

Varsity

Friday February 27th 2009

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

Issue no 692 | varsity.co.uk

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Orwell's overrated

»Centrefold *Special pull-out*
The Dial: exclusive four-page preview issue inside

»p17 *Arts*
Patrick Wolf: a very odd man

Sidney's vomit bug spreads

» *Students warned as other Colleges hit by norovirus*

Caedmon Tunstall-Behens

The outbreak of a vomiting bug in Sidney Sussex has spread to other colleges, the University has confirmed.

Although the University declined to say which Colleges have been affected, *Varsity* understands that cases have also been reported at Queens', Clare, Newnham and Homerton.

A spokesman said: "There are a few isolated cases in other Colleges. It has been confirmed that most of the individuals affected had had contact with Sidney people over the last few days."

The news comes after Sidney was in lockdown for over a week with just over 80 students, Fellows and catering staff debilitated by a suspected outbreak of norovirus, also known as the 'winter vomiting virus'.

Students at Sidney with the virus were ordered to stay in their rooms until the bug was contained, with friends being instructed to avoid contact with them.

Formal Hall was cancelled for a week amid fears that the virus would be spread further in a large gathering of people and during food preparation.

The College bar, however, remained

open. Following a closure as punishment for non-Sidney students vomiting in the toilets, one bar worker commented, "This week it's been the Sidney-ites themselves who have been having vomit problems, albeit of quite a different nature."

The viral infection induces projectile vomiting, fever, nausea, fever and diarrhoea. It can be incubated for 48 hours before its symptoms becoming apparent, and ends 48 hours after the last vomit or bout.

Transmission occurs through contact with contaminated surfaces, body-to-body contact, orally or from inhalation of infected particles.

Sidney called in the city council's environmental health officers at noon last Friday. They directed staff on a range of measures to prevent the spread of the virus and a team of external cleaners fought to bring the virus under control through thorough and regular cleaning of communal areas.

Max Beber, Senior Tutor at Sidney, told *Varsity* that contract cleaners are providing an overnight service.

"It's difficult to know exactly how many are affected because we're asking all people with flu-like symptoms or worse to report them. There hasn't been much change since earlier in the week," he said.

"The boat club dinner on Saturday will go ahead as planned," he continued, "but without outside guests so as to restrict spreading."

E-mails have been sent to all students by College nurses. Advice on how to avoid contracting the virus includes thorough and frequent hand washing with anti-bacterial soap, as well as ensuring that surfaces are kept clean.

Additional reporting by Ben Watts and Michael Hornsey



ZING TSJENG

The race is on for CUSU Access

» *Access beneficiary, CUSU insider and JCR president go head to head*
» *Three serious contenders in this year's tightest election contest*

Andrew Bellis

A charismatic JCR president, an outreach success story and a CUSU insider are battling to be Access Officer in 2009's most hotly contested CUSU election fight.

Joe Farish (right), Andy McGowan (left) and Ben Henriques (centre) are in the running for the £16,550-a-year post.

The three candidates all claim significant experience. Farish was Trinity's JCR president and formerly the JCR's access officer. He has also worked as a researcher for the Cambridge Admissions Office, analysing intake figures.

Henriques has spent a year working with CUSU, another two on Robinson's JCR and has three years of experience with the shadowing scheme.

McGowan attributes his motivation

to his access background. He was one of only 135 students in the whole country receiving free school meals to get three As at A-level. He is a carer for his parents, on a full bursary and was the first in his family to go to university. He has since been a JCR access officer and has been involved with various CUSU outreach schemes.

Whilst the election for access officer looks set to be a close fight, the race for CUSU President is barely even a tussle. Tom Chigbo, John's JCR president and this term's Union Society treasurer,

looks set to cruise to an easy victory against his only opponent, Guolong Li, a second-year from Churchill.

The contest for Education Officer is this year's largest field, with four candidates running for the post. Ed Maltby, a prominent student activist who helped organise last month's law faculty occupation, is advocating a reading week as part of a nine-week term. His call for rents to remain the same despite the extra week has been attacked by his opponents, Sam Wakefield, Dan Chapman and Nina Walters. The only other contested post is Welfare, with two candidates.

Candidates will take part in 14 hustings over the next five days. Students can vote online on Monday and Tuesday, and in their College on Wednesday.

Candidate profiles on page 5

FOLLOW THE RACE ONLINE
Updates every day at
blog.varsity.co.uk

80

The number of people at Sidney hit by the winter vomiting virus

48

The incubation period of the virus in hours before symptoms are seen

Man charged and two arrested over series of muggings

Varsity News

A man has been charged following a series of muggings in the west of Cambridge over the weekend.

The spate of connected attacks occurred between Saturday and Monday earlier this week.

In a spate of violent incidents, victims reported being approached during the early evening and forced to hand over valuables to two youths wearing balaclavas.

Shaun Sandford, 19, of Queens Close, Over, was charged with ten offences of robbery at Cambridge Mag-

istrates Court yesterday.

The first three robberies, all in the west of Cambridge, took place between 11.20pm and 11.35pm on Saturday night in Queen's Road, Grange Road and Madingley Road at 11.35pm.

Victims reported being approached

by two offenders wearing homemade balaclavas and being forced to hand over valuables, including mobile phones and cash.

Two further robberies, in Storey's Way and Queen's Road, took place late on Sunday night.

Following reports of these often vio-

lent incidents, police increased patrols in the area. Three suspects have since been arrested: Sandford, a 16-year-old boy and a 36-year-old man.

The 16-year-old has been bailed to reappear at Parkside Police Station on March 11th.

Continued on page 4

VARSLITY

A special preview issue of The Dial, a literary magazine based at Queens', can be found inside the centrefold. It is the fourth 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.

Vote, but don't get too excited

The CUSU elections are shaping up to be a (moderately) interesting race. The battles for Education, Welfare and Access Officers will be hard fought, and are awash with committed candidates. All the candidates will all do an important job, representing us in dealings with the University and outside bodies. They all deserve for us read their manifestos, give it a little thought, and cast a vote on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

Our only caveat would be to ensure that students elect officers who will do their job of running a students' union and representing us in the University, not those who intend to use their position as a political soapbox. For better or for worse, CUSU is an administrative organisation, not an activist one, and that is what it will remain for the time being.

There is only one serious candidate for President, despite Guolong Li's endearing attempts. This is perhaps a little anti-democratic, but it does, happily, mean the almost certain election of Tom Chigbo of St John's. Chigbo has wide-ranging experience and good ideas, and should make an exceptional CUSU President.

Despite big talk from the candidates about changing our lives through CUSU, it is worth pointing out that there is only so much it can do. The big news this week has been the norovirus outbreak and a spate of muggings in Cambridge; these are things which directly and materially affect large numbers of students in a way that motions at CUSU Council never will. Perhaps this is all obvious. However, it is always useful to remember that CUSU is not going to change the world – even if it gets its own 'Ethical Affairs' sabbatical officer.

Varsity Drugs Survey 2009

Varsity is conducting an online survey on academic performance-enhancing drugs. It is anonymous and very brief. Please visit www.varsity.co.uk/drugs

CUSU elections blog

Visit blog.varsity.co.uk for comprehensive coverage of the CUSU race.

Edit this newspaper

Applications are currently open to edit Varsity in May Week or in the Michaelmas term. For more information visit www.varsity.co.uk/jobs

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.

Don't pummel Pokemon

Dear Sirs,

I surely speak for every person in Cambridge who had even the semblance of a normal, well-balanced childhood when



I say that the inclusion of Pokemon in your list of the five worst cartoon characters in the February 20th issue is not only outrageous but indeed racist. Lumping all of our favourite pocket friends, from the majestic Mewtwo to the cheeky Charmander, under the label of one character 'Pokemon' smacks of

the racist notion that "they all look the same to me". Beyond this, and the insane notion that Pokemon is anything less than entertainment of the highest intellectual and emotional value, is the mind-boggling display of chronological ignorance. *Dragon Ball Z* – originally just *Dragon Ball* – is Toriyama Akira's magnum opus, and it began in 1984, a full decade before the original Pokemon Red and Green games hit the shops of Japan, not to mention the TV series they inspired. It astounds me how uncultured Cambridge students can be.

Yours faithfully,

Dominic Morris
Corpus Christi College

A CUCA correction

Sirs,

A correction, if you please, to the February 20th edition of *Varsity*. In his column, Mr Sharpe is credited as President of the Cambridge University Conservative Association (CUCA). Whilst Mr Sharpe has presided over another excellent term in CUCA's history, he is not its President, but its Chairman. The former position is held by The Rt Hon. Michael Howard QC MP.

With best wishes,

Mike Morley
CUCA Chairman, Easter 2008

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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New university concerns over controversial essay-buying websites

Lizzy Tyler

Students at universities across the country have been contributing to and using a new note-sharing website, Gradeguru.com.

The website claims that it is "a note-sharing website where students who need relevant, course-specific study notes can find them, and where students who have study materials can share them to get rewarded with cool stuff and recognition."

This "cool stuff" comes in the form of financial reward. So far, the collected earnings of the "gurus" who contribute to the website amounts to £7,848.

One of the most prolific contributors, or "top gurus", is a second year management student from the University of Manchester, who has already received almost £400 for her contributions.

The most popular subjects on the website include Law, Literature and Psychology, with work ranging from notes and tips to full essays.

Unlike other essay-sharing websites, Gradeguru.com allows free access to all its users.

Oxbridge Essays, another popular site, provides students with essays suitable for assessment, and can charge up to £1,000 for an undergraduate supervision-type essay and over £20,000 for a full dissertation. The existence of such sites has caused increased con-

cern from University authorities over plagiarism.

Gradeguru.com claims to take a tough line on plagiarism, working with anti-plagiarism software to detect if any material contributed to the site is second-hand. The site warns against those who might wish to use site material to pass off as their own.

It states, "Gradeguru is not the lazy path to qualifications... Cheap plagiarism of material portions of essays and coursework is not the goal of Gradeguru". However, with material on the site from a wide range of subjects and institutions, the extent to which the team behind it can limit its use as a source of assessed essays is questionable.

The Varsity plagiarism survey last term recorded that of the 1,000 students who took part, 49 per cent of them admitted that they had plagiarised work.

The results varied between subjects and colleges, with Law students being amongst those who plagiarised the most. This seems to correspond with the popularity of Law on Gradeguru.com.

Those at Colleges lower in the Tompkins table appeared to be plagiarizing the most, with 67 per cent of St. Edmund's students admitting to breaking University rules on plagiarism.

The Cambridge University policy states: "Plagiarism is defined as submitting as one's own work that which

derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity."

This ranges from copying full essays from sites such as Gradeguru.com, to failing to attribute a quotation correctly. Any students discovered to have contravened these rules may face disciplinary action at one of the Univer-

sity's courts, which could lead to their being sent down.

Although Cambridge is not listed as one of the main institutions from which work can be found on Gradeguru.com, with universities such as Durham, Manchester, Nottingham and York topping the list of top contributors, the popularity of the site could well bring an increased range of contributions.



University plans to redevelop Mill Lane site

» *Businesses in the surrounding area earmarked for relocation, as council consultation begins*

» *Dojo, Bombay Brasserie and the Anchor may all be under threat*

Beth Staton

Cambridge University and the city council have released proposals for redeveloping the riverside city centre site on Mill Lane.

The current home of Dojo's, Bombay Brasserie and the Anchor, as well as the lecture halls and University Press, was earmarked for potential development in a policy document three years ago.

After expressing an interest in relocating some Mill Lane sites to other areas, the University began work with the council to produce a draft planning document, which is in consultation until April 6th.

In a statement, the University said they had for some time been interested in relocating their activities on the Mill Lane and the Old Press site to more appropriate locations within the city.

The University and Council have also expressed interest in redeveloping the New Museums site, although no plans have yet been proposed for this.

The council's vision for the area proposes retail, business and residential development, and includes possibilities for increased restaurant and café space overlooking the river.

Widening pavements on Silver Street and improving junctions, which now present a conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, are also priorities.

Buildings set to be demolished, or significantly redeveloped, include

the lecture halls and the University Sports and Social Club.

Because many are listed, care will be taken to ensure that buildings like the Pitt Building and the Emmanuel United Reformed Church will remain prominent features in the newly developed cityscape.

A new 70-room hotel and areas of student housing are strong possibilities for the site, as are commercial spaces for creative industries such as craft workshops.

It is hoped that the development will incorporate sustainable transport infrastructures, and one of the stated aims of the project is the reduction of parking spaces within the city. Green spaces will be maintained and improved.

As it is housed in a listed building the Mill pub will escape demolition, and the Anchor will probably remain, although the space in which it is housed it will be adapted.

All businesses based in the area are being consulted, and a spokesperson from the council was keen to stress that the proposals allow plenty of commercial space for the endurance of favourites such as Dojo and Bombay Brasserie.

"The document is in its very early stages at the moment," she said. "It outlines our aspirations for the area, and seeks for guidance for development. We are looking at indications of how the space can be used to its best advantage."



In Brief

Finger food causes fire fight

Firefighters were called to Cambridge's Atmospheric Research unit after a sausage roll was left unattended in a microwave. At 3.46pm on Tuesday, the offending finger food burst into flame, setting off an automatic fire alarm at the centre, which is shared by the University's Departments of Chemistry, Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, and Geography. Luckily, fire engines were able to quench the flames quickly and prevent the fire from spreading beyond the kitchen in which it began. The Cambridge Fire Service issued a statement explaining the course of events: "There was a fire in the kitchen next to the chemistry room. Two fire crews attended and entered the building using breathing apparatus. It was a small fire." A University spokesman confirmed: "The fire was started by a sausage roll in a microwave which overheated, setting off the smoke alarms." He was keen to emphasise that "no-one was injured and there was no significant damage to the building." Both the Fire Service and the University have urged students to be vigilant whilst preparing food.

Car park on Jesus Green?

Plans for a temporary car park on Jesus Green have been condemned by residents and councillors. EDF Energy has submitted plans to install a large storage compound on the green while it replaces an electricity sub-station in Thompson's Lane. It would see workmen occupy the triangle of land between the grass tennis courts and the path running from the end of Portugal Street to the footbridge at Jesus Lock for 18 months. Four trees would be felled to make way for the halogen-lit compound. Councillor Colin Rosentiel has vowed to block the plans, saying Cambridge City Council will not allow the works as it is common land. Simon Godfrey, an independent punter who operates from the La Mimosa mooring station, said: "Jesus Green is one of the most picturesque and best-loved open spaces in Britain - anything that detracts from its atmosphere is an obvious concern. Laying down all this concrete will wreck the grass and it will take years to recover." A spokeswoman for EDF Energy said the work was part of £2.7 million of essential upgrades to the electricity network in Cambridge city centre to cope with added demand.

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Police arrest three over muggings

Continued from front page.

The 36-year-old man remains in custody at Parkside Police Station.

Despite these arrests, police have encouraged Cambridge residents and students to maintain vigilance at all times. Police Liaison Officer Carol Langton said that students should not get “complacent” and should always “be aware of their surroundings and not advertise personal effects”.

She also stressed the importance of registering property on www.immobilise.com. “We’ve successfully tracked down the owners of items we’ve retrieved. It does actually work,” Langton added.

Detective Inspector Adam Gallop added: “We would ask people in the area to take sensible precautions with regard to personal safety: stick to well-lit areas, don’t carry large amounts of cash and don’t advertise the fact that you may be carrying items such as ipods and MP3 players.”

A series of thefts has also been reported taking place within Colleges. On Tuesday, a student at St. Catharine’s reported their laptop stolen from their unlocked room. A laptop has also been taken from a room in Clare.

A fresher at Queens’ expressed concern at the recent spate of muggings: “Up until now I thought Cambridge was a safe city. Now everyone has to be extra vigilant on the streets at night.”

Review slams primary education system

» *Government-backed Cambridge study describes state of young education as ‘impoverished’*

Beth Staton

A Cambridge report has condemned the “impoverished” state of Britain’s primary education.

The report, part of the government’s Rose Review of the primary curriculum, states that a focus on testing and standards have narrowed children’s education.

Robin Alexander, director of the study and Wolfson Fellow, said that failings in primary education have compromised children’s “statutory entitlement to a broad, unbalanced curriculum”.

The report expressed a concern that maths and English have become dislocated from the rest of the curriculum, which is in itself confused.

It urged that arts and humanities should assume their “rightful place” rather than being marginalised in favour of formally tested league-tabled subjects, and argued for a curriculum which better incorporates creative and personal education.

At present, primary schools incorporate daily literacy and numeracy hours into their timetables, and children are examined on core skills in maths, English and science at age 7 and 11. The report’s “substantial” proposals, designed to address “serious” problems, aim to create a more balanced curriculum in opposition to the current “policy-led belief” that “breadth and standards are incompatible”.

Professor Alexander said: “It should be possible to assess children’s learning and for schools to be accountable to par-

ents and to government with a procedure which does not compromise the very thing for which schools are existing.”

“We’re arguing for a concept of entitlement which is qualitative rather than quantitative; not just about the number of subjects but about high quality of teaching and learning in all of those, regardless of how much time is devoted to them.”

But the Department for Children, Schools and Families, denied the claim that primary education was failing children.

A spokesperson for the Department said, “To say our children are receiving a deficient education is insulting to hard-working pupils and teachers everywhere, and flies in the face of international evidence. English children have recently been recognised as the highest achieving in maths and science among European countries.”

The report outlines twelve aims for primary education, beginning with ideas of well-being and empowerment, factors which then interlock with eight further “domains of knowledge, skill enquiry and disposition”, including arts and creativity, citizenship, and, centrally, a “revised and strengthened domain of language, oracy [oral skills] and literacy”.

Other recommendations included greater adaptation to community-based learning, so that 30 per cent of a school’s curriculum is tailored by local authorities to suit the distinctive needs of a particular area.



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CUSU ELECTION

More online at blog.varsity.co.uk

From the Archives

Fighting for your vote

Ahead of next week's CUSU election, *Varsity* assesses the candidates standing for each position

PRESIDENT



TOM CHIGBO
ST JOHN'S

Experience: John's JCR president, 2008-09; Union Treasurer, Lent 2009.

Policies: Lead "vigorous" campaign for University's own sports centre; ditch failing club nights and support a wider variety of ents; double frequency of newsletter and revamp website; publish CUSU council attendance figures.

You'll vote for him because... you want a President who's serious about the role.



GUOLONG LI
CHURCHILL

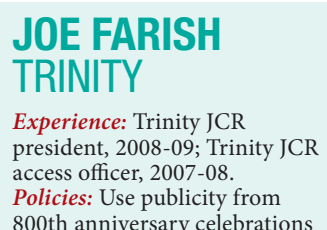
Experience: Maths Faculty student representative; member of CUSU council.

Policies: "Olympic spirit" to encourage participation; the spirit of Hakuna Matata to promote the enjoyment of Cambridge life; the solidarity spirit to encourage sharing between Colleges.

