional team.

The period was broken down into four phases, with the fourth being 'the summit', the match itself. In each phase, the intensity increased, not in terms of physical output but in concentration and focus on the field.

Each training session had an objective so that every player had a clear understanding of where they were going and to maximise the chances of the team peaking both mentally and physically at the same time. Sessions were no more than an hour long, though there was often time set aside for analysis before and after the session itself.

Most importantly, this was the time when the team mentality really took

shape. The tradition and passion which surrounds the Varsity Match manifests itself in a series of motivational talks and dinners. The outcome of the match is largely due to how the team cope with the pressure on the day, which is itself a result of the confidence each player has in himself, in his team mates, and in a game plan which covers all eventualities.

A psychologist addressed the team before the match, although this could only ever build on the spirit that had already built up. Certainly in a game like rugby, where most of the margins are determined by game plans, mistakes and skill under pressure, mental preparation is the key over purely physical conditioning.

Having said that, nutrition and training come with the territory for rugby players, and the team do endure a five-week drinking ban in the Michaelmas term. This is the base upon which the mental preparation can be built in the run up to such an important event.



Jimmy
Pickles

Sport
Comment



For F*ck’s Sake

“Success is a science; if you have the conditions, you get the results.”

Ulrika Jonsson may recognise this as vintage Sven Goran Eriksson pillow talk, uttered from behind those sexy rimless spectacles in his particularly clipped Swedish accent, but this statement is actually attributable to Oscar Wilde (famed neither for his scientific nor his sporting prowess).

Let’s face it; it’s not exactly classic Wilde. In fact I doubt if you’ve ever heard it before, and that’s kind of my point: if you were an international sportsman and a velvet-clad fop, genius or not, wandered into your dressing room and started chatting about ‘zones’, ‘mental strength’ and ‘isotonic shower gels’, he’d be battered with his own handbag.

If, however, a slim, grey-haired, Skandi-looking chappy with a suitably dead-pan sidekick started pouring horse manure onto the lunch trays and explaining that eight hours of jivamukti yoga could improve scrum-maging techniques, you’d probably bury your face in the shit and fold your legs around your ears before you even noticed the slightly weird shape of his

wife’s breasts.

By the same logic, you’re unlikely to take nutritional advice from me, an overweight, chain-smoking, pseudo-prop who clearly hasn’t seen a well-cooked vegetable since Christmas day. So I’m not going to offer you any. Sports science is split into two major fields: nutrition and psychology. Both are dominated by the image of their

‘You’d probably bury your face in the shit and fold your legs around your ears’

experts. Specialists on the latter are predominantly bespectacled, while ‘experts’ on the former spend a lot of time in the gym and a lot of time posing on the side of big white tubs.

Many of you reading this will have some sort of sporting aspirations, maybe playing for a Blues team or representing your College, or maybe some more personal goal; many of you will have been tempted by the articles opposite, wondering if they might contain the ultimate secret to ‘sport-

ing’ godliness; many of you will have vats of creatine and protein powder under your sink, each branded with its own multicoloured lightning-bolt and slightly homoerotic imagery and each costing however many hundreds of pounds. How many of you, I wonder, have a copy of Anderson and Bale’s *Sporting Sounds*, an intriguing insight into the improvement of sporting

awareness of the psychological battle?

You’ve probably realised by now what I’m insinuating: achievements on the pitch may not be the primary concern of the College sportsman. Little wonder, then, that one rarely sees the St John’s rugby team sitting cross-legged on the Backs on a misty matchday morn in a state of serene meditation.

In the end, it is no longer about sports for many of our generation. It is about ‘banter’, popularity and, ultimately, sex. They look at some doctor on the front of a book and think, “He’s definitely not getting as much sex as this guy with the huge guns and the lightning bolt on his shorts.” So they plump for the powder over the literature. And I hope they make many women happy.

Keep in mind though, that Sven has a best mate called Tord and he’s still shagged more secretaries than there are six-packs in Cindies on a Wednesday. Even Oscar Wilde got all the sex he could ever want (once he moved to France) and he looked like a sack of potatoes with a flattened weasel on top and probably never even swung a croquet mallet.

Cambridge Ladies hit Holcombe

» Cambridge steal close victory from top of the league team

Varsity Sport

Fresh from a week of disruption due to the weather, the Women’s Blues took on Holcombe in a double-header last weekend. Holcombe are sitting pretty atop the East Premier League and are a strong side with some very skilful players. There did not seem to be much hope of gaining any points, but the Blues nonetheless were determined to gain revenge for some unlucky losses in the past.

The Cambridge team played hard from the start, winning important fifty-fifties and pressing for the first goal. Fantastic passing up both sides of the pitch and variation in play meant the Blues were quickly rewarded for their efforts when Emma Goater put the ball in the back of the net.

The Blues then continued to press Holcombe, marking their South African star player out of the game and taking advantage of their early lead. Unfortunately, Holcombe managed to gain a short corner after a foul and

Cambridge	3
Holcombe	2

used this opportunity to get back into the mix and score the equaliser.