You'll vote for him because... he's also known as pizza and Superman.

Online: www.prchina.eu

ACCESS OFFICER



JOE FARISH
TRINITY

Experience: Trinity JCR president, 2008-09; Trinity JCR access officer, 2007-08.

Policies: Use publicity from 800th anniversary celebrations to launch extensive access publicity campaign; produce website with Oxford's students' union to combat misconceptions about applying to Oxbridge; provide greater support for JCR access officers.

You'll vote for him because... he's the charismatic JCR President with experience of the issues.



ANDY MCGOWAN
TRINITY HALL

Experience: Trinity Hall access officer, 2008-09.

Policies: Track progress of shadowing scheme participants and push for more College rooms; work with the President to oppose raising of the top-up fee cap; encourage greater co-operation between JCR access officers and the admissions office.

You'll vote for him because... he knows what access is all about – he's a 'free school meals' kid, receiving a full bursary and the first in his family to go to university.



BEN HENRIQUES
ROBINSON

Experience: Robinson access officer, 2007-08; external officer, 2006-07; CUSU catering and facilities officer, 2007-08.

Policies: Secure more funding to allow more school visits and more advertising; strengthen links with teachers and compile a database of those involved with access schemes; use University committees to change policy.

You'll vote for him because... he's the CUSU insider, with the knowledge that will help him work effectively from day one.



EDUCATION OFFICER

SAM WAKEFIELD
TRINITY HALL

Experience: CUSU education team 2008-09; faculty board member.

Policies: Longer library opening hours, particularly for arts subjects; exam feedback; encourage sharing of best practice between subjects.

You'll vote for him because... he knows how stuff happens – he worked for the University in his gap year.



DANIEL CHAPMAN
DOWNING

Experience: Downing JCR president, 2008-09; services officer, 2007-08.

Policies: Improve links between JCR officers and faculty reps; mandatory training for supervisors; raise awareness of CUSU support mechanisms.

You'll vote for him because... he's a proven JCR president.



NINA WALTERS
PEMBROKE

Experience: Pembroke academic officer, 2007-09; faculty board representative, 2006-09.

Policies: Campaign against Saturday exams, which discriminate against Jewish students; demand feedback for exams.

You'll vote for her because... of her passion for the role and her track record in resolving casework.



EDWARD MALTBY
ST JOHN'S

Experience: National secretary of Education Not For Sale.

Policies: Campaign for a reading week, with no increase in either workload or rents; defend small courses and subjects; fight for abolition to top-up fees.

You'll vote for him because... of his transparent enthusiasm and dedication.



WELFARE AND GRADUATES OFFICER

JONATHAN BIRTWELL
HOMERTON

Experience: Trained College peer supporter.

Policies: Raise profile of welfare and increase visibility of support.

You'll vote for him because... he's been instrumental at promoting welfare at College.



AMIYA BHATIA
ST JOHN'S

Experience: John's JCR welfare officer, 2008-09.

Policies: Develop "creative" welfare campaigns; hold "fun" events during exam term.

You'll vote for her because... she has wide ranging policies and is a sexpert.



CO-ORDINATOR

CLARE TYSON
MURRAY EDWARDS

Experience: CUSU communications officer, 2008-09; New Hall JCR president 2007-08.

Policies: Promote University Sports Centre and autonomous campaigns.

You'll vote for her because... she is much better than RON.



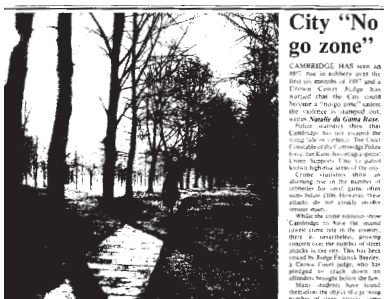
WOMEN'S OFFICER

NATALIE SZAREK

Experience: The incumbent Women's Officer.

Policies: Creating working groups to get more students involved with women's issues; a focus on casework.

You'll vote for her because... she is passionate about women's issues; so much so she wants to run again. Very capable, and far better than RON.



Week 7: October 30th 1987
An increase in robberies...

Cambridge has seen an 86% rise in violent robbery over the first six months of 1987 and a Crown Court judge has ruled that the city might become a "no-go zone" unless the violence is stamped out.

Police statistics show that Cambridge has not escaped the rising tide of violence. The Chief Constable of the Cambridge force, Ian Kane, has set up a special Crime Support Unit to patrol known high risk areas of the city.

Whilst the crime statistics show Cambridge to have the second lowest crime rate in the country, there is, nevertheless, growing concern over the number of street attacks in the city.

Many students have found themselves the object of a growing number of street attacks, some arising from the continuing animosity between town and gown. Some seven students have reported serious assaults this term.

Women, particularly, are at risk of attack. The police prohibit the use of "offensive weapons" carried by women for the purpose of protection.

January 22nd 1988
...and the subsequent University precautions taken

A series of attacks on Cambridge students prompted a meeting at Robinson College last Sunday. Police Sergeant Trevor Gilbert told the meeting that there had been 13 reported incidents in the Grange Road, Burrell's Walk and West Road areas last year.

The meeting was called by Cambridge University Student Union at the request of the Robinson Student Association. Helen Watkins, Welfare officer for Robinson students, complained of inadequate policing. She said she had "never seen a bobby on the beat" in the Burrell's Walk area. A view that was shared by other students.

Sergeant Gilbert replied that the area was patrolled every morning by an officer on foot and two or three evenings a week by an officer on a bike. He said that this was the maximum policing given the resources available. He then made a plea to students and local residents to "report every incident no matter how trivial" and he encouraged the carrying of personal attack alarms and the use of college-based "escort" schemes.

Street lighting in the Grange Road area was also criticised. Council representative Mr Paul Eliot told the meeting "Grange Road is better lit than several areas of the city" and so improvement would be a "low priority".

The discussion then turned to other possible solutions. It was generally felt that a late-night bus service for the area was the most promising solution. Mr Glauert, Junior Bursar of Trinity College, said that they had proposed such a scheme but that the initiative "needs the support of other colleges".

Call for research funding reform

» Minister says action is needed to retain UK's world-leading position

Timothy Leung

John Denham, the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, has called for the re-organisation of the UK's research base in order that the nation might retain its position as a world-leader in research.

Denham's comments, expressed in a speech at the Royal Academy of Engineering to a number of British scientists, emphasised the importance of research in terms of equipping the country "to meet the global economic challenges we will face after the downturn".

Denham spoke of the role of research in contributing "to this country's future prosperity and our ability to help resolve the big global challenges," and stressing the need to increase private and public investment in both fundamental and translational research.

He also said that the organisation of the UK's research bases will determine the extent to which global companies will invest in the country, the growth and sustenance of home-grown companies, and effective use of our pool of researchers.

Denham suggested that international collaboration would attract leading researchers to the UK and allow universities to develop as "genuinely global institutions".

Universities were targeted as areas where better organisation could facilitate the realisation of the full benefits of research if we are "more sensitive to the impact of research on the wider economy, including its contribution

to our skills base."

Denham said, "Universities have expanded business co-operation, become more adept at exploiting intellectual property and are better able to support spin out companies. And these trends need to continue."

"We should not allow any obstacles to stand in the way of researchers who wish to combine blue-skies and translational activities, or who wish to cut through traditional disciplinary boundaries."

Cambridge is regarded by many as a paradigm of Denham's vision. The Research Sciences Division holds numerous Research Sciences seminars which highlight cutting-edge research for industry partners.

A report published by Library House in December 2008 stated that the University generated £49.4 million last year from collaborative research. It also noted that "the University of Cambridge is very active in knowledge transfer with business, and is particularly outstanding in terms of collaborative research, licensing, and spin-out activity."

In addition, the report praised Cambridge Enterprise, which helps members of the University "make their ideas and

concepts more commercially successful for the benefit of society, the UK economy, the inventors and the University."

There are many examples of spin-out companies resulting from research carried out at Cambridge. These include Cambridge Display Technologies Limited, Plastic Logic Limited, Smart Holograms Limited, Campath and Cambridge Serial Total Energy Package.



CUP book on 'oddest title of year' shortlist

Avantika Chilkoti

A Cambridge University Press publication has been featured in *The Bookseller* magazine's 'Oddest Title of the Year' shortlist.

The title of Emmanuel Kowalski's book about the study of prime numbers, *The Large Sieve and its Applications*, one of six books nominated for the award, is undoubtedly misleading: if your innumerate mind has conjured up a somewhat eerie picture of oversized vegetables and Herculean pasta, you are certainly not alone.

The winner will be decided on March 27th by a popular vote on the Bookseller webpage (www.thebookseller.com).

The current title holder, *If You Want Closure in Your Relationship, Start With Your Legs*, has set high, if not tasteful, standards and the competition is indeed stiff.

Other bizarre titles among the six nominated for the Diagram Prize include *Baboon Metaphysics*, *Curbside Consultation of the Colon*, *Techniques for Corrosion Monitoring*, and *The 2009-2014 World Outlook for 60-mil-*

ligram Containers of Fromage Frais.

An analyst at The Bookseller, Philip Stone, commented, "Six seems such a cruelly low number given that titles such as *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages* and *All Dogs Have ADHD* were rejected."

Titles are often selected on the basis of their susceptibility to misinterpretation. The risqué suggestion of kinky pensioner activity implicit in one short-listed title, *Strip and Knit with Style*, is so self-evident that the book's publisher has since felt compelled to clarify: "No, not that kind of stripping. Strips of fabric! Get your mind out of the gutter and take your knitting to a whole new place." It goes without saying that allowing the misinterpretation to stand may not have been necessarily detrimental to sales.

The titles are spotted and submitted by publishers, booksellers and librarians around the world. The submitter of the winning book will receive a magnum of champagne.

A spokesperson for CUP said: "We don't know if our odd title is odd enough, as it is up against some mighty titles, but we've got our fingers crossed!"



Varsity Profile

» Week 7: Dan Vickerman, Cambridge rugby Blues Captain

The girl behind the counter at Cambridge Blue Café starts making Dan Vickerman's order before I even reach the counter.

A regular haunt for grads, the well-hidden café behind Silver Street is fast becoming an extension of the Mill Lane lecture site for the mature Land Economy freshers, Vickerman included.

The 29-year-old rugby legend applied to Cambridge on the advice of his neighbour in Canberra, who read Economics here. He has subsequently been elected Captain of the Light Blues this term.

Having left his school in Cape Town, Vickerman came to England to work in a glassworks factory in Cheltenham for a year, before embarking on an impressive sporting career including 55 Test matches for Australia, where he hopes to return after graduating.

Before Cambridge, he played for – to name but a few – Sydney University, the ATC Brumbies, New South Wales Waratahs and the Wallabies, as Vice-Captain and the team's "vital cog". Understandably, then, he is idolised by rugby fans across the world.

In turn, Dan's ultimate idol, he tells me, is Nelson Mandela. Having grown up in South Africa, he understands the hardship of Mandela's struggle for equality, and it is a subject he feels strongly about.

He has, for example, been Ambassador for Australia's national "Harmony Day", promoting the equality

he feels so strongly about in sport.

Vickerman now lives in Cambridge with his wife, Sarah, a primary school teacher, and their dog, a Bichon Friese called Molly. He likes to take Molly, his "little mate" flown all the way from Australia, to Castle Hill.

He describes his love for all animals, not just poodles. Though he has never seen them in the wild, he particularly loves bears.

Whilst at school in Cape Town, he did volunteer work for South African National Care of Birds. His ideal weekend, he describes, would be "away in the mountains, fly-fishing – not that I have the chance to do that at the moment!"

When not mulling over the ISLM model or the Human Rights Act as part of his degree, Vickerman can often be found, pint of Guinness in hand, in the Eagle or the Granta.

"Cindies? I think I've been there twice..." I remind him of one occasion in particular, and the unfortunate VK overdose experienced by those of us in the group below 6'8" and 119 kg – "Those things are horrible!"

Despite his captaincy, Vickerman has never yet tried a Tomahawk, let alone downed one in Hawks' Club style – "I love Guinness too much!"

Aside from drinking, he enjoys watching films – a recent favourite being, fittingly, *Australia*, which he describes as "awesome – a nice story" – as well as reading books like Bryce

6'8"

Vickerman's height

119

Vickerman's weight in kilograms

776

The number of Wallabies that came before him

Courtney's *White Thorn*.

Though not a big music fan, he enjoys classical music, and loves Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*.

Vickerman graduated in 2007 with his first degree in Financial Planning, from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. After completing his Land Economy BA, he hopes to work as a property fund manager.

Anna Harper



Addenbrooke's under fire over child welfare

Gemma Oke

Addenbrooke's Hospital has attracted criticism after a Freedom of Information request revealed that staff at the hospital's Accident and Emergency department do not routinely check child patients against the Child Protection Register.

Although it is not compulsory to check if a child is thought to be at risk of neglect or abuse, a number of high-profile incidents concerning communication failures leading to

child fatalities have brought the issue to wider public attention.

Following the death of 'Baby P' in August 2007, an independent review was commissioned by the then Children's Secretary Ed Balls. The findings highlighted broad concerns over frontline agencies' lack of co-ordination and co-operation in child protection cases.

Andrew Lansley, MP for Cambridgeshire South and the Shadow Health Secretary, expressed concern over the findings.

"It is deeply worrying that some very basic checks to protect our most vulnerable children are not in place in A&E.

"The NHS is doing its best, but many hospitals are getting incoherent messages about what to do to prevent tragedies like the Baby P case from happening again".

A spokesman for Addenbrooke's said, "Although our emergency team doesn't routinely check the register, they are all conscious of the need to safeguard children.

"The team is trained to identify suspicious injuries and knows how to raise concerns if necessary".

In 2007 over 81,000 people attended the A&E Department at Addenbrooke's.

The Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the local healthcare group to which Addenbrooke's belongs, was rated 'excellent' for its use of resources and quality of services in 2008 by the Healthcare Commission's annual report on healthcare Trusts.

In Brief

Flat as a pancake

Pancakes were responsible for a disaster of an unexpected kind this week when a council chairman was rushed to hospital after falling over during a pancake race. Chairman of Huntingdon District Council John Davies, was attempting to overtake the mayor of Godmanchester during the race in Huntingdon town centre yesterday, when he slipped and cut open his head. He also suffered a badly bruised shoulder and ribs. Councillor Davies blamed himself for the accident, saying, "I should have warmed up properly. My legs just locked and I went down like a sack of potatoes." But the Councillor is keen that his accident should not affect the future of the annual event. Around 150 people took part in a series of races along the High Street. Davies confirmed his position in the race at the time of his fall as "in front of the mayor of Huntingdon and behind the mayor of Godmanchester." He is the first casualty in the history of the event.

Under the sea

Cambridge scientists have discovered a massive mountain range under the Antarctic. Researchers braved temperatures of -30 degrees to map the ancient Gamburtsey range, two miles below the world's largest ice sheet. Having predicted a flat plateau, they instead found a range similar in height and shape to the Alps, its peaks as high as Mont Blanc. One lake, Vostok, was 300km long, similar in size to Lake Ontario in North America. They also found water, turned to liquid by the pressure of the East Antarctic ice sheet above it, in rivers and lakes. Scientists hope the findings will enable them to predict the effects of climate change on ice sheets. Their discovery will also challenge long-held views that the ice sheet formed over millions of years, as it suggests instead that they formed in a fraction of the time and the area could have been ice-free at some points in history.

City bonus

The Government is planning to pump money into both the City and County councils to help them face the "difficult economic climate." In an initiative designed to beat the recession, Cambridgeshire County Council will receive over £482,000, whilst the City Council, hit hard by the Icelandic investment crisis, can look forward to an injection of almost £531,000. County councillor John Reynolds emphasised that it "is not extra money, but rather funding that has been held back, and which we and other authorities have been waiting for." He explained: "The scheme only returns funding that was generated locally from business rates – and indeed the local economy contributes far more than it takes from central governments." Head of the City Council Ian Nimmo-Smith, said that the money would go towards maintaining the "pre-eminence and vitality" of the city's shops; namely, the revamping of Lion's Yard shopping centre.

Test tube babies to find 'donor siblings'

» Cambridge study suggests test tube babies could have over 50 unknown relatives

Christos Lavidos

A Cambridge study has found that babies conceived with the help of donor sperm or eggs could have as many as 55 donor siblings.

The findings of the University's Centre for Family Research, published in Europe's leading reproductive medicine journal, *Human Reproduction*, on Tuesday, have given rise to concerns over the new forms of extended families created by clinics' repeated use of a single donor's sample.

Director of the research Tabitha Freeman said that in some cases, parents found more than 10 donor siblings. One parent found 55 brothers and sisters for their child.

The findings have implications for a donor's right to anonymity as biological relatives attempt to track each other down, and could spur legislation limiting how many times genetic material from one donor can be used as a fertility aid.

Dr Freeman said, "The study has exposed the fact that some clinics are using the same donor for a lot of families. Guidelines suggest this should not be the case but they are not strictly enforced."

She continued, "Donor siblings

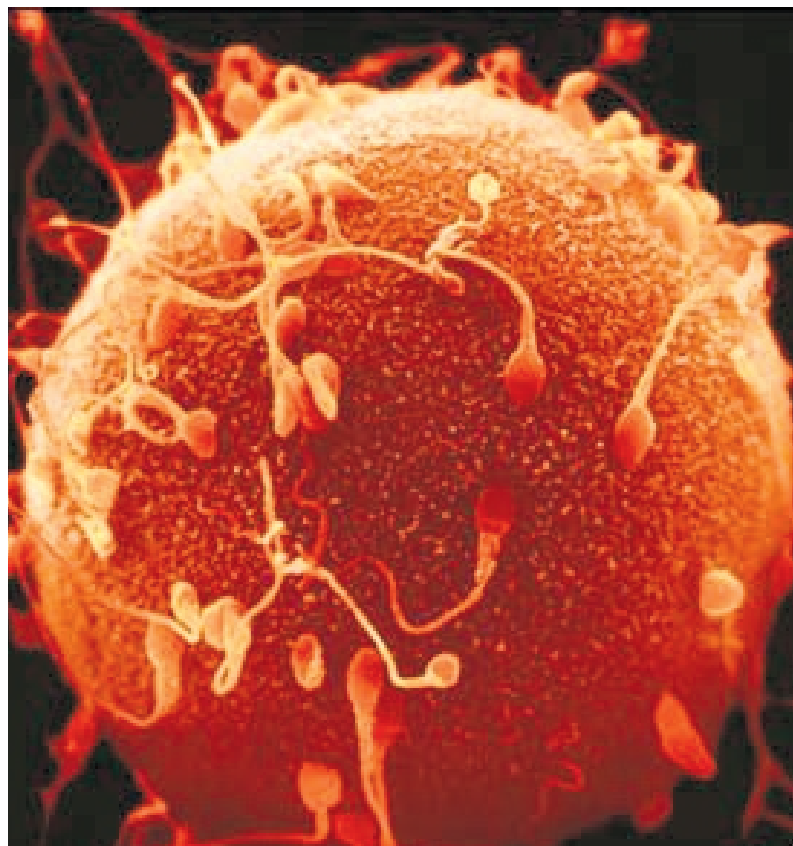
have rarely been mentioned in policy discussions about the regulation of gamete donation, beyond concerns about the possibility of unwitting 'incestuous' relationships between people conceived with the same donor."

She added: "Our most important finding is that the practice of donor conception is creating new family forms based on genetic links between families with children conceived by the same donor, as well as between donor-conceived children's families and their donors' families.

"Contrary to what might be expected, this research has found that contact between these new family forms can be a very positive experience for those involved." She went on to explain that in some cases mothers experienced maternal feelings for donor siblings of their own children after such families came into contact.

90 per cent of the parents featured in the study were based in the United States, where the guidelines for the use of a donor's sperm or eggs are less strict.

UK law since 2005 has stated that donors must agree to identification by parents who have used their sample to conceive. Identification must also be agreed to by children after their 18th birthdays.



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Cambridge Spies



Newnham

Red sky at night...

One fire-haired female visited her equally ginge sister last week and was treated to an exotic extravaganza at the city's most Moroccan of night-spots. One red-blooded lad took a fancy to said school-girl, recently having celebrated her super sweet sixteen, and on consulting her role-model, it was decided that she should be in the advanced party on the way home, and that her new beau should accompany her back through the dark streets, dim enough to provided ample cover for a little 'rumpy-pumpy' to kindle under the College gates before bed time.

HQ

Who said air hostesses had all the fun?

After a certain flying-related organisation within the university finished its annual frivolities last week, the decorum usually associated with the club was firmly abandoned. Fellow students would certainly balk at the sumptuous gastronomic experience enjoyed by the few at the college with two Royal patrons, but what shock after the event? Once back on home territory, and subsequent to the departure of certain guests, a 'naked bar' was declared. Clothing abandoned, pyramids of flesh were constructed from soberly-challenged aviators. What would they get up to a mile higher, one wonders?

Fitzwilliam

Regal relations

The president of a notorious dining society was accosted by the manager of a distinctly unregal former cinema who firmly informed him that none of his boys need "ever bother coming back". Feigning a look of surprised innocence, he enquired as to why this request was being made. In stone-cold silence, she pointed towards a scene of carnage. Following an evening of beer Olympics, four of the eight assembled blokes were vomiting copiously in a corner, to the consternation of five staff cowering on the balcony, one of whom, in evident distress, was holding a spouting undergraduate at arms' length and shouting, "No, you can't do this in here", whilst a passing tramp looked on gleefully.



CAMBRIDGE EVENING NEWS

M11 gridlocked as beer lorry overturns and sheds its load

The M11 suffered considerable delays last Friday as 300 beer kegs fell from a goods vehicle. Frustrated motorists had to wait hours in a queue before they could pass the over-turned truck, blocking the slow lane, and rejoin the motorway. Each of the barrels holds 72 pints of beer when full, meaning a total of 21,000 pints were lying on the motorway. The vehicle carrying the beer was overturned at 5.15am on the southbound carriageway between junction 8 for the A11, and junction 9 which leads to London Stansted airport. To help clear the beer kegs, highway agency officials closed slip roads between junction 8, the A11 and junction 10, for Duxford. Essex police were pleased to report that no-one was injured in this accident but have said that a central reservation barrier has been damaged during the crash. *Sufyan Khan*

Controversy over fee cap abolition report

» Government-commissioned report calls for tuition fee caps to be removed

Cædmon Tunstall-Behrens

A government-commissioned report has called for the removal of the cap on student tuition fees.

The report, by Sir John Chisholm (below), was published last week, having been submitted to the government in December.

Chisholm commented in the report that "the university business model is driven by research. There would appear to be a strong argument here for releasing the cap on student fees and/or channelling more of the government funding through the student customers

so university providers feel a stronger sense of customer demand."

He went on to say: "In most markets price capping has perverse consequences. It is not difficult to imagine that the UK university sector could respond energetically and creatively once artificial restrictions on student fees were lifted."

Charlotte Richer, CUSU's access officer, commented: "Removing the cap on fees would create a system dictated by market forces and overly influenced by the whims of graduate employers."

"We don't disagree that the sector is under-funded, but raising fees is the wrong way to go about remedying this.

"A competition-based system of variable fees depends on the assumption that university applicants and their advisors can fully understand and navigate their way through the process."

"Given the sheer amount of work we have to do to explain the current system and ensure that students aren't deterred from applying to Cambridge through misperceptions of costs, I think that this premise is fundamentally wrong."

NUS president Wes Streeting is opposed to the recommendation, saying that raising the fee cap would be "catastrophic".

"It is staggering that, in the middle

of a major economic downturn, John Chisholm is suggesting that hard-working families could pay up to £20,000 a year towards the cost of higher education – and that's without living costs", he said.

Chisholm asserts that removing the cap would result in "greater flexibility to develop and execute their own strategies."

"That flexibility would be derived from a significantly higher proportion of private sector income coming from student fees, donations, and knowledge based services including continuing education."





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The Essay



Homage to a Mediocrity Ben Slingo

George Orwell is an author students love to love. His intellectual courage and plain style are two factors regularly invoked in such a judgement. But Ben Slingo argues that Orwell was a bad writer with bad politics, and deserves a colder re-evaluation.

The politics of *Standpoint*, a neo-conservative monthly founded last year, are not to this columnist's taste, outlandish though that taste undeniably is. A strident cheerleader for what one might call the 'John Stuart Mill with cluster bombs' school of international relations, *Standpoint* bewails our feebleness in defence of 'Western civilisation'. Amongst the frenzied keening, however, there is one page that is always diverting.

Emblazoned with the words 'Overrated / Underrated', its recipe is unvarying and simple. Take one illustrious intellectual prone to leftist urges and attack him with a (more or less) figurative pick-axe. Then pick another thinker who is reliably right-wing, ostensibly inferior and, if possible, altogether unknown. Garnish him with abundant (if dubious) laurel leaves and one has a punchily revisionist column. Sometimes, as in the demolition of Eric Hobsbawm and Norman Foster, this technique has its advantages. But when one starts resurrecting Ian Fleming at the expense of John Le Carré things get very gruesome very quickly.

In the spirit of 'if one can't agree with it, one might as well plagiarise it' I shall embrace this model, albeit in an abbreviated form. No other British intellectual inspires the same hushed reverence as George Orwell. Even Darwin, whose birthday has just been celebrated with a fit of glee, elicits anger from religious zealots and disdain from trendy postmodernists liable to be anathematised in the aforementioned *Standpoint* column.

Yet, like most universal adulation, that enjoyed by Orwell is largely unearned. In the case of the novels his mediocrity is glaring. *Animal Farm*, though a brave work for a man on the radical Left, is so devoid of subtlety that every one of its characters can be matched exactly to a real-life Russian. Snowball, Trotsky; Napoleon, Stalin: there is more allegorical cunning in C.S. Lewis' *Narnia*. The irony, meanwhile, is as ponderous as Boxer the horse's transformation into glue.

1984 is less jejune and has a certain cachet as every precocious thirteen year-old's favourite novel. The plot, however, is as full of holes as the prose is of memorable phrases (of which Orwell coined so many he could have opened a literary version of the Royal Mint). If Julia has slept with dozens of party drudges before, why is her doom with Winston (more subtlety!) so inevitable? Worse still, the novel fails to terrify because its totalitarian regime is far too perfect – untarnished by such human touches as corruption, confusion or sincerely-carried ideological baggage, it becomes superhuman and thus incredible.

The riposte of any dedicated Or-

"The irony is as ponderous as Boxer the horse's transformation into glue"

wellian is predictable: it is in Orwell's essays, not his fiction, that one must seek his genius. These too, alas, are irredeemably marred, and one of the disfiguring factors is also one of Orwell's defining characteristics: inverted snobbery. In his literary criticism this prejudice can be ruinous, not least because what it ruins is so often perceptive.

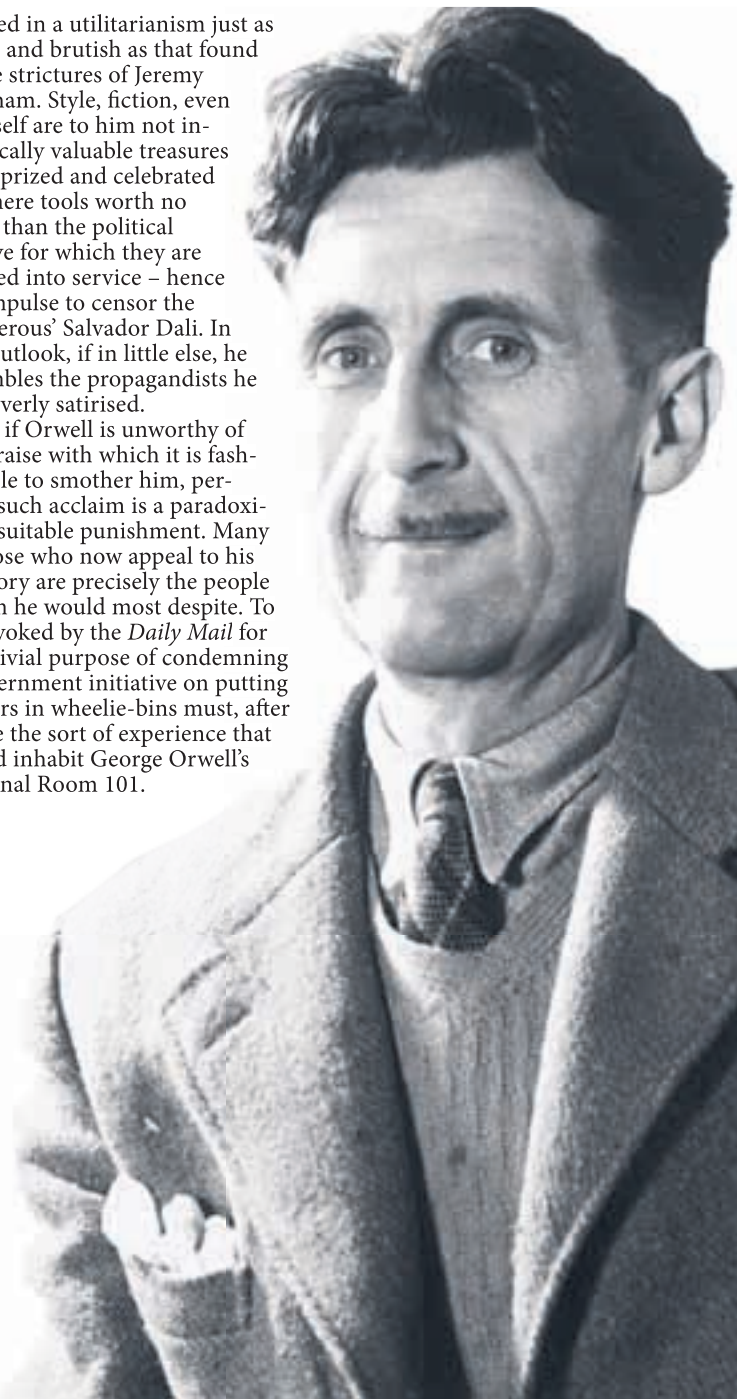
After a clinical dissection of Dickens' caricatures (never characters), in which he observes that they are essentially static and can only be imagined repeating the same phrase or action, Orwell wilfully blunts his scalpel by refusing to rank the great Victorian charlatan lower than Tolstoy. His grounds? Unlike the Russian, Dickens can "reach simple people". Orwell's elevation of George Gissing to the status of Greatest English Novelist because of his attentive depiction of the working class in *New Grub Street* displays the same perversity.

Nor are such prejudices always clad in the tasteful guise of bookchat. Orwell's embrace of proletarian culture, while often bold and trailblazing, led

him to flaunt a masochistic brand of nastiness as distasteful to the society that reveres him as the snootiness he always reviled. Obsessed by manual labour, the filthier and more exhausting the better, he cultivated not only a vegetable garden but also a contempt for the effeminacy of 'fairies'. With respect to food and wine, fashion and décor, his socially motivated austerity left him in the most lamentable state known to an intelligent man – joyful and unashamed ignorance. His crude patriotism, and his admiration for the 'emotions' if not the 'allegiance' of Colonel Blimp, cast doubt on whether, in matters of fundamental morality, he ever strayed too far from his public school roots. The ascetic of

steeped in a utilitarianism just as harsh and brutish as that found in the strictures of Jeremy Bentham. Style, fiction, even art itself are to him not intrinsically valuable treasures to be prized and celebrated but mere tools worth no more than the political motive for which they are pressed into service – hence his impulse to censor the 'dangerous' Salvador Dali. In this outlook, if in little else, he resembles the propagandists he so cleverly satirised.

Yet if Orwell is unworthy of the praise with which it is fashionable to smother him, perhaps such acclaim is a paradoxically suitable punishment. Many of those who now appeal to his memory are precisely the people whom he would most despise. To be invoked by the *Daily Mail* for the trivial purpose of condemning a government initiative on putting sensors in wheelie-bins must, after all, be the sort of experience that would inhabit George Orwell's personal Room 101.



Foreign Correspondence

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



Week 7: Sri Lanka

By the time the sun had risen on 2009, my plan to see in the new decade in Sri Lanka had already been formulated. New Year's Eve over there is mesmerising, and it is home to my best friend who I do not see often enough.

However, Sri Lanka is also the stage for one of the longest civil wars Asia has ever experienced, which has claimed in excess of 70,000 lives. Since the Tamil New Tigers militia was formed in 1972, its members have been orchestrating suicide bombings and military skirmishes in order to secure North-Eastern regions of Sri Lanka as their independent territory.

The first time I travelled to Sri Lanka in the summer of 2004, the peace brokered by Norway between the government and the Tamil Tigers was still being upheld. However, by the next year it held only nominal authority, and in my subsequent visit in 2006 a car bomb exploded in Colombo, only a couple of streets away from where I was sleeping off the thirteen-hour journey. Since last year, when the Sri Lankan government pulled out of the truce, the violence has escalated.

The events of the past few weeks have certainly made me question the booking of my flights for December. On Friday, two planes controlled by the rebel group the Tamil Tigers attacked the capital of Colombo. At the beginning of February, nine people were killed in the shelling of a hospital in the northern Vanni region. So the threat of potential violence remains and is unnerving.

I am fortunate. My destination is the town of Galle, in the virtually unaffected south. Still, any trip to Sri Lanka begins and ends in its international airport in Colombo, the focus of so many attacks.

Part of me wonders if it is irrational to go somewhere if you are aware you are putting yourself in danger. But if fear triumphs then so do those who use it as a weapon, and I do not want to let terrorism limit my experiences or my enjoyment.

However, there is obviously a line between continuing to act normally and being realistic which must be navigated carefully. With regards to the situation in Sri Lanka, though, given the Foreign Office's advice just to remain in the south, I do not believe that I am foolishly putting myself in danger. I hope, both selfishly and selflessly, that it is a peaceful country in which I shall arrive in December, but I shall be arriving nonetheless.

Vanessa Macdougall

Guy Stagg



Crunched News

The recession has given us miserable and lazy journalism

The silly season was credit crunched this year. Stories about Morris dancers chasing wheels of cheese across the Cotswolds went the way of Lehman Brothers. Columns once reserved for anecdotes about gallant firemen saving misplaced pets were replaced by experts in every field of doom and gloom.

BBC News spent the entire month recycling photographs of traders, bankers and stockbrokers, each sweating the last of their self-respect into the last of their Jermyn Street shirts. Every headline seemed to quote generously from the Revelation of Saint John. In September light relief finally came in the form of the Large Hadron Collider managing to fire up without swallowing Switzerland into a black hole.

For those of an Apocalyptic persuasion, newspapers must have been a source of constant joy. Broadsheets imagined the City of London as a ghost town within a decade, and within a generation Canary Wharf rebranded as the Museum of Capitalist Civilisation. Tabloids took the more pragmatic approach of printing more flesh.

Soon pundits tried to outbid politicians in the negativity of their economic forecasts: drizzling comparisons to Black Monday became tempestuous recollections of the Great Depression, trumped finally by likening the saturated property market to the Deluge itself. The more journalists adopted the rhetoric of the rapture, the more traders acted as if the End of Days was right round the corner.

Such pessimism cannot fail to diffuse

into all avenues of life. Finance, at one time conversational suicide for any self-respecting dinner party, became the only valid topic of discussion. Oscar Wilde's clichés on the opposition of art and utility seemed to spell the end for catwalks and galleries alike. Even the bubble felt the effects, with students giving up on graduate employment and finding little comfort in rolled cigarettes or Management Studies.



We cannot deny the recession, nor can we ignore it in the hope that it will go away. Journalists have a responsibility to respond to the economy, especially when its behaviour proliferates through all avenues of interest for the potential readership, whether interior decoration or football transfers. Many journalists have fulfilled this responsibility with insightful and honest analysis of the problems facing us at the start of the twenty-first century.

The criticism is not one of quality, but

quantity. Firstly, obsessive commentary on the recession has made for predictable and unimaginative journalism. Secondly, endless recordings of every dip and blip in the graphs-that-make-the-world-go-round further deflate the already punctured bubble of consumer confidence. Thirdly, attempts by journalists to divine increasingly dystopian visions of the future exploit reader concern with a rather indulgent form of sadomasochism. Finally, the recession has been transformed from a financial phenomenon into an intellectual fashion, a bandwagon onto which almost every hack has jumped. Other interests and concerns - political and social matters of genuine consequence - have been subordinated to the fortunes of the stock exchange.

The recession becomes doubly pernicious in its effect. Not only has government spending on Africa, in both aid and peacekeeping, been dramatically reduced, but popular interest and support has waned as newspapers pursue an increasingly introverted policy of domestic reporting.

The future of Afghanistan seems to have deserted the public conscience, as newspapers see fit to report only the death of an occasional soldier, and even then as long as it does not get in the way of another exhausting review of corporate bonuses and banking practices.

Crucial public debates, on everything from Europe to educational reform, are given no space for expression, swal-

lowed by interest rate predictions. If the recession has encouraged an isolationist mentality, it is one that journalists have made no effort to resist.

Ultimately, what has been exposed is the fickleness of the whole journalistic enterprise. Significant global events test previously nascent opinions - as the recent conflict in Gaza demonstrated with the sudden polarising of the student body into caricatured advocates of terrorism or Zionism. However, these opinions come and go with the tide of popular interest: out with the climate change, in with the credit crunch. Obsession not only makes the hypocrisy of journalism more obvious, but it filters the rest of the world through a paradigm of exaggeration.

Newspaper editors have a tremendous influence over the nature of public debate and the tone of public understanding. They both respond to it and direct it. Necessarily the recession dominates newspaper headlines as it dominates our own lives. But this should be measured not by popularity or ubiquity, but by justification.