But Cambridge were not going to give up. The dynamic duo on the left, Hannah Rickman and Sarah Baggs, outplayed their opponents with ease, using the width of the pitch well. Finally a pass to Jess Hume provided the Blues with a great opportunity to take the lead once again as she slipped a pass beyond the goalie to Anna Stanley, who placed the ball into the gaping Holcombe net. As the half-time whistle went, the Cambridge team was deservedly ahead, having impressed the spectators with their slick play and good composure.

The second half started with equal determination as both teams tried desperately to increase their influence on the game. Holcombe were determined

to even the score and fought much harder than before, creating difficulties for the Blues’ defence. Holcombe capitalised on this, using a free hit just outside the Cambridge D for a sneaky deflection which brought the teams level.

But the game was not over yet. Eager to take away more than one point from this game, the Cambridge side now turned up the heat. Rachael Barraclough on the right in particular managed to power some balls up the line, gaining some important ground. With possession therefore mainly in the Holcombe half of the pitch, Cambridge demonstrated great skills which led to Sarah Baggs stealing the third.

The Blues celebrated when the final whistle went, having demonstrated their quality and determination against some top quality opposition. Their happiness was short lived however, as they lost to local rival Cambridge City the following day by a crushing 6-0 scoreline.



The Week Ahead

International

Dubai Tennis

The men are back on our screens at the Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships this week. Roger Federer has crashed out with a back injury, but the tennis will still be top class. Nadal vs Murray round 2, anyone?

Mon 23rd-Sat 28th, coverage on Sky Sports

University

Blues Rugby

After a storming performance against the Navy, the Blues are in action this week for the final time. Your chance to bid farewell to the old, and welcome the new, before next year’s Eddies’ intake ousts them once more.

Weds 25th, Grange Road, 7.15pm.

College

Lent Bumps

With the Cam just about safe to row on again having been red flagged for a week, the Colleges’ finest will be out in force. Rowing hard for the chance to stick twigs in their hair, the indefatigable boaties will be keen for your support.

Next week, the Cam.

University

Women’s Rugby

Thompson’s ladies continue their Varsity preparation this weekend with a match against Buckingham. This team currently sit above them in the table so should be a good ‘un. Get along to watch the fairer side of the ugly game.

Sun 22nd, Fitz Pitches, KO 2pm.

Cooney’s Marathon

Lauren Cooney

Week 6

In which Lauren discovers the inevitable boredom of long distance running...

New fitness regime; new sense of philanthropy and undulating sanctimony; long distances travelled, both spiritually and literally. Not only do I feel a great sense of zen nestling itself within my bosom, but I also feel quite poetical: there’s nothing more sensual than a short sprint onto the fields that run from Grange Road to the M11. When the evening rain flecks itself across my cheeks, the wind creeps through my hair, and the clouds sit on and sink the soft orange sun... Oh yes, be jealous.

The feeling might be recognisable to those of you that participated in well-rounded and fulfilling activities exposed by the likes of Duke of Edinburgh/World Challenge. I’ve done both. Come on, surely you all know those glorious schemes imposed by schools to make Oxbridge applicants seem wholesome, balanced, and absolutely up for anything? Check, check.

With the physical, the charitable, and the great long expedition already sorted, I’ve decided to complete my D of E requirements, and add a skill to the list: “Yeah, I’ve always wanted to play guitar, and I’ve had this bad boy knocking around my room for the last eighteen months or so. Yeah, only really know how to play the White Stripes...” I did my best, OK.

I even paid a friend to enforce practice, and to entice me to his room to display my spastic musicality and absolute lack of rhythm thrice a fortnight. There was a period, of about a week, where I thought I was improving. But then I just strolled onto a ‘plateau’, and have pretty much cotched there ever since.

It was in accordance with the plateau of my running et al. I’ve got to the point where long runs validate lengthy trips to pubs to ask for multiple pints of water, and even stopping to greet each and every acquaintance I happen to pass on the street in an effort to prevent the gnawing boredom from getting the better of me, whereas before I would run, run, run before showing any signs of recognition.

This is a new development, which I am hoping to overcome in the ultra-near future. And at the same time either slice off or celebrate a new muscle growing atop my shin, which a trainer at the gym euphemistically deemed ‘unusual’. Hopefully, in a week or so this irregular shin muscle will have me bounding past this plateau, ready to complete the race in record time, before picking up my gold achievement award from the palace. Why thank you. Enjoy a week without a website.

Sport



Sport's Reliance on Science

Jenny Morgan investigates
P34

VARSITY MATCH RUNNING TOTAL: CAMBRIDGE 5, OXFORD 4. NEXT UP: NETBALL, BASKETBALL, FENCING, KARATE, TRAMPOLINING

Hello, sailor!