Editors must ensure that any journalistic production, whether reporting or commentary, is first and foremost an attempt to improve understanding and not merely to propagate doubt and hysteria. The fact that we are in a recession does not necessarily justify writing about the recession. Less is more. Admittedly, an article condemning the ills of recession-journalism would most probably be the first to go.

George Owers



Cloud Cuckoo Conservatism

CUCA is irresponsibly wrong about the economy

CUCA's hard-right ideologues must have been pleased to see their Chairman, James Sharpe, appear in *Varsity* last week to defend Conservative Party economic 'policy'. To be fair, at least Sharpe admits that a hardcore neo-liberal ideology underpins his party's stance. The Tory leadership doesn't have the guts for any such enterprise. This, however, is hardly surprising, given the absurdity of such a position.

Mr Sharpe does not address the fact that if the state had followed his prescriptions over the past two years and left the market to determine the fate of the actors within the world economic system, then it is improbable that there would be a financial sector left by now. When the US government let just one financial institution go bankrupt, namely Lehman Brothers, the resulting panic and market turbulence came close to collapsing the entire financial system. If the market had been allowed to determine the fate of every such troubled institution, the resulting carnage would have been the financial equivalent of a thermonuclear apocalypse.

The same applies if governments around the world had not re-capitalised the banks (as suggested by Gordon Brown). The state is too enmeshed in economic life to simply withdraw at a stroke without massive consequences. In fact, if anything, only more emergency

state action can save us. Most responsible economists realise that the only way to get the banks lending again is to nationalise the entire banking system now. Leaving the current motley collection of financial bloodsuckers in charge of the financial system is like leaving Dracula in charge of a lengthy blood transfusion operation. Inadvisable.

Even if the state could realistically become the 'nightwatchman' that the clas-

seems to be just about the only institution in the entire world that attributes the current crisis to too little marketisation rather than too much. Only by state action to regulate economic activity can we manage these risks and prevent periodic financial crises.

The hard empirical evidence for this truth exists - it's called the past. From 1945 until the 1970s the world had a well-regulated financial system operating

"The current crisis is the best chance...to save people from these Thatcherite zealots"

sical liberals salivate over, it shouldn't. Contrary to Mr Sharpe's assertions, this catastrophe is the result of a dumb faith in the efficient market hypothesis, and only a result of the failure of the state insofar as the state did not act more firmly to prevent such madness.

Actors in a market are not rational calculating machines able to use data to efficiently determine the optimum allocation of resources. They are often driven by irrational exuberance, which leads to insane speculative bubbles that can destabilise the real economy.

Surely that is apparent to everyone by now. The British Conservative Party

within the framework of the Bretton-Woods settlement.

Whereas the neo-liberal era has seen increased instability, lower growth, and spiralling levels of inequality, during the post-war consensus years boom-and-bust was largely (if not completely) curtailed, and the world enjoyed a 'golden age' of relative financial security and increasing living standards. In 1945 it seemed that we had stepped back from the brink and said: "Never again". We seemed to have learned the lessons of the speculative madness of the late 1920s and the ensuing orgy of classical economic orthodoxy that prolonged

the ensuing slump. It appears that Mr Sharpe wants us to ignore these lessons of history and leap back into Dark Age of greed and market failure, only this time with complete abandon. The Tory Party of Stanley Baldwin lives on.

Mr Sharpe and his neo-liberal Tory cronies are what Adam Smith termed "men of system", unable to adapt their rigid prescriptions and ideology-crazed models to the reality of people's opinions and wants - namely, security, full employment, and prosperity without the insane extremes of greed and inequality.

Although cold comfort to those suffering now, the current crisis is the best chance in thirty years to make these modest ambitions a reality and save people from these Thatcherite zealots.

In last week's article James Sharpe said that the economy is only "slightly more important" than people dropping cigarette butts. To the minor aristocrats and assorted examples of the upper-middle-class that attend CUCA's cheese and port evenings, this may seem plausible. To ordinary people who don't have Mummy and Daddy's nest-egg to fall back on, the health of the economy is what their livelihoods depend on. I hope for their sake that we can finally return the world to economic sanity.

George Owers is Publicity and Publications Officer of Cambridge Universities Labour Club.



ANNA TRENCH

Joe
Farish



The Image Problem

Cambridge has a poisonously bad reputation for fair access

We are constantly being told by our Government and by the media that Cambridge harbours an institutional bias against state school applicants. Each year there is continued debate over the applications processes of Cambridge and Oxford.

A Level results are scrutinised, quotas and percentages are drawn up, and data is analysed. And the Government's conclusion? The poor performance of state schools' applications to Oxbridge must be the fault of the elitist institutions that have proven unwilling to open their doors beyond a narrow pool of privileged private schools.

However, it is exactly this type of negative rhetoric and one-sided presentation of Oxbridge in the media and by the government which perpetuates and compounds the problem. If we want to see Cambridge becoming more representative of state school applicants and students from underprivileged backgrounds then we need to encourage more applicants to apply in the first instance.

The fault does not lie with Cambridge's application process; on the contrary, the admissions procedure is both transparent and fair. The problem stems from Cambridge's image and it is this that needs to change if we are to make any progress in improving the number of students from under-represented groups.

Cambridge is commonly seen as a university attended by the posh, the rich, the geeks and the nerds. It is assumed that students got a place because their family has been going there for generations, Daddy paid for a private school education, and as if that wasn't

enough, also donated money to the college, just in case. Alternatively, everyone at the University must be library-loving geeks who are chained to their desks twenty-four hours a day. No one ever goes out, does any sport or extra-curricular activities or anything normal like 'socialising'.

Given this misguided and false image, which remains sadly prevalent among would-be applicants, it is no wonder that many of the brightest and most able students are put off applying

university life even in the unlikely event that they are accepted.

The problem is that the media, government, teachers and parents are relying on stereotypes that are 30 years out of date. According to the NFER report, when asked to estimate the percentage of Oxbridge students from state schools teachers gave answers ranging from five to 70 per cent, when this figure is closer to 55 per cent. Many teachers were also unaware that it is often cheaper to study at Oxbridge, instead giving their



here. Nobody talks about the people, who are diverse and interesting, or the extra-curricular activities, which are wide and varied.

Rather, an image based around exaggerated stereotypes has been left without being contradicted or challenged. Indeed, a 2005 report by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) showed that the perceived social mix of students was a significant factor putting people off applying to Oxbridge. This perception further discourages well-rounded applicants, since they don't think they'd fit in or enjoy

students incorrect information which overestimates the cost. It's easy to see why some state school students would be discouraged from applying if their teachers are poorly informed and are providing them with a negative view of Oxbridge.

Similarly, the BBC claimed in response to a report by the Sutton Trust in 2007 that the school someone attended was key to their success in gaining a student place at Oxbridge. This suggestion is both false and damaging, and represents journalism in its laziest and most irresponsible form. Any intelligent

person who was prepared to look carefully at the statistics used as 'evidence' by the BBC would not come to the same conclusions.

Year after year MPs heap criticism on Cambridge for not meeting arbitrary targets for state school students. John Denham, the Secretary of State for Universities, talked of a "social bias across higher education". Their headline-grabbing rhetoric only does one thing – makes a bad situation worse. Instead of addressing the real issues (inadequate funding, support and advice in schools), MPs find it easier to whip up some vote-winning anti-elitism which damages Oxbridge's already poor reputation.

The tragic irony is that the institutional bias that hampers Oxbridge applications comes not from the universities themselves but from the media and government's insistence on portraying them as elitist and socially biased. While it is right that our universities are held to account over their admissions procedures to ensure that they are fair and unbiased, this should be done constructively, objectively and independently.

If we want to see more students from under-represented backgrounds applying here then we need to tackle Cambridge's image problem head on. We need to dispel myths about the interview process, the cost of studying and the social life to ensure that people are making decisions based on facts, not outdated stereotypes.

Joe Farish is standing to be CUSU Access Officer. Another Access candidate, Andy McGowan, has written an article for the Varsity blog: <http://blog.varsity.co.uk>

Spk yr brains

The Wit and Wisdom of the World Wide Web



Week 7: *The Oscars*

I went to see Gran Torino on Friday, a movie that deals with real issues facing our society. It also dealt humourously with racism, ageism, gangs and guns. Would the luvvies have considered it? Of course not because there was no gay agenda and it had those dreadful guns being used in a positive way. Shame on Clint Eastwood for making such a relevant film

eg10000traceyplayle@cam.ac.uk

I can't believe the number of people who say they don't care about the Oscars, only to assume anyone cares about what they have to say. I mean, the guys made some good films and so they have to get your jealous complaints on here. The worse part is, I'm the one sad enough to respond to you.

self_hater_23@hotmail.com

I think that Slumdog Millionaire was THE best movie of all time! Yay Slumdog! WHOOO!!!! It absolutely, totally deserved winning the Oscars! Shows that Britain is not bad after all! Go slumdog, go slumdog! On the whole it was great! Kate Winslet must have also been very happy..... of course winning the Oscars! Britain rules!! Obviously in the filming industry it totally does rule!

RP, Blackburn, Kent

Look at that silly girl sobbing into her cleavage, akl too much on display. WHAT was she thinking of?? Does she not have children? What will they think seeing mummy on the television exposing herself to millions of viewers? It's Janet Jackson gone mad. Who cares about the Oscars anyway? Ppl are dying all over the world in Zimbabwe, struggling to make ends meet, and all we care about are which celebs have got the most plunged necklines. ps. didnt madge look terrible.

honesttaxpayer,bedford

They should give all the money to charity.

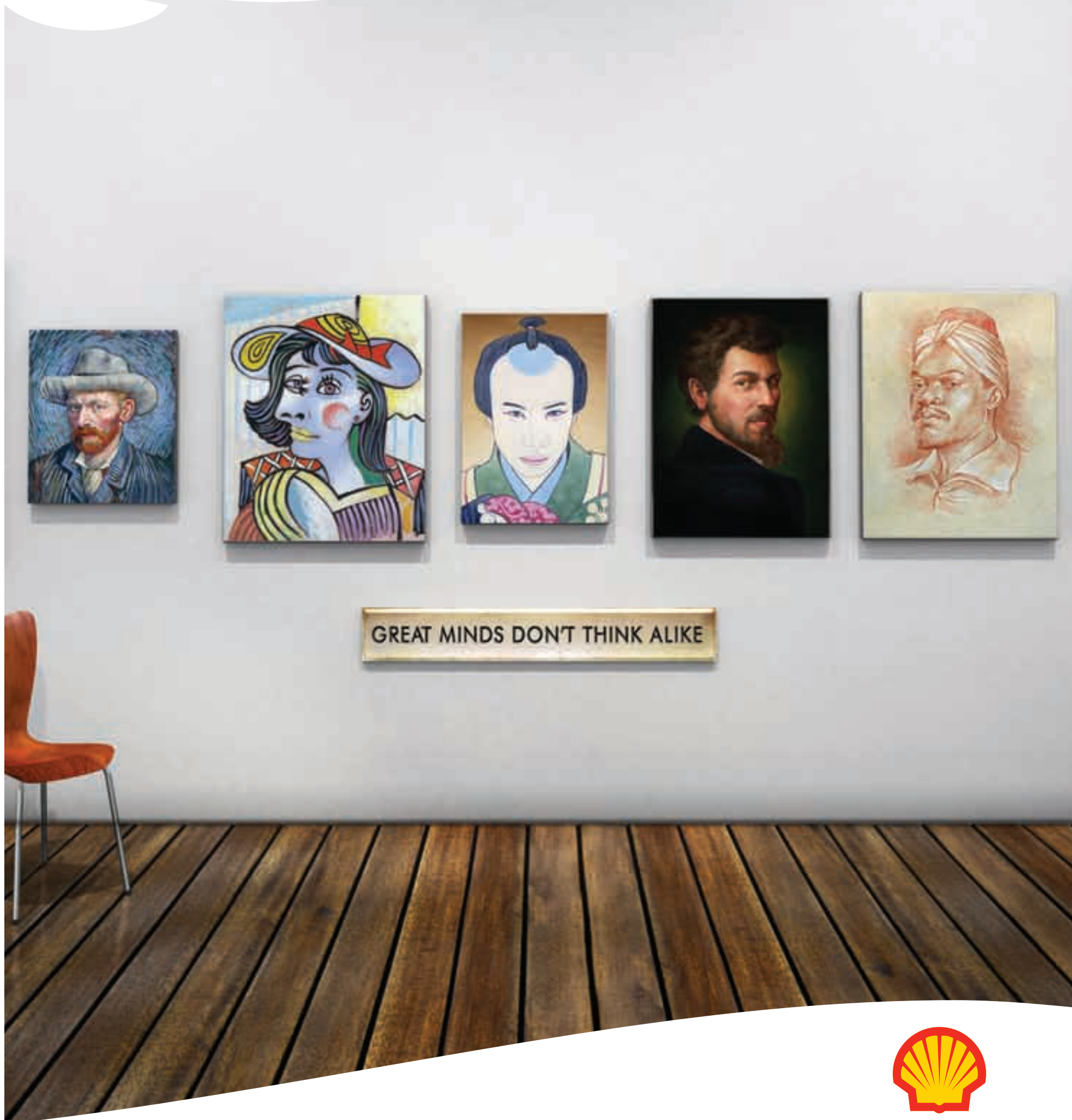
jonnysayed@lol.com

Good, informal show this year! Wolverine did a grand job! Snickt! Why waste your time commenting if you didn't like the show? It's like my gran said before she died of cancer: if you cant say nething nice, dont say anything at all. BRAVE JADE 4EVA.

cervicallover,London

TECHNICAL & COMMERCIAL GRADUATES

The most successful problem solvers look at things differently and see solutions no one else can. Who would have thought to use fish protein to stop gas freezing in subsea pipes? One of our people did. And right now we're looking for more people who can bring a fresh perspective to the energy challenge. We'll provide training, support and career choices to develop your potential. We'll get you working with some of our most accomplished problem solvers. And together we can help build a responsible energy future. Think further. Visit www.shell.com/careers and quote ref. GCE412F when you apply. Shell is an equal opportunity employer.



MAGAZINE



THIS WEEK IN THE MAGAZINE: MEET IAIN SINCLAIR, RELUCTANT FATHER OF PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY / LONDON SLANG / PATRICK WOLF / STREET STYLE / LEWIS WOLPERT / THIS WEEK'S DRAMA

Photograph of the week by *Natasha Amladi*



“This photo was taken of the fountain in Trinity Great Court early on a Sunday morning in late December. I was trying to take a picture of the whole fountain, but it was the piercing Cambridge sunlight (the stuff that blinds you as you cycle to lectures in the morning) that drew my attention to the elaborate detail at the top. It was not the skilled craftsmanship of the filigree detailing of the grey stone that caught my eye; it was the simplicity of the light and shade that - to me - truly captured its intricate form.”

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



My week by Hermes, University Messenger God*

Thursday

During the internet age the potential for shame and ignominy can be just a mouse-click away. How many Cambridge careers, I wonder, have been irretrievably set back by missing the ‘reply to sender only’ button and clumsily ordering me to ‘reply to sender and all recipients’. A covert relationship between lad69 and his DoS that had been firing for over a year was let out the bag today for precisely that reason. In reply to the DoS’s message that the talk on the economic consequences of natural disasters had sadly been cancelled, lad69 innocently replied “Shame, how about I come to yours instead this

evening – my erupting volcano and your quivering earthquake will frenzy the FTSE100.” Some things just can’t be explained away.

Friday

Busy morning with a raging debate over a college mailing list about ethical eating. The college environmental officer recommended free range eggs in hall, only to be called a “hemp-chewing, sandal-wearing beard fetishist” by the captain of the rugby team. It’s gone all the way to the top; I have just delivered draconian orders from the List Monitor. Lad69 has been doing his best to explain away yesterday afternoon’s mishap, but his fellow students are unconvinced and the Senior Tutor is perturbed.

Sunday

Always a busy day with the drinking teams organising their endless swaps. These messages are notable for their insincere use of irony when actually delivering a statement that is deadly serious, example: “The Mercenaries are going to show the Cambridge women’s sailing team how to really hoist a sail this evening.”

Monday

I was attempting to get some sleep in the small hours of the morning, when I was called into action at half past three. In response to his invitation to a talk on African nation-building, dum101 had me deliver a message to every single member of the SPS mailing list containing such furious imperialism

that it would have made Genghis Khan see eye to eye with Gandhi. I spend the morning delivering two hundred emails of disgust from the more right-on members of his faculty. Lef3 called him a “stupid racist” and noh8 a “disgusting, reactionary pig”. I did deliver one message of solidarity though, from the Emmanuel May Ball Committee.

Wednesday

After a day of considered silence, I delivered an unqualified apology to the SPS mailing list on behalf of dum101. He confessed that alcohol makes him racist, and he only sent the email after getting back from a heavy night out, but Lef3 was unconvinced, demanding what kind of drunkard checks his emails at three in the morning. Big day for essay

deadlines, so the five o’ clock rush hour was spent delivering a few essays, and lots of excuses. There seem to be three forms of excuse: extraordinary circumstance, whinging self-pity and good old fashioned honesty. My favourite of the later this week from chil2 was “I find enclosure deathly boring so I just couldn’t help but spend the whole day watching *The Wire* instead... Would you still like it maybe in a couple of days?”

Thursday

Supervisor replies to chil2, “Not a problem, I feel your pain, try writing a PhD on it. Could you lend me Season 3? I need to know what happens to Stringer Bell.”

* As told to Rob Peal

VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS HERE): It’s Pancake Day and you’re chundering all over the shop. Chunder on the carpet; chunder on the duvet; chunder on the cheese toastie machine; chunder on the MacBook Pro; chunder on the dissertation; chunder on pretty much everything, in fact. Chunder chunder chunder. Bleurgh. »**p14** You ate too many pancakes. »**p15** You’ve got the Noros virus thing.

Ed at large

EDITOR-AT-LARGE ED CUMMING, CONFINED TO HIS SICKBED, PONTIFICATES ON THE INS AND OUTS OF TAKEAWAYS (AND PRAWN COCKTAIL)

As decent and civilised readers you'll accept my apologies for this week. Clearly you haven't read the piece yet, but as we go on just remember that I've banked that apology, and that as decent and civilised readers you are honour-bound to accept it and make do. I hope I'm not too insensitive, but I'm always asked to be outlandish.

There's a famous description of cricket, beloved of tea-towel-makers, which plays humorously with the prominence of 'in' and 'out' in the game's lexicon. Whilst I think of tea-towels as rarely as the next man, which is to say hardly at all, I nonetheless found myself remembering this phrase this week for reasons which we'll come to. For the benefit of the baffled, I paraphrase, but it goes something like this:

You have two teams, one out in the field and one in. Each man that's in the side that's in goes out, and when he's out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out. When they are all out, the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in, out. Sometimes you get men still in and not out. Etc.

Very droll, I'm sure you'll agree. Except for those of you who are actually unfamiliar with the rules of cricket, in which case you're probably better served by TCS anyway.

Anyway. Without going into the ins and outs of it too much, my curios-

ity was first aroused by a message in my inbox. This message went out to all *in statu pupillari*, so you may be familiar with it. In it were set out a range of medical symptoms, of varying grossness, and an advisory that anyone displaying said symptoms, which seemed specifically designed to include common man-flu and hangovers, was to stay in and not go out, and not let anyone else come in and go out again, unless the nurse made an outcall and insisted you weren't infectious.

I replied to this email in a rare paroxysm of civic responsibility, observing that I had been displaying one or two of these symptoms, namely that one or two of the foodstuffs I had of late ingested had been making their way out rather too keenly, and some others have been

making their way out through the same way they came in. In which case, said the college nurse, I was to stay in and not go out until that which was going in was staying in, and not going out the way it had come in or going out the way it was supposed to go out before due time. During this time it went without saying, she said, that nobody was to go in or out until that which was causing the whole hokey-cokey confusion was out.

Nobly I accepted my fate, not least because I felt slightly guilty for imposing on the poor lady the following conversation:

"What's wrong with me?"

"Well, it's Norovirus."

"Phew, well that's a relief. I thought it was certainly a virus."

Is it a bacterial infection?"

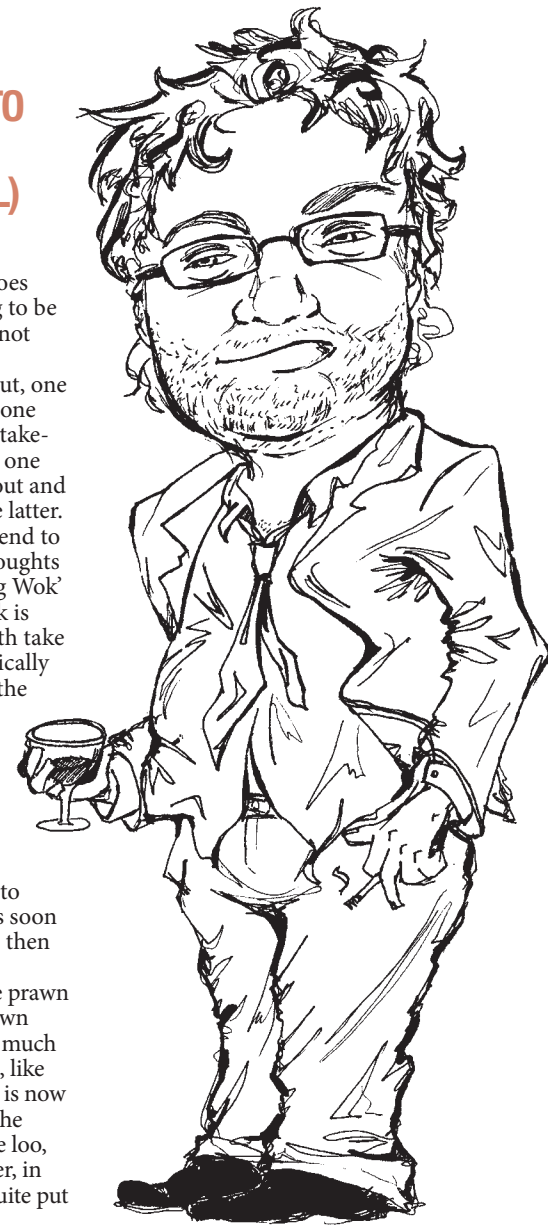
"No, it's Norovirus."

"I'm sure, but it must be something, surely, I mean I didn't eat that much cheese."

"You've got Norovirus."

"So you said, but what about the 'neither'?"

One has to amuse oneself, and for a nurse I felt she was being most unspecific –



FRANKLIN AND PALIN GO HEAD TO HEAD ON THE GREASY ISSUE OF JUNK FOOD

Junk in the Trunk



Chocolate Junkyard

Bene't's on King's Parade – £2

It could have been a children's party. A chocolate item was presented to me by a smiley, bespectacled, bald man. The party factor lay in the fact that the Chocolate Junkyard came with a knife and fork. I definitely didn't set a stopwatch, pull on a few items of fancy dress, and try to eat as much of the above as possible using only the utensils provided though. I was too busy thinking about the shiny head who had just given me a free shot of melted chocolate that gave me a moustache, which can only be empowering, right?

The strength of a man was necessary for the Junkyard; the thing weighed more than its shape insinuated. It comprised a few inches of treacly flapjack, finished with another centimetre or so of butter-heavy, and thus bitable chocolate. This was embedded with a Mars bar chunk and white chocolate mouse. And get this: there were additional hundreds-and-thousands, which added a very important textural dimension to an otherwise chewy snack. They also added to the acid-trip experience of sitting in Bene't's, replete as it is with ice-cream counter, small fernery, and chemistry-class-colourful bottles of 'Vitamin Water'.

Taking the Biscuit

I love Waitrose. Those extra aisle inches make all the difference. I'm a tongue, not turkey twisters girl, you see. Or was it twizzlers? But good, wholesome fare shouldn't have to be the reserve of the Wellie Brigade, and its colour scheme needn't be limited to sludgy greens. I happen to have a special passion for orange foods. This does not include the 'Monster Munch' that Jonathan speaks of, mind. What is most suspicious about this as a foodstuff, is that unlike the 'pan-fried corn-fed' chicken, 'Munch' offers no indication of what one is about to place in one's mouth. Heavens, it's not even a noun. The two occasions when I have sampled this maize savoury (the first when I swapped lunches with Araminta, whose mother was known to be disreputable; the second on a motorway during a dark night of the soul), I experienced exactly the same salty, sugary taste sensation.

Herein lies the problem with packaged goods; the lucky dip factor from buying, say, some Space Invaders, or a Double Decker, is over after your first pop. They taste the same every time. My sort of orange food, on the other hand, always comes out a little different. For example, 'red' split lentil soup (which has a misleading name of its own). Fry an onion, add lentils and some stock, and simmer. For added excitement: ginger and garlic, finely chopped

carrot and celery, ground cumin and coriander. Blend for a smooth finish. Whatever happens, you won't come away with the sweaty hands of someone who has been reaching into a shiny foil packet of heart disease. Admittedly, carrot batons don't always make a party, so I'm willing to stretch to a 'bit of this, bit of that' approach. But please don't let your bit of that include 'Rustlers', that very slightly beefy snack advertised as being 'nought to tasty in seconds'. Or if you must, consider toasting a pumpkin seed or two to sprinkle on top of the square of congealed whey-powder (or processed cheese) provided.



Peace of Cake

Multipacks of crisps, eclipsed only by black pudding, are one of the most unappealing examples of British eating habits. Partly because they seem to go straight from shelf to screaming pram and partly because the smell of 24 packs of Monster Munch is worse than sewers in July. However, as Cadbury's reminds us, treats can be enjoyed as part

of a healthy lifestyle and there is no need to deny oneself fats and simple sugars because of the actions of a few irresponsible mothers. The junk food debate has been maternally polarised, with 'yummy mummies' who'd rather see their children with an AK47 than a packet of Quavers. Of course, there are the other type of parents, vilified by Jamie Oliver and the *Daily Mail* alike, who think that Starburst count as one of the five a day. Do not be sucked, impressionable reader, into either groups' blinkered vision.

Miss Palin and her set would have you eating cabbage for a midnight essay snack and celebrating birthdays with freshly baked quiche. Presents serve a social function by being unnecessary (only thoughtful presents from moth-eaten relatives contravene this rule), and treats have to be the same. If you try to get vitamins through your culinary vices, you're making a big mistake, snacks need to be unhealthy lapses in an otherwise faultless diet. If you eat your Brussels sprouts and check your pulses, and dessert isn't a piece of cake, then why not Twix yourself or take a Malteser breather. It's important to differentiate between the role of food in joining body and soul and its potential as a source of comfort. Tasty, greasy, saccharine junk food should play a part in your diet, for paying too much consideration to self-denial is unhealthy. Choose chocolate, have screaming children (but never let the twain meet).



Walkers Multipack

Those of you who haven't been living in a cauldron will surely have noticed that Walkers have brought out a new range of flavours, designed by the willing general public. I don't know who they were looking for, but they didn't find them, unless they were planning to employ all the people neglected by Care-in-the-Community programmes. Choosing between the unappetising and the unoriginal, it is now the public's duty to vote which one becomes canonised. Among the treats are Fish'n'Chips and Hoisin Duck. Eschew the former unless you want to release a smell akin to Margate at pub closing time. The latter is preferable, although still tastes of formaldehyde. Builder's Breakfast (all the grease and none of the taste) is to be avoided, and Onion Bhaji does to crisps what *Bride and Prejudice* did to cinema. Those who think Chilli and Chocolate sounds appealing should stick to Cadbury's. Although nothing beats the stench of road-kill, Cajun Squirrel has resulted in a public health recall. Don't encourage them: choose an election where there are serious candidates, like Guolong Li for CUSU President.



Slang Tang

SHOCKED BY ITS LINGUISTIC LIMITATIONS, KIRAN MOODLEY STARTS A ONE MAN CAMPAIGN TO BRING THE STREET TO THE COBBLED LANES OF CAMBRIDGE

Seeking to liven up a conversation with public school-hopper Emma, I asked what her favourite piece of slang was. Bemused, my Bloomsbury-dwelling friend revealed that she didn't really know any. It set me on a mission to repaint Cambridge with the linguistic colour of slang, and Emma would be my first pupil.

Cambridge's rarefied bubble has left us cut off from the hectic world of slang. Cam-slang consists of simply shortening commonly used phrases: 'plodge' or 'ent' for example. So our native slang is, one could say, rather shank. Such a sentence caught my friend by surprise: "Shank? You mean as in lamb shank?" Emma had a long way to go; think *My Fair Lady* in reverse.

In many ways the experiment was about forging a new bond with Emma; breaking down the language barrier between us. Indeed, I recently found out that community nurses in Scotland managed to deal effectively with drug addicts by speaking slang with the patients. The barriers instantly came down and they accepted them as someone they could talk to. Could I finally relax, use my normal vocabulary and be understood? The next few days were going to be well long.

First word of the day had to be 'butterz'. The main hurdle with butterz is that it has to be said without pronouncing the t's, otherwise you really do sound like a parent attempting slang. But for some, it's just too hard to chip away at the bastion that is the Queen's English. What I did notice during our daily lessons was that slang is always better at describing stuff that is associated with bad or ugly things: 'minger' and 'bint' surely out-weigh 'nang' and 'heavy'.

"NEVER, EVER, CHIRPSE A MUNTER: IT'S JUST BRASS"

Another word unfamiliar to Emma's ears was 'choong', which I always took to mean really hot, as in, 'she's well choong.' However, choong (or chung) can also mean when someone's stoned, which I guess can be merged with the previous meaning. You might think that a girl was pretty choong, even though she was butterz, but because you were chunged, that's why you thought she was choong. Thus, being chung can make someone else look choong.

However, if you did decide said girl was choong, you would obviously go to chirpse (flirt) her (I could tell Emma was getting slightly confused at this point). Upon chirpsing the girl, it may dawn upon you that she was butterz and not buff, and thus you proceed to chunder. This ruined the kotch and all was no longer lush. Never, ever, chirpse a munter: it's just brass.

I became wary that I did not want to give Emma too much attitude, inverting her heavenly demeanour into some sort of Cambridge sket. In fact, 'sket', although peppered with bad connotations, is apparently a Caribbean term for 'super ho' which I thought made it sound quite exotic, conjuring images of a sexy Lilt lady. Not such a bad thing.

Emma has now slowly begun to adopt my linguistic ways, but can the rest of Cambridge? Perhaps we could ease in with our own version of cockney rhyming slang, a highly adaptable discourse that has begun to mould itself into the modern world. For example, a 'Melvyn' (Bragg) is, of course, a shag. I am currently still working on some local examples, but all I've got is a 'Tony' (Badger): a shagger. Apologies to the Master of Clare if this becomes commonplace.



Competition ~~and 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 7: 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?

Winner:

The Scream

It was ticklish at first. Really ticklish! I couldn't stop giggling! The paintbrush just went on and on, drawing waves of wet oily colour on my skin. I could feel the shades of red and orange, playing with the blues and greens; they were mingling with each other in streams of emotion and warmth; and yet, in spite of this blurring feeling they created, they somehow managed to remain distinct in their brightness and intensity. At first, I thought it was going to be just a play, but it wasn't long until I realised how wrong I'd been: it wasn't the joy of life that these colours were praising. No. They were in search of something else... something indefinite; I couldn't figure out what it was. Suddenly, it was burning hot! I could feel the anger, the frustration steaming from the paintbrush! It was DESPAIR, confusion, panic, a nightmare!

All I wanted was this agony to be finished as soon as possible. But then I suddenly realised: by the time the painting was finished, I would have become the voice in it, a ridiculous bunch of colours, claiming an identity of its own; a face trapped between reality and fiction, immortalised in a hopeless attempt to give voice to some terrible feelings! Dreadful!

After moments of infinite struggle with my emerging passions and desires, I was finally given a soul and a mouth to shout out my despair. I was just a nameless ghost, just a body for this terrible, awful feeling! I was trapped inside the painting condemned to silence and immortality! Hanged on a wall, I was not a piece of cardboard anymore, not even a painting: I was a stifled soul, begging for mercy, crying for salvation, yet unable to do so.

I've seen so many people now staring at me with blank faces. Some of them seem to pity me, some look away in disgust, some treat me as if I was just a piece of cardboard once again, but what is really starting to worry me, is that most people look at me in DESPAIR: the same despair they can see in my very own eyes. And I keep asking myself: why is that? Does it mean there really is no hope left? And if so, why don't they shout out loud their cries and frustrations? Why don't they let the world know about it? I am just a bunch of colours and oils: but what about them? Are they afraid that the others will turn their backs and run away on their own bridge towards redemption? Are they all living my tempera tragedy out there in the real world?

Once, I've even heard someone asking: "What's this painting called?" And a calmed, composed voice replied: "*The Scream*, by Edvard Munch."

Corina Balaban

Next week's competition: Triolets. A triolet should rhyme abaaabab. It also uses repeated lines – line 1 becomes lines 4 and 7, and line 2 is repeated as line 8. In a good triolet, the meaning of the lines should be subtly different when repeated: don't be afraid to change punctuation, etc. Dash a couple off! Send submissions to Colette Sensier at literary@varsity.co.uk no later than 9 am on Monday, March 2nd for the chance to win two tickets to the following week's ADC main show, and see your work printed in our next issue.

THE CAMBRIDGE INVADER

MISSION: TO DELVE INTO CAMBRIDGE'S SECRET ORIFICES
WEEK 6: OCCULT DINNER SOCIETY

It's not every evening that one attends a dinner to which the anonymous handwritten invite is replete with mysterious insignia, and a disturbing name that sounds like a conflation of chimera and obscure. Allegedly the name refers to light and dark. My nervous but welcoming assumption was that the evening would lean significantly on the dark, and lightly on the light.

Images of fleeing bodies being pursued by sinister thick set men chanting otherworldly tracts, whilst dressed in red capes and holding hefty candles, flew through my mind. My imagination ran wild with glimpses of indulgent depravity and Tolkien-esque mythology. I was scared, but intrigued. Putting such fears of devious doings aside I set off, hoping that I would return with my clothes, innocence and sphincter all still intact. We rendezvous at the harmlessly sedate Pickerel – so far so normal. Over a pint of happily foaming ale and reliably tasty salt and vinegar crisps, I picked the brains of the society 'member' who had invited me. She was not forthcoming, preferring to heighten my nervous anticipation with ambiguous and suggestive remarks, and a wide-eyed look that combined a patronising sense of pity and amusement at my artlessly eager questioning.

We made our way to one of the more wealthy but less popular colleges in Cambridge, where we were led to an

oak-panelled room. Champagne and tentative introductions greeted me as I glanced around the room, hoping to see such wild expectations fulfilled. However, my heart rate fell as the actual mundanity of the evening's company dawned on me. There were no wizened old wizards with floor-length beards, no sly Freemasons practicing their handshakes, and no perverted priests eyeing up the boys. Instead, the room was full of Catholics, CUCA members and kilts. In place of capes were bow ties, cava instead of potions and small talk instead of rituals.

However, this was but a minor setback, and one that my rationality had secretly anticipated. In a room full of unreconstructed dults, fizzing with repressed homosexuality, oddness was still the order of the day. At my table, the conversation started with a discussion of the Mass, moved on to favourite whisksys and before I knew it a hearty declaration of Jacobitism was made, a political outlook which I had ignorantly assumed was confined to the eighteenth century. The surrounding characters revelled in reactionary opinions, idly floating across the table comments with power to shock medieval sensibilities.

In for a penny, in for a pound, I decided. I met their jokes with encouraging laughter, tolerated their opinions and quizzed them further. But a rat was smelt, my insincerity had surfaced. Had I

not sufficiently disguised my disingenuous quizzing? It was time for a cigarette. I went outside and lit up a B&H Gold. A fellow diner approached, sucking on the golden filter of his Sobranie. The Sobranie took one look at my cig and sneered, leapt onto its horse and nonchalantly kicked mud into my cig's eyes as it took off into the distance.

The evening moved on to a set, where port and cheese were on offer. As a man of simple tastes and easy pleasure I opted for the hard stuff; cheddar, not brie. Conversation developed over a print of a medieval village. "This fifteenth-century Flemish painting is deathly boring," declared one; "Flemish painting and deathly boring?" quipped his friend, "I thought the two were synonymous!" Ensuing guffaws made my baffled silence deafening. The room filled with smoke; my eyes reddened and my mind slowed; I felt vulnerably unaware of how the vibe was evolving. Then a ringing lifeline. The nostalgic revels were interrupted by the intrusion of modernity – a smoke alarm. A ban on smoking was announced. "But this is a Monte Cristo," declared one outraged guest; "That can pass," conceded the host.

It was an evening which at every turn hoped to fulfill a bygone age. The cigars, the port, the conversation, the mass, the toasts, the kilts all shouted 'throwback', but not nearly as loudly as the organisers had hoped to contrive.

VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 13): It's a fact: you've got Nora's virus. Though quite how you got it is a mystery because you don't know any Norahs, and even if you did, you wouldn't have borrowed a virus off them. "Never borrow a virus; always buy it firsthand" – that's your motto. Anyway, enough: you need to work out who this Norah person is, so you can give her back her virus. »p20 She's running for a position on CUSU. »p21 She's your supervisor.

THE VARSITY WEEK

THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS

Theatre

Tuesday 3rd
Romeo and Juliet
Arts Theatre: 7.45pm, Saturday matinee 2.30pm (£10-£20)
Romeo and who? Runs until Sat 7th.

Derek - Footlights Spring Revue 2009
ADC: 7.45pm, Saturday matinee 4pm (£6-£9)
The life of a normal loser, told through sketches. Runs until Sat 7th.

Father/Son
Corpus Playroom: 7pm (£5-£6)
A new play by Freddy Syborn. Runs until Sat 7th.