» Vickerman leads his team to high-scoring victory
» New players begin to shine amongst old stars

Charlie Pearson

Deep into that half of the Blues' rugby season when the main event at Twickenham has long been and gone and when all university rugby seems a little bit pointless, Cambridge took on the Royal Navy at Grange Road on Wednesday night in front of a modest crowd of grizzled old regulars and the odd sailor, producing, in actual fact, what was a thoroughly worthwhile display of rugby.

They amassed seven superb tries to the Navy's three in a performance that demonstrated immensely satisfying sleight of hand, fleet of foot, esprit de corps and any other elegant cliché you might add, and rather left me wanting to go back to my room and do press-ups at the end of it.

Maybe it's because I'm too used to watching England mindlessly scrap around in the rucks and cluelessly chuck the ball around like netballers behind the scrum that I assume all rugby should be that way, but it was so pleasing to watch a team that could appear to play the game properly.

Cambridge's passing in the backs was polished and crisp and the speed at which they received each pass was persistently threatening. The forwards were fast, physical and equally well organised and created great opportunities for their backs to run.

Perhaps the Navy just weren't terribly good, which I'm prepared to believe, but rumour had it that they had a couple of England Sevens players lurking in the back line who did show flashes of brilliance. The poor chaps don't play together that often of course, which is where the Cambridge team, now commanded by Dan Vickerman following the end of Jon Dawson's tenure as captain, clearly had significant advantage.

While some grubby Cambridge hands in the ruck allowed the Navy to take an early lead through a penalty, the Cambridge pack immediately put the visitors onto the back foot and within 20 minutes three tries had been scored and it looked like embarrassment for the Navy.

Lock Will Jones finished the opening two, the first from close range following

Cambridge	45
Royal Navy	23

some lovely passing amongst the forwards, the second, taking advantage of an overlap with a pleasing dummy.

When James Greenwood was released through a gaping hole in the midfield to gallop all the way through for a try converted by winger Scott MacLennan, the match did look like it had the makings of a rout. After a brief period of disarray, however, the Navy rallied admirably; their inside centre slithered through an unfathomable hole in the defence and sprinted untouched for a good 50 yards for an unconverted score. A penalty added to their total before a beautifully worked try down the left flank nearly levelled the scores at 17-16 and all of a sudden the Navy looked rather good.

20-17 was the score by half-time, MacLennan slotting over a penalty to end the first half, but a proper lead was re-established by a moment of individual brilliance from fly-half Sandy Reid, who, receiving a quick ball from the breakdown fifteen yards out, wove through alone, skilled the last man and slipped over the tryline himself. Another penalty went over for Cambridge before the Navy closed up again. Cambridge forgot to tackle a fat bloke who appeared in the midfield and after two phases of lovely hands their fullback walked over to score.

Although quite well poised at 28-23, the game was always to be won by Cambridge. Pulling away like Usain Bolt in the last fifteen as the better side in a rugby match invariably does, three late tries sealed the deal. Outside-centre Chris Lewis' converted score gave Cambridge enough breathing space for Jon Dawson to go off for a burger, then flanker Joe Wheeler snaffled a try off the back of Chris Lewis' break before replacement Tom Malaney bullied over on the overlap for the last. A convincing win and highly entertaining stuff.



Cambridge outmuscle the Navy in the lineout

View from the River

Silas Stafford



CUBC had an incredible opportunity to meet Prince Philip this past weekend as he named our new Empacher shell The 800th. We spent weeks cleaning and repainting the inside of the Goldie boat-house, dusting off trophies won in (and maybe not touched since) 1896, and rediscovering forgotten triumphs and history. I, being an ignorant American, kinda wondered what the hoopla was about.

When the day of the visit came I was surprised by how exciting the affair was. Even though the Chancellor didn't say anything of substance to me other than to ask jokingly if there were any natives in this year's boat, it was neat to shake hands with him. (I should clarify that by 'natives' the Chancellor was asking about Englishmen, and was not making an inappropriate comment.) Afterwards, we rowed the new shell on the Cam, which was flooded up to the doors of Goldie.

Because CUBC train in Ely, rowing together on the swollen Cam was a new experience for many of us. I must confess that navigating the narrow river with such a strong stream was actually rather nerve-wracking.

The boat naming ceremony was a welcome diversion from the intensity of selection and training. The lineup is still undecided for the Blue boat and tensions remain high. Minor tiffs have become more frequent, inevitable when you get such a high concentration of competitive personalities.

Having the Chancellor visit was good for us, if for no other reason than that we were doing something together besides rowing. I look forward to the day when we can let loose again. Thirty-seven more days. We'll be ready.

OXBRIDGE VARSITY BOXING MATCH

Last few Balcony tickets left at £25. Some seated tickets at £25 before the end of February.

Coach from Cambridge to London and back again £10

Give Cambridge your full support and celebrate at the party afterwards.

For further details, VIP discounts and coach tickets please visit www.cuabc.org, ring 01223 30 80 30 to pay by card, visit Ryder and Amies or The Glassworks.

Tuesday 10th March 2009

from 6.00pm

At 1 Old Billingsgate,

London (overlooking Tower Bridge)

Event covered by ch 4 television