Cardenio
Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens' College: 7.45pm (£4-£5)
Shakespeare's mysterious 'lost play'. Runs until Sat 7th.

Historical Fiction
Pembroke New Cellars: 7.30pm (£4-£5)
New student-written comedy about the possible destruction of the time-space continuum. Runs until Sat 7th.

Wednesday 4th
The Chairs
ADC: 11pm (£4-£6)
Tragic farce. Runs until Sat 7th.

Seven Jewish Children
ADC Larkum Studio: 10pm (free)
See Pick of the Week.

The Vampire
Corpus Playroom: 9.30pm (£5-£6)
A voracious vampire and a beautiful virgin take their places amongst the craggy cliffs. Runs until Sat 7th.

The Water Bears
Wolfson Hall, Churchill College: 7.30pm, Saturday matinee 2pm (£5, Thurs £4)
The annual play from the CU Chinese Cultural Society. Runs until Fri 6th.

Music & Nightlife

Friday 27th
Green Mind 8th Birthday (Part 2)
The Junction 1: 7pm (£5 adv.)
Green Mind Gigs continues its birthday celebrations (see p30 for our review of Part 1) with The Mono Effect (below), The Tupolev Ghost, The Cathode Ray Syndrome and more.



David O'Doherty
The Junction 2: 8pm (£10 adv.)
See Pick of the Week.

Saturday 28th
Half-ton Studios 1st Birthday Gig
The Portland Arms: 8pm (£3)
In a week of local music biz birthdays, head to The Portland to hear Truly Beautiful Disaster, The Winter Kings, Um and DJ Nochexxx.

Thursday 5th
Revelation Rock-Gospel Choir Lent Concert
West Road Concert Hall: 7.30pm (£4-£6)
A mixture of rock and gospel music including songs by Israel Houghton, Ziggy Marley and MC Hammer.

NSPCC night with DJ Flash Louis
Kambar: 10pm (£3 before 11pm)
Get down to Kambar for a one-off night to raise money for NSPCC knife crime awareness.

King's Jazz Jam
King's Bar: 8pm (free)
Come down and jam with the house band in King's bar. All are welcome to join in or sit back and enjoy the jazz!

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, check next week for our review)
Kettle's Yard (free):
• The Roundhouse Of International Spirits (until March 15th)

Friday 27th
Britten and Rudland
Great St. Mary's: 8pm (£3-£10)
Cambridge alumnus Oliver Rudland conducts the world premiere of his Oscar Wilde-inspired work as well as two rarely performed Britten pieces - soloists include the indomitable Sam Furness.

Rimsky-Korsakov, Sibelius and Beethoven
West Road Concert Hall: 8pm (£4-£12)
Soloist Catherine Myerscough and the student-run Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra perform Sibelius violin concerto, Beethoven's overture to Egmont and Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade.

Saturday 28th
Beethoven Ensemble
Trinity College Chapel: 8pm, (£3-£10)
The Cambridge Beethoven Ensemble treat us to an unusual 'concertante' work and a Mendelssohn symphony inspired by the love of Mary Queen of Scots for an Italian lutenist.

Sunday 1st
The Lady Frances Singers
Sidney Sussex College Chapel: 8pm, (£2-£5)
The first concert of the Lady Frances Singers sees the new consort tackling 16th century motets and folksong arrangements.

Talks & Events

Sunday 1st
Salsa @ La Raza
La Raza, 4-6 Rose Crescent: 9pm (free)
CUiD are proud to present another night of Latin tunes, sultry dancing and delicious cocktails. Featuring up-and-coming Cambridge DJ John Gomez, a veteran of the Madrid clubbing scene.

Monday 2nd
'Participation or Delegation?'
The Forum: 7.30pm (free)
Professor Gerry Stoker, author of Why Politics Matters: making democracy work and Natalie Szarek, elected CUSU Women's officer and member of the protest occupation of the Law Faculty explores conflicts and compatibility between representative democracy and direct action.



Van Dyck at The Fitz

Wednesday 4th
Pier Paolo Pasolini's Salò
Lucia Windsor Room, Newnham College: 7pm (Free)
n.e.r.d.i. present a showing of Pasolini's highly controversial film, with an introduction by the writer Jenny Diski and Robert Gordon, a specialist in Italian cinema.

Thursday 5th
'The Brain Drain: Emigration of British Scientists Abroad'
Fitzwilliam College Auditorium: 6pm (free)
A round-table discussion concerning the 'brain drain', the movement of scholars across international boundaries.

Film

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Vue: 12pm (Fri/Mon-Weds only), 9pm (daily until Weds)
Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett tick all the Oscar boxes in the story of a man who ages in reverse.

Confessions of a Shopaholic
Daily: 12.20pm, 2.50pm, 5.20pm, 8pm (not Mon-Thurs)
A girl who has a particular talent for shopping lands a job as a columnist advising on money-saving tips. Oh, the irony.

Gran Torino
Vue: Fri/Sat only: 12.30pm, 3.10pm, 6pm, 8.45pm, 11.30pm
The man with the most intimidating voice in cinema returns to clean up the filthy streets of suburban America. It's Dirty Harry with lawnmowers, and Clint is out for blood.

The International
Vue: Fri/Sat only: 12pm, 2.40pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm, 11pm
Clive Owen and Naomi Watts negotiate lots of jump-cuts while trying to expose an evil financial (boo hiss!) organisation who secretly deal in weapons and secrets.

Vicky Cristina Barcelona
Arts Picturehouse: Fri/Mon-Wed: 3pm, 5.45pm; Sat-Sun/Thu: 12pm, 7pm
Penelope Cruz (clutching a BAFTA), Scarlett Johansson and Javier Bardem star in Woody Allen's latest movie, set in Barcelona "because the government offered to pay for it". Apparently it's quite good nonetheless.

St. John's Films
Sunday 1st: 7pm and 10pm
Cloverfield

Thursday 5th: 9pm
Dostana



David O'Doherty
Friday 27th
The Junction 2: 8pm (£10 adv.)
A sample: "Celebrity news - stop appearing at the end of real news. You are not real news. You get a really odd juxtaposition like: 'And the death toll from the earthquake could rise as high as 45,000. Christina Aguilera's cat has alopecia.' Fuck off!" Head down to the Junction tonight for some sheer brilliance from the mini-keyboard-wielding Irish comedian.



Seven Jewish Children
Wed 4th - Sat 7th
ADC Larkum Studio: 10pm (free)
Caryl Churchill's new ten-minute play, which has just finished its run at the Royal Court Theatre in the West End, comes to the intimate space of the ADC's Larkum Studio next week. Seven scenes of family life from recent Jewish and Israeli history create a powerful and human drama. It's also free.



The big bad Wolf

COMPARING BAROQUE MUSIC TO R&B, SHOWING FRIENDS EXPLICIT VIDEOS OF HIMSELF HAVING SEX, AND BEING BEST FRIENDS WITH HIS VIOLA. AS STEPHANIE DAVIN DISCOVERS, PATRICK WOLF IS A WEIRD ONE

Being “locked in a house for a year and a half” is enough to turn anyone crazy, and Patrick Wolf is certainly no exception. However, on the upside he has emerged with an album. Called *The Bachelor*, the album (soon to be followed by another) is apparently “grander”, “tougher”, and more mature than his previous output. It can’t have been an easy period.

In order to finance the new album, shares are being sold on bandstocks.com. This is one aspect of Wolf’s desire to be involved in all aspects of the record, from the artwork to the direction of the music videos, as well as his refusal to compromise on a choice of producer.

That said, although he views this kind of undiluted contact between artist and fan as positive, Wolf does draw the line at illegal music-sharing. He tells me that when he was younger, he used to make mixtapes for his friends all the time “but it was just one song – I never copied albums”. However, as he tells me, later on “I was well into a creative rhythm so I kind of didn’t have time to stop to think to worry about that stuff”, admitting that he’d bought CDs, copied them and then returned them to the store. What kind of CDs? “Bach, Sibelius, Rachmaninov,” apparently, because the profits go to major music labels, rather than independent ones.

Indeed, further questioning revealed a vehement dislike of people illegally sharing music from small, independent labels: “Don’t take that for free and take that for granted, because it’s taking the piss out of the whole idea of creativity, and productivity with creativity.” Similarly, he exhorts Cambridge students, if they were going to steal, to do so from larger stores like Tesco and Sainsbury’s rather than small local businesses.

Wolf also seems to view himself as a purist. He talked of how he used to “walk through a field or go down to the beach and just get lost in 45 minutes of music,” and laments the fact that nowadays people might enjoy a single track of his, played on a mobile phone on a bus. Indeed, his yearning

for older, better times does not end there. In response to a question about what he was wearing, he talked about how he was currently very influenced by “fabrics that you would have to wear if you were going into battle”. This reference to his new album was followed by the baffling claim, “I feel a bit like a mediaeval James Dean at the moment”.

Wolf views himself as a pioneer. He seemed perplexed by people taking inspiration from a couple of decades in the past, instead describing the influence of older classical music on his song-

writing. Apparently, if he could live in an era it would be the Elizabethan period because of the music, which was “quite anti-establishment”. He goes on to present the rather startling view that “Baroque for me is like RnB... I definitely would want to murder people if I lived in the Baroque era. I’d go out with a gun and just shoot everybody.”

This comment is perhaps in keeping with Wolf’s tendency to speak his mind without inhibition. Certainly, his music and lyrics are drawn from and reflective of different events in his personal life. On asking if this is ever embarrassing he told that “embarrassment is something to be embraced... I really enjoy

showing, when my friends are over, really personal, sexual videos on my computer of me and my boyfriend”.

However, rather than embracing the feeling of embarrassment, it would seem that he does not even experience it: “There’s no such thing as too much information... we can talk about anything. I really enjoy it.” This hon-

feel exposed or pigeonholed, but there seemed to be no need to ask. From his love of revealing his deepest feelings to showing explicit videos of himself to his friends; from adoring the confessional quality of Joni Mitchell songs to being incited to murder by Baroque music; it all seems to display the value he places on raw communication.

“I REALLY ENJOY SHOWING, WHEN MY FRIENDS ARE OVER, REALLY PERSONAL, SEXUAL VIDEOS ON MY COMPUTER OF ME AND MY BOYFRIEND”

esty and exhibitionism central to his persona both onstage and on record.

Indeed, he was equally unguarded when I asked about all of the instruments he is listed as playing, saying, “It’s a big fuss made out of nothing, really, for me”. Apparently he has always had an obsession with instruments and collects them – if he finds an instrument in a charity shop, “even if it’s broken, and makes a new sound, I want to buy it”. However, talking about his proficiency he says that “I guess I do play them... I can see my accordion right here and I can play three songs on it. I’m not secure on these instruments; I just like writing songs on them”.

The only exception to this is his viola, which he played as a child and recently picked up again after a year, feeling that the viola “was his best friend... you were my best friend at school, you got me through everything”. Incidentally, this viola is something which he says that he would save if his house caught on fire – the viola and, he adds, “his boyfriend”. Other things to save include his box of archive material from his early days making music and some shamrock cushions, knitted by his grandma and left to him in her will.

This rather personal admission reflects how Wolf sees genuine emotions, what he terms “heart”, as immensely important. I had planned to ask him whether descriptions such as the

Junction’s website which describes him as “brimming with emotional passion” ever give him cause to

Talking about the current music scene, he expresses doubts: “I’m always positive about what could happen next. I guess at the moment I feel the stuff that’s being hyped in England by certain tastemakers lacks any heart. I’m sure there are ideas floating about and some interesting sounds...but I really think we need a heart at the bottom of everything”.

Coupled with this emotional element, however, is a love of melodrama – something to which his costumes and stage persona have always been a testament. Indeed, we can ask whether these two traits go together. Rather, could his exhibitionism not threaten to undermine the genuine sentiments which he aims to share? He is playful, certainly, but I found it difficult to take him seriously – something which he seems to want, given his idealistic views of music and composition. That said, perhaps this kind of judgement depends on his audience. Asking about the British press, he observes that “there’s a lot of cynicism here”, and one might say that a cynic is inclined to dislike an artist such as this. However, it remains debatable whether he genuinely has substance, and the depth to which he will go to accomplish the innovation for which he appears to strive.

It probably does not matter what one’s view on this is. Certainly, having done the interview, I don’t think I would want to be Patrick Wolf’s friend. However, cynicism aside, he does care deeply about his music and the way in which he makes it. Perhaps the proof simply has to be in the listening – something which it is easy to forget with a personality as distinct and memorable as his. Talking of having finished his recent album, Wolf said, “my dream – my wish – has come true”. All we will have to do is wait until the spring (or the Junction) to discover whether Patrick Wolf’s dream makes for impressive listening.

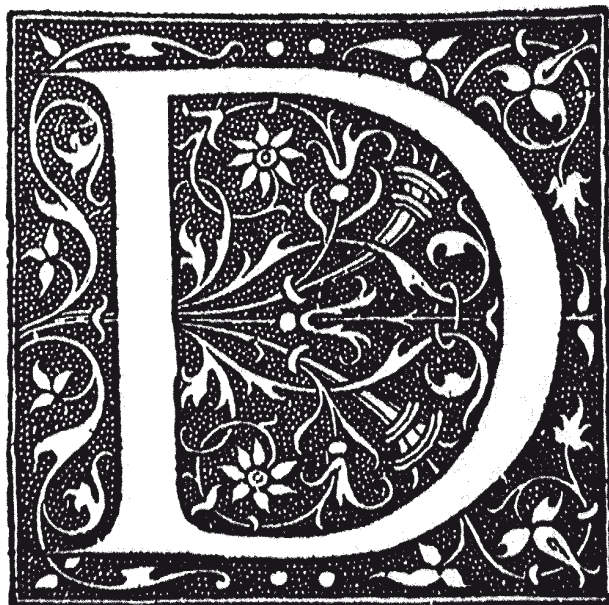
Patrick Wolf will be playing at the Junction on Tuesday 10 March; tickets are £11.50.





Photography by Katy King, Dominique Iste & Soumaya Keynes
Left to right: Robbie Stern, Izzy Finkel, Jo Starte, Dominic Morris, Abbie Glen, Zing Tsjeng, Adam, Slavica Delevic

THE



DIAL

LENT TERM 2009

PREVIEW

The Dial was a Queens'-based magazine which ran from 1907-1953. It was resurrected in 2008 as a space for new and experimental writing. In Michaelmas we ran an issue of two hundred copies containing poetry and prose from students across the University. This term we're hoping to increase our print run and our readership. *The Dial Society* also runs termly readings, continuing the tradition of contemporary readings at Queens'.

The Lent Term edition of *The Dial* will be available from the 2nd March. A limited number of copies will be distributed from The English Faculty library, Queens' College Porters Lodge and various other locations across the University. For more information on how to contribute, on readings and other *Dial*-related events please email lgmbk2@cam.ac.uk or join the Facebook group 'The Dial'.

P OETRY

Dance

You chopstick a whitebait.

Dip it, fluttering. Odori-Gui,
this squirming mouthful, the Japanese
for dancing-
eating,
refuses easy vanishment,
fights
the peristaltic walkstep's
one-two count disposal.
This is food insoluble
in function.

No slow prosaic bolus,
the silver fish
does the sparrowdance.

Leaps.

The memory
of that once-read sailor-cure for the seasick,
the pork-rind tied to swallowed string,
jerks now –
a rough shanty-heave
on the toppling wavecrest.

The Masai spearmen,
whose fresh-fried bloodclots
stretch like elastic in the throat,
Are slamming their high, redrobed warjumps.

You gag,
weightless on the offbeat.

Richard Osmond

Pope, Telescope

He smoothes his hands over its hips
and pulls its eye to rest against his own,
zooms into the dark to study fireflakes
strung up and blizzarding
across the dome of atmosphere.
Psalms and intercessions drift
up to universal rafters, with Sunday smoke
from mouths, and lungs
broadcasting into black.

As he focuses the glass into the distance,
it doesn't seem to matter if
the star above the stable
was really only Jupiter,
bending closer just to see the fuss;

he means to keep an eye out for
his echoes bouncing off the asteroids,
in case an eardrum reaches up to catch
and beats a sacred cadence back.

Every night he sieves the cosmos through his sinuses
and scans the skies for codes, for explanations -
come morning, as the sun brights out the blueprint
he swings a fiery meteor
to wash the earth in outer space.

Charlotte Runcie

Egon Schiele

Unripe green banana belly,
Why bare yourself to the butcher boys?
Why bare yourself to the carving knife
Why form a claw and forget you ever made it?

Three-day-old banana next to red stiletto shine
Blood on a tissue dries and goes muddy
Drip black currant tears on this salt-washed turquoise green fragment
Washed up out of the closed cupboard of years

Vine tomato glossed into acrylic plastic that chemical stench
That dress like wallpaper in a tobacco stained room
I'll put up a shelf and leave my bright orange peel there

Your slippers almost fit like a salt-washed turquoise green fragment
Your hair is washed with the tortoise shell kitten
Those brown paper boots crease over watercolour stardrips
What sea of white sheets crumpled your flesh putty floats out
And laps into black forest
Woman hold me like shore holds cliff
On a dull picture postcard in a puddle by the circus.

Spotlit on
leg, stockings
End in feet stretched into bloated sun stained sphinx
Calves meet knees in uncooked meat colours
Breasts fresh and bursting though stale cherry cupcakes
What sea of white sheets crumpled your flesh putty floats out
Dry eye paste
Stuck trained with dim beam for horizon

Blake-scale visions of meat-body distortion
Hang arms drooping hammers night's dumb anaesthetic
Sick god's yellow shadow in eyes of lost father
Shelter him marble-mother, cover bright child with calming.

Bruno Burton

DROSE

Extract from
La Sainte Vierge du 14 juillet

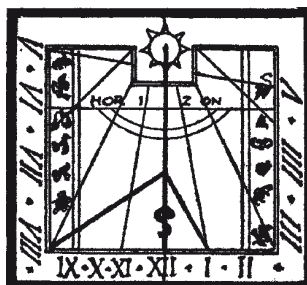
From the boat in the middle of the bay, fireworks arch up into the warm night sky. On the hill, the cicadas' buzz battles against the bangs. The lights bathe everything in pink glow. Standing on the garden wall, Agnès thinks she could topple all the way down through the town and fall into the sea.

The beach is heaving, illuminated in the gloom. She can't make out the people, only their 'oohs' and 'ahhs'. Behind them, the men have moved the long tables out of the road. Plates are stained with smears and sauces; big bowls hold traces around their edges, all the spoons are gone. She turns to see Papa swallowing the last morsel of tarte. He winks, smacks his lips, puts his finger to them: Tais-toi, rien à maman.

A last burst of golden green and the spectacle is over. Everyone trails slowly back to the tables, adults woozy with wine, children's heads lolling heavy on their shoulders. Agnès sees Marie catch Roman in her arms. Her own mother stops to kiss her godson's head as he is carried off to bed. Mama looks strange in the candlelight, smoke wafting from her lips like a ghost. She looks sad, the corners of her mouth turned down towards her chin. Out of the darkness, a hand clamps Agnès' shoulder. Gleaming talons dig into her skin. A wall of fusty perfume hits her, and Madame Ochin's scratchy voice issues out into the night.

"Béné, you must let me show the girls my Blessed Virgin."

Francesca Whitlum-Cooper



Editor: Laura Kilbride Design: Lizzie Robinson

Editorial Team: Kate Doyle, Maddie Power, Florence Privett, Lizzie Robinson,
Amy Shepherd, Vicky Sparrow

Points of View

DRUNKEN, DISHEVELLED AND RIOTOUS, THE VIEW ARE BRAND NEW PURVEYORS OF GOOD OLD-FASHIONED ROCK AND ROLL. LAURIE TUFFREY CATCHES UP WITH DUNDEE'S FINEST TO PICK THEIR BRAINS ON TRAVELODGES, GETTING PISSED, AND PETE DOHERTY

The Junction holds a special place in the hearts of The View. "We played here with Babyshambles ages ago, it was kinda the first time wed ever been out of Dundee," Kyle Falconer, the band's lead singer and co-songwriter, tells me before their gig there last Thursday. "We didn't think we were getting paid for it, and then Pete [Doherty] came out and gave us £300, which was like gold dust!"

As well as unexpected payments from other rock stars, tours in Japan and the US and meeting such luminaries as Paul McCartney, The View are doing pretty well for themselves. While probably still best known for last summer's ubiquitous 'Same Jeans', the View's second album *Which Bitch?* was released earlier this month. It reached number four in the album chart, and has so far garnered two singles, '5Rebbeccas' and 'Shock Horror'. The band recorded again with Owen Morris, who worked on their debut *Hats Off To The Buskers* and has previously produced Oasis and The Verve.



Falconer is an animated talker; as he talks, his hands stab the air to make his point, and he offers up some convincing impressions (his Noel Gallagher is particularly good). Recalling the time when the band first met Morris, "he said 'you're a junkie, you're a hobo, you're completely thick', he just like totally labelled us." He laughs, "we just thought 'who's this cheeky bastard?'" But the cheeky bastard proved to be an adept foil to the band's working ethic, particularly their more lubricated methods. "We recorded in Owen's house, just stayed there a week and got pissed up and recorded", he explains, which led to some unusual production techniques from Morris, including constructing a throne placed halfway up one of the studio's walls to record vocals on.

The new album signals a distinct change of tone for the band: while '5Rebbeccas' is of the same mould as *Hats Off...*'s 'Wasted Little DJs', 'One Off Pretender' combines post-punk guitars with rapping from Falconer, 'Typical Time 2' has skiffle-esque gui-

tars and piano and a Dundee-meets-Treasure Island pirate sea shanty, 'Distant Dubloon'. They provide a surprising answer when I ask if this genre-breaking is down to any new influences. "I listened to a lot of ABBA. Barbara Streisand is one of Owen's favourites – *The Way We Were* – we listened to that a lot", he says, before singing a snatch of the 1973 classic.

The album also signals a change in direction lyrically, becoming more introverted and private, with 'Unexpected' seeing Falconer reflect on the death of his father. Although he was reluctant to debut this song, written in his mid-teens, to the rest of the band, "I remember one time I showed them, and they never knew what I was on about," the track is now one of the standouts of the album, embellished with a string arrangement from New Yorker Ollie Krauss.

The band have become synonymous with some rock 'n' roll behaviour. Having being kicked out of the pub where they first practiced for riding a scooter along the bar and being too

drunk to perform at a gig in Nottingham last year, Falconer tells a story of the last time they stayed in the Cambridge Travelodge: "It was fuckin' mental man. Pete was doing blood paintings on the wall, writing 'The View', and we were like 'we'll get in trouble for it, fuck's sake!'" The apex of these extravaganzas came in 2007, when they were banned from Travelodges nationwide after causing £7000 worth of damage by flooding rooms in a Liverpool branch. Falconer seems unamused when I ask him if the ban from the chain of budget hotels has affected them, "no, not really", before explaining that Travelodges are "shite innit".

As I leave, any thoughts of hotel endangerment seem far from their minds. Happily tucking into a Nando's meal before their gig, the band seem unaffected by the trappings of fame. Though they now may be rubbing shoulders with McCartney and the Gallaghers, it seems clear that you can take the boys out of Dundee, but you can't take Dundee out of The View.

Living the life of Rileys

DURING THEIR RECENT APPEARANCE AT THE CHURCHILL BALL, INDIE NEWCOMERS THE RILEYS CHAT TO LUCY BRYANT AND LAURIE TUFFREY ABOUT PLAYING LIVE, THEIR SONG WRITING PROCESS, AND THE FAST TRACK TO FAME IT HAS EARNED THEM

Having attended universities in both Lancaster and France, the Rileys frontman Joseph Fielder is well experienced when it comes to balls. "I was in the Champagne region; we had our ball in the champagne cellars so it was free all night, which was absolutely brilliant. The Lancaster one was in Blackpool, so it had a completely different vibe about it!" Hopefully the Rileys felt comfortable amongst the free-flowing Cava at Churchill's 'Neon Sunrise' spring ball last week, where they played a set along with Nine Black Alps and a DJ set from Foals.

While providing the entertainment at a friend's charity rugby match is the band's only previous Cambridge appearance, they are well-loved in the south-east. Having formed in Essex, after Fielder met guitarist Dave Giles at a school induction day, the band have released a self-titled EP, which was chosen for the XFM Uploaded single of the week. They are at the beginning of a nine-date tour across the country to support their new single 'Do You Feel Me'.

"We've got a lot of '80s influences like Duran Duran, then a lot of modern bands like Kings of Leon and Bloc Party," Fielder says. While this sounds like a unique mix, it doesn't stop endless comparisons to other bands: "Every time we do an interview or a radio show, people say oh, we sound

like the Kaiser Chiefs or the Kooks... oh we've never heard that one before!"

But while their recordings are being given accolades and earning them illustrious comparisons, performing live is their first love. Recording in a studio can be "very insular", but "when you're standing in front of a crowd I always end up singing a lot more aggressively, a lot louder, because I'm there and it's actually happening." They certainly drew in the crowds on Friday night, despite tough competition from the ball's ninja assault course and sumo wrestling.

Fielder's lyrics are highly personal, though he's careful to guard himself from not giving too much away; after all, "It's tricky to write songs specifi-

cally about people, because you might not want to sing it in a year's time". The emotional content of the songs is all his own, but the story may be someone else's: "You get inspired to write a song about something that's happened to you but you change it... I might write a song about splitting up with a girlfriend, but a lot of the lyrics wouldn't necessarily be relevant to my situation." Their last single, 'Baby Blue', uses the example of a girl Fielder knew at university in France, who had a child whilst studying, to express the difficulties of "being young, not always making the right choices and having to deal with the consequences".

The achievement of the XFM-hon-

oured single, 'Jimmy Is A Lunatic', was a major step for the Rileys. "I think that was a turning point in the way we viewed ourselves", says Fielder; "I think once that happened it was like, wow, we're being played on a major radio station, people like us! It gave us confidence." Putting their records out on their own label, the band appreciate the hard work that goes into releasing music, especially with the huge availability of music publishing afforded by the internet. "It's good because anyone can get music out there," Fielder explains "but the problem is, because there are so many people doing it, it's hard to differentiate yourselves, hard to stand out." He also remains sceptical

about the role of MySpace in one of its biggest success stories: "People say 'oh yeah, Lily Allen was found online', but either way her dad's famous, so she was always going to have label backing."

But most of all, the Rileys' lead singer is excited about the year ahead and what's still to come for the quartet. With another EP on the horizon and plenty of dates ahead, Fielder can't wait: "Now it's all come together, it's brilliant." Thinking over the success of 'Jimmy Is A Lunatic', Fielder reflects, "I think that was the first thing to make us stand up and say fucking hell, we've got a chance to do something good". Judging by the response at Churchill, they are well on their way.





Redemption Song

IN LIGHT OF THE UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF GUSTAV DUDAMEL DAVID ALLEN EXPLORES VENEZUELA'S EL SISTEMA, A SOCIAL PROJECT WHICH BRINGS CLASSICAL MUSIC TO THE LIVES OF BARRIO CHILDREN OTHERWISE BLIGHTED BY CRIME AND DRUGS

Gustavo Dudamel is not a traditional conductor. He positively bounces onto his rostrum at the front of the stage, his wide smile gleaming under a shock of frizzy black hair. But then his is not traditional story, and nor is the story of the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra.

To watch him communicate with the players of the SBYO is to see a relationship of true equals. When they take their applause, Dudamel stands not on his podium to take a bow, but within the orchestra itself. The youngsters who play for him are his friends. None is older than their mid-twenties, and Dudamel himself is only 28. They have grown up together (the conductor was appointed music director at 17), and they play together like no other orchestra on the planet. Dudamel coaxes sounds and rhythms from them using every available inch of his short, stocky frame. Sometimes he will wiggle his hips, as if dancing a salsa, occasionally he will snarl at the brass to obtain the sound he wants, or jump a foot in the air. The SBYO's passionate playing style is a far cry from the sterility of professional orchestras the world over. Combined, they give the impression that every single note counts, that they live and die by their performance.

In a less than abstract sense, they do. The SBYO, named after a man who helped liberate Latin American from imperial Spanish control, is the flagship group of 'El Sistema'. This Venezuelan social project aims to take children off the drug and crime ridden streets of the country's cities, by giving them, free musical instruments and intensive training in the hours after school. El Sistema was founded by an economist, the extraordinary Jose Antonio Abreu, in 1975, with the idea of taking music into some of the world's poorest slums, giving desperate children and their families hope and, eventually, pride in their achievements. Thirty years later, a pyramidal structure of well over 200 groups, from

neighbourhood 'nucleos' to the SBYO itself, has influenced the formative years of nearly 300,000 Venezuelans. Yet this is not simply a massively expanded youth orchestra system, based on prior talent and 'European' learning methods. Children as young as four are not thrust into one-on-one lessons with a teacher and the dully repetitive practice that goes with them, but are thrown in at the deep end, straight into a huge band, sometimes twice as large as a usual symphony orchestra.

The result is, unsurprisingly, not exactly musical – simplifications of Beethoven symphonies are part of the usual fodder – but an intense feeling of community is born out of the fun

“THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BARRIOS WAS POURED INTO EVERY NOTE. THE PRESS HAILED THE EVENING AS THE GREATEST PROM THERE HAS EVER BEEN.”

of playing and learning together for hours on end, day after day. There is thus little competition between players, the atmosphere instead being one of mutual support. Dudamel, indeed, often talks of the SBYO as his 'family'. “There's collective pressure,” he says, “but in a positive way. If a musician gets ahead of the group, the group must follow – that's how the social aspect of El Sistema feeds the music we make.” This sense of belonging is of marked contrast to the fear and isolation of the barrios, Venezuela's suburban slums: it is no shock that relationships between orchestra members blossom.

There is a clear degree of escapism about all this. Most of the SBYO say that they hope to play in famous British, American or German orchestras, moving away from Venezuela in search of a better life either musical and not. But the children of El Sistema are also representatives of their country, their system, and are proud of it. They have been known to accompany President Chavez on foreign trips; so rooted has

the system become in the Venezuelan social fabric that even he hasn't attempted to reform it, instead securing its budget. The SBYO's players, though conscious they could leave the barrios behind, often return to their local nucleo to teach and help out where required. They feel an incredible bond with the system that has given them so much. Dudamel, despite his enormous success, says “the most important thing is the project – the System.”

Yet the SBYO's strongest indication of patriotism and collective belonging comes in their encores. Under darkened house lights, the orchestra and their conductor change into garish sports jackets in their nation's colours

(yellow, red, and blue). They then launch into short pieces written by Latin American composers, and often the 'Mambo' from Bernstein's *West Side Story*, with a glee and fervour that no other orchestra could contemplate matching. They dance in their seats, creating a swaying 'Venezuelan wave' effect; the cellos and double basses twirl their instruments like seasoned jazz pros; the trumpeters stand and spin their instruments like Catherine wheels. Needless to say, the audience consistently goes mad at such expressions of uninhibited joy.

At the Proms in 2007, in their London debut, the SBYO brought the crowd to their feet, their infectious rhythms forcing the prommers to dance. They were almost dragged off the stage by their management: before they went, the 150-strong band threw their jackets into the audience, giving a lucky few, me included, a priceless memento of a concert they will never forget. What made it all the more impressive was the first-half performance

of Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony, a piece full of pent-up rage, melancholy love, and triumph, which was simply astonishing not only in terms of the technical skill on show, but in the emotional depth the youngsters drew upon. The experience of the barrios was poured into every note. The press hailed the evening as the greatest Prom there has ever been.

That concert was emblematic of Dudamel and the SBYO's rise to superstardom. Four well-received CDs have been issued, including one of Latin American music. A double-bassist, Edicson Ruiz, became at 17 the youngest member of the Berlin Philharmonic since a harpist in the nineteenth century. Dudamel himself has been appointed music director of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra (at the 2008 Proms he got their brass dancing, jackets ostentatiously taken off, in an encore of 'Tico Tico'), and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Last Saturday, he gave a performance of Mahler's Fifth with London's Philharmonia Orchestra so utterly staggering that every single member of the audience leapt immediately to their feet.

Most importantly of all, however, El Sistema is being copied and adapted across the world. In Los Angeles, Dudamel's arrival has prompted the creation of YOLA, Youth Orchestra Los Angeles. In Scotland, a charity called Sistema Scotland aims to open three centres by 2013. They have already begun work in the one

of Scotland's poorest housing estates, Raploch, with the 'Big Noise' project. The social impulse is clear: project administrators exhort that their aim is not to find another Dudamel, but to cure problems of self-esteem, thereby reducing the risk of children turning to crime, substance abuse and anti-social behaviour. No child is turned away, integrating children from stable and more challenging backgrounds. Just as in Venezuela the project is intense, with three sessions a week in term time and a full-time programme in holidays for children no older than 8. Yet the project has been criticised for simply copying El Sistema's methods: naysayers argue that Venezuelan slums are quite different to British housing estates. Given as much help as possible, however, there seems no reason to suggest that the project cannot succeed. The astonishing success of El Sistema ought to confound cynics.

The transforming power of music and El Sistema is perhaps best voiced by young Venezuelans themselves. One says: “If I hadn't found music? Obviously I'd have gone back on to the streets to steal, beg and take drugs.” Another says that, without her violin, she'd be “like most 17-year-old girls in Palo Verde – hanging with the gangs and pregnant”. Not for nothing does Dudamel call the system a “social saviour”. As Sir Simon Rattle has put it, “There is nothing more important in the world of music than what is happening in Venezuela”.

Can't beat El Sistema

1975	Formed by economist and amateur musician José Antonio Abreu
1996	UNESCO appoints the orchestra members as Artists for Peace
2004	A prizewinning documentary, <i>Tocar y Luchar</i> , is made about El Sistema
2006	Abreu is awarded a UNICEF prize for his work with children
2004	Pledge to support 500,000 children by 2015

VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 13): Indeedy: Norah takes you for Thermodynamics classes. In fact, you borrowed her virus because you were thinking of studying it for your dissertation. And now you're chundering everywhere, which means you might be late for today's class anyway. You'll need to email her to smooth things over. »**p24 Semi-flirtatious:** “Hey Norah ;)... V sorry but vomming everywhere so will be in late x”. »**p25 Deadpan:** “Dear Dr Norah, Am ill; can't come; very sorry. Regards.”

Psycho Semantics

HIS WORKS MAY BE CELEBRATED AS FOUNDATION STONES OF MODERN PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY, BUT IAIN SINCLAIR REFUSES TO BE SEEN AS THE GENRE'S NEWEST PROPHET. HE TELLS PATRICK KINGSLEY ABOUT THE FOOTPRINT LONDON 2012 WILL LEAVE ON HACKNEY

For an author who supposedly personifies its revival, Iain Sinclair is startlingly ambivalent about psychogeography. "It's nothing to do with me," he says softly, swivelling on a Union chair after last week's Olympics debate. "It's a nuisance. It's something which existed in the late 50s and early 60s that disappeared for many years and then was reinvented simply as a provocative device. And now it's become pretty much anything you want it to mean."

Sinclair's attitude is unexpected: the man is an icon of psychogeography. He has published nearly 30 works associated with the subject, he's shot Super-8 films about it, and one of his early works, *Lud Heat*, went on to exemplify the London psychogeographical resurgence. Peter Ackroyd calls him a "visionary" of the genre. Will Self describes Sinclair's books as must-reads. And Merlin Coverley notes, in his introductory survey of the subject (called simply *Psychogeography*), that "if there is one person who is responsible for the current popularity that psychogeography enjoys, then it is Iain Sinclair."

Why, then, is Sinclair almost scornful of the genre? Perhaps psychogeography's transition – from a marginal, almost occult fascination to a very marketable, middle-class brand – has caused him to drift away from the subject. But Sinclair himself denies even this: "I never drifted *into* it! My use of it was pretty minimal in terms of my writing. At the start of my book, *Lights Out For The Territory*, I did do a V-shaped walk which was a sort of psychogeographical project. But the walking round the M25 [in *London Orbital*] – that wasn't a psychogeographical project. It was just a project of human perversity, a geographical project about deciding what London topography was and where London finished."

And what of *Lud Heat*, which explored the behavioural effect Hawksmoor's London churches had on their neighbouring, non-Christian population in the 70s? "That was not psychogeography; that was much more to do with an English tradition belonging to people like Alfred Watkins [a nineteenth-century archaeologist]. Though *Lud Heat* has become this psychogeographical text in retrospect, psychogeography was never even heard of or thought of at that time. The subject didn't occur to me when I was writing it. I was writing it simply from the perspective of a gardener."

Yet perhaps it's not surprising that the flag-bearer for such an ambiguous genre has such an ambiguous attitude to it himself. After all: what is psychogeography? No one seems sure. It's a very hazy idea. It concerns cities – traditionally London and Paris – and it involves walking; this much is certain. And it involves recording, with words or photography, what happens on one's

walk. But the *purpose* of psychogeography has always been unclear. For some, it's a means of examining how buildings affect our behaviour; for others, it's the more intangible 'reading' of a city. For the French, it was a political medium; for the British, it's more of a literary phenomenon. And whereas Guy Debord and his gang of 60s Parisian Situationists said it was

"[PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY]'S NOTHING TO DO WITH ME. IT'S A NUISANCE... AND NOW IT'S BECOME PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING YOU WANT IT TO MEAN"

subversive – a rebellion against typical, workaday city activity – Peter Ackroyd (author of *London: The Biography*) argues the opposite: for him, psychogeography is simply a way of recognising the way the city controls our every action. In short, then, psychogeography's only defining feature is its lack of definition. If the man who reinvented the concept can state that he "never was a psychogeographer" and even deny "much sympathy or interest in [the subject's] manifestations", perhaps

this is only fitting.

But if Sinclair doesn't identify himself in psychogeographical terms, how exactly would he define his writing? Very simply, as it turns out: "I buy into a union between writing and walking. I think there is as much of that going on – or more – than what could be described as psychogeography. I have this notion that there are

two kinds of writers: there's one called 'pods', and there's another called 'peds'. Peds are the kind of writers who very definitely have, within their writing, this rhythm of journeys and walks and pilgrimages and quests. And pods are these other writers who sit in a room and just draw the world to them in whatever ways they want to. And there is a very distinct gap between the two."

By his own definition, Iain Sinclair is clearly a walking writer, a ped. And

it follows that his latest work, *Hackney, That Rose-Red Empire*, while it lacks "anything that could really be described as psychogeographical", is based on a series of walks through Sinclair's native ground in north-east London (one of which features Emmanuel's English DoS, Robert Macfarlane). It's a timely celebration of Hackney, an area already massively affected – for the worse, Sinclair feels strongly – by the new Olympic site. The book argues that while "Hackney itself is magnificent, it's always battling with a level of input from whoever's trying to control it from above, for generation after generation."

For this particular generation, Sinclair suggests, the battle is with the Olympic developers and their lackeys on the local council. "There is suffering on an enormous scale because of [the Olympic developments]... Local people have been kicked out, the building works have released toxins into the water, we've lost allotments, we've lost the football pitches in Hackney Marshes, we've lost fourteen swimming pools, cycle lanes..." And while Sinclair

does see some advantages to the rebuilding – "quite conservative people have become very active as a result of it" – in general he is despondent. "What I once thought was a disaster is now much worse than that: it's a catastrophe."

Yet perhaps there are encouraging comparisons between the Olympic site and Sinclair's old Hawksmoor churches? Will the former not contribute to London's palimpsestic nature in the same way as the latter? "No, I don't think so. I don't think any of this will last long enough to do that. The actual Olympic structures are so tawdry that they'll be gone soon, whereas the Hawksmoor churches are so massive that even though they went through periods of neglect, somehow they hung on. The Olympic site, by contrast, will be a totally transitional landscape. It has no notion of permanence. It's built to be destroyed, to be revised."

Sinclair's forthright views have seen him banned, hilariously, from his local library (where he was scheduled to give a talk) by the Hackney council. Publicity-wise, this was a blessing: "It proved the thesis of the book and it was a catastrophic piece of PR [for the council]. Instead of being a very small event with ten or twelve of us sitting around a library chatting about a book, I'm on the *Today* programme defending the freedom of speech." The underlying argument, however, still causes Sinclair rancour – "the whole thing was about mendacity, and spin, and lies" – and he's still visibly irritated by it all when his debating partner Andrew Gilligan, a hack who certainly knows about spin, swaggers into the room.

Gilligan joins in the Olympic grumbling. "I am simply going to leave town," he promises, before reiterating points he made during the debate itself: the Games will clog up the city; they'll be expensive. Sinclair smiles: "We're more or less obliged to have a major terrorist attack to justify the expense." Gilligan, ever the journo, turns to me: "There's your quote."

Iain Sinclair's latest book, *Hackney, That Rose-Red Empire*, is out now.



TOM DE FRESTON

Psycho paths

1943	Born in Cardiff
1970s	Studies at Trinity College, Dublin. Works as gardener in East London.
1975	Publishes <i>Lud Heat</i>
1991	Publishes <i>Downriver</i>
1997	Publishes <i>Lights Out for the Territory</i>
2002	Publishes <i>London Orbital</i>

VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 13): Yes, it's so effective that it actually sickens you. That's the real reason why you're vomming left, right and centre. Anyway, back to the adventure: you decide to go along to the hustings to give Norah back her virus. You need to attract her attention. »p29 Ask her a pertinent question. »p30 Vomit all over CUSU.



TOM PLAYFORD

Come Sail Away

SAILING ISN'T JUST FOR SALTY SEADOGS, ACCORDING TO RACHAEL SPROT, NOR RESERVED FOR THOSE WITH REDFACED AND WEALTHY PARENTS WHO SPEND ALL DAY QUAFFING WINE ON THE DECK. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY YACHTING IS FOR YOU, TOO

Last year, the University bought its Lown boat. Or should I say yacht, seeing as there are hundreds of University-owned boats wallowing about to the tune of anguished grunting on the Cam every morning.

Before you throw the paper down in horror, convulse with liberal guilt and lament the return to the days when Teddy Landed Fitzgentrysnob and chums spent their time away from the Pitt Club on Daddy's yacht comparing blazers, let me offer you a Cuppa-Soup from a plastic cup that I half poured down my front when the boat lurched, and protest that sailing suffers from an image problem. Don't sit down whilst you're drinking it either, your wet weather gear is soaked through with salt water and if you get that on

JO WIGHTMAN



the cushions, which also serve as your bunk, they'll be damp indefinitely. Get back on deck and relieve Helen on the helm – she's been up there since she came on watch at 2am this morning.

Unlike some other countries, Britain can't seem to attract the masses to the sport. On the other side of the Channel, in France, every pot-bellied,

“THE DAYS SPENT SURFING DOWN HUGE WAVES WITH A MANIC GRIN AND A DELIRIOUS SENSE OF LIBERTY ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN”

pipe-smoking man and each scrawny sun-leathered woman has a boat, or a friend with one, that they potter about in, whiling away those long French weekends, public holidays, strike days... In Blighty, you've got to sell your house and downsize to a potting shed with an allotment before you can access the water.

This is bizarre, because we're one of the few countries where you don't need a licence to own or sail a boat: seafaring is considered a basic British right. The only reason that yachting is expensive is because there isn't the demand for cheap sailing. Thanks to our fondness for attaching class labels to everything in life, we limit what we do to a comfortably narrow band of socio-economically defined hobbies. But not for much longer; the industry itself is changing and Cambridge has become the first university to own its own yacht, run specifically with student budgets in mind.

Admittedly, the boat, Kestrel, cost a small fortune to buy (almost £50,000 once she was properly kitted out) and has been costing more small fortunes ever since – the salt water and the constant battering from nature's elements etc. means that things are always wearing out. But absolutely anyone, novice or Admiral, can join Cambridge University Yachting and

sign up for a weekend of training or cruising relatively cheaply. Compared to sailing with a commercial sailing school, or to other types of 'adventure holiday' like skiing, that is: somewhere in the region of £120 per week. That's cheaper than most youth hostels and definitely cheaper than a May Ball, so you can tear up your ticket to a white-

tie champagne-soused evening before the word 'elitism' escapes your lips. Our strength is certainly in our numbers. A boat owned and maintained by all the different people who sail on her becomes quite affordable, and the availability of a team of dedicated people working long hours in return for some free sailing keeps her floating.

At the moment the boat is on the south coast of the UK, occasionally cruising over to France or the Channel Islands. Over Easter there are several training trips planned. The instructors can qualify beginners as Day Skippers under the RYA (Royal Yachting Association) scheme or help more experienced members hone their skills. CUY has already nurtured and taught over forty skippers, many of whom had little sailing experience before arriving but are now fully fledged Yachtmasters.

This year Kestrel will spend four months cruising in the Baltic, going through the Kiel canal and up to Sweden and Finland in one- or two-week time slots. Last summer various different crews took part in sailing her to Norway (a four day passage across the North Sea), cruising up the coast via fjords, and visiting idyllic anchorages and cities with a Ryanair connection for crew changes. She returned via the Shetland Isles, through the Caledonian Canal from Glasgow to Edinburgh.

For many people this was their first experience of sailing, and of Norway. Few people know the other crew members before they get on board and the 'club' simply consists of an email list of hundreds of people who have sailed on the boat at different times, or would like to get around to it one day. Membership does not require anyone to be a practised jellywrestler, to have drunk so much that they pass out in their pudding and wake up wondering where the face mask came from and the cheesecake went. Spending days at sea with ten people in a space the size of your bathroom but without the hot-water option and personal hygiene equipment you find that people bond of their own accord.

The days spent surfing down huge waves with a manic grin and delirious sense of liberty are few and far between. Or at least, the good bits don't have much narrative quality and though you can return to the brine for more they don't preserve well in the vinegar of memory. The bad bits, like the time the fuel tank split and filled the boat with diesel, or Min set fire to the galley, or the mast fell down and the lifeboat had to be called, stick like glue; as do the people that they happened with.

Much of the time the weather is foul and you don't reach the destination you had in mind because everybody has had enough of being cold and wet and sick so you stop off in a different harbour instead. You manage to tip several tins of Morrison's mild chicken curry into a pot and prod it until it loses the perfectly cylindrical shape that it held onto for far too long, before slumping exhausted off to the pub. You're still wearing your Michelin Man outfit of sixteen layers and leaking rubber boots. Unfortunately, this deserted spot hasn't got so much as a corner shop selling a four pack of Carling and a scotch egg, but everyone is thoroughly warmed by the rose-tinted

Kestrel's Statistics

Model: Sigma 38

Length: 11.55m

Beam: 3.6m

Displacement: 6250kg

Draft: 2m

Berths: 10 including 2 double aft cabins

Designer: David Thomas

Sails: 4 Genoas, 3 Mainsails, 2 Spinnakers, Storm sails

Berth: Swanwick Marina, River Hamble, Hants

recollections of the day, so you bundle back into the floating caravan, unanimously convinced that you've been having a really good time. Inexplicably, you probably were – the disappointments and the failures, the being really frightened and the being really bored are part of the challenges that make the experience worth having.

There is no advance starred review for sailing, no traffic light labelling system confirming your suspicions that it is, indeed, bad for you, and neither I nor my secretary will be taking irate phone calls from anyone who signs up for a trip and hates it. All I'm saying is that there is a boat out there, for our use only, going to extraordinary places with unusual combinations of people and you'd be mad not to go with it. I will promise that there's no snivelling geek with weird headgear sitting at the back shouting orders about pushing harder, or some other incomprehensible request. Skippers are a funny breed, but as far as I know they haven't started using microphones yet.

No Fiction in Science

IS OUR DESIGN INTELLIGENT? IS SCIENCE DANGEROUS? NEVER MIND WHETHER OR NOT GOD EXISTS, WHY DO WE BELIEVE HE MIGHT? SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT ROSIE POWELL-TUCK ASKS LEWIS WOLPERT ABOUT SCIENCE AND 'THE PEOPLE'

As a young man, Professor Lewis Wolpert didn't want to be a developmental biologist or even a scientist. He started his career as a civil engineer, a field he chose "because it sounded less greasy than mechanical engineering... I really wanted to be a mathematician, but wasn't clever enough." Only later, studying for a PhD on 'The Mechanics of Cell Division', did Professor Wolpert become interested in developmental biology.

Now, at

the age of 79, he is Emeritus Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology at University College London. "And the strange thing," he chuckles, "is that my son is now a Professor of Engineering here in Cambridge, [having trained] as a neuroscientist!"

Professor Wolpert is most famous for his work on 'positional information' in chick limb development. He proposed a 'French flag' model to explain how cells in a developing embryo know what to do. "One mechanism is that they get assigned a position." He continues, "If you want to form a French flag – you can hold up blue, white or red – you're in a line, which piece of paper are you going to hold up? If you know your position in the line, then you'll hold up the right one... and that's what cells do."

Recently Professor Wolpert has become interested in the impact that science and its discoveries have on society. "I'm lecturing on Bioethics tonight... I'm going to say that most of it is moral masturbation."

That being said, he is aware that new scientific applications, for example genetically modified crops, give rise to important issues that necessitate discussion. He is adamant that scientists are not the people to be making these ethical decisions. "The role of a scientist is to understand the way the world works. I don't want scientists making ethical decisions... they are not our elected representatives." In an article entitled 'Is Science Dangerous?' that was published in *Nature* in 1999, he argued that all scientists have a social obligation to fully disclose all aspects of their research. So long as this happens, he wrote, science is "most emphatically not" dangerous. "I wouldn't let my scientific colleagues, love them as I do, choose my tie," he grins mischievously, "let alone make ethical decisions on my behalf."

Professor Wolpert is the author of several popular books. "I wrote a very nice book, *The Unnatural Nature of Science*." Laughing vigorously he adds: "Well, I like it!" As an advocate of the clear communication of science to the general public, he concedes that in practice it is not easy. "We don't control the media and many articles about science in the papers are misleading. My favourite example... have you seen that picture of the mouse with a human ear on its back? It's not a human ear at all – it's just a bit of cartilage

shaped like a human ear!"

Wolpert is the first to admit that he himself has not always been wholly successful at relating to a wider audience. In 2002 he participated in a highly publicised 'Telepathy Debate' with a former colleague turned parapsychologist, Dr Rupert Sheldrake. Who won? "He won. The audience were totally in favour of Rupert. Oh yes! Telepathy... total nonsense... do you know his ideas about 'morpho resonance'? You know that if you teach a mouse to run a maze then mice all over the world will run that maze faster?" When we ask Professor Wolpert to elaborate on this – how is that supposed to work? "That's morpho resonance," he replies in a false tone of mystery, "no-one knows how it works!" On Sheldrake he comments, "he used to be a very clever plant scientist, oh yes! Before he went gaga." Though Professor Wolpert is amusing in his approach to many of our questions, he is consistently frank and straightforward. He feels it is important to debate the par-

"THE ROLE OF A SCIENTIST IS TO UNDERSTAND THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS. I DON'T WANT SCIENTISTS MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS... THEY ARE NOT OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES"

anormal "to show that these things don't exist", but he totally dismisses, for instance, the idea of Intelligent Design on the grounds of no evidence. "I will not debate Intelligent Design because the evidence is zero – you know, that there's a God or anything like that."

Religious belief has been a key focus for Professor Wolpert, not least when his own son became a born-again Christian. "You see he actually tried to commit suicide, he was on drugs and things like that, he jumped from a window... and then, when he was recovering, he was evangelised." Wistfully he recalls an incident shortly after this episode in which his son proclaimed, "Dad I'm so envious of you because you will be dead soon."

"Whatever do you mean?"

"I'm longing to die because I know I'll go to heaven," replied his son.

As a life-long atheist Professor Wolpert did not think it strange that his son should become a Christian. "No, it made perfect sense... and I never tried to persuade him not to be because it helped him a great deal."

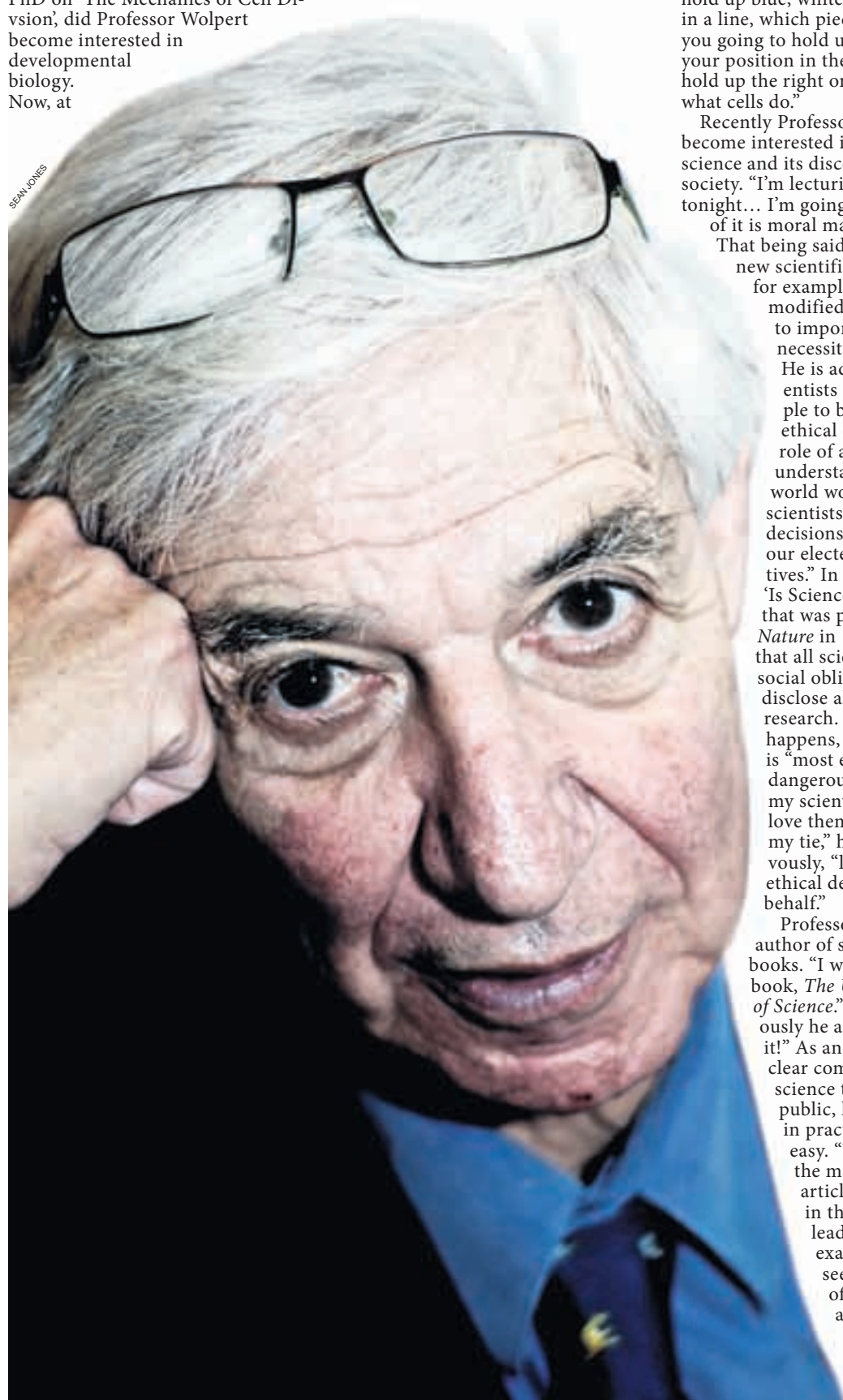
This exchange with his son was a key trigger that prompted Professor Wolpert to write his most recent book, *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast – the Evolutionary Origins of Belief*. In it he describes how humans, distinct from other animals, possess causal beliefs about the physical world. "We think that

things remain whole unless something breaks them," he expands. He proposes that this notion of cause and effect led in evolution to our ability to make tools. "The evolutionary advantage of causal beliefs was that you could make tools and that's what drove human evolution." Once humans had mastered tool use, they started to want to understand the cause of other things. Professor Wolpert argues that this moment in our history was the evolutionary origin of belief. "You wanted to know why you got ill, for example, and the most obvious cause of most things was a human-like cause, because that was the one cause you were absolutely sure of... and that's why most gods have a human characteristic." He goes further too, in an attempt to explain what he calls our "mystical minds". "The people who did believe in religion," he says, "did better than those who didn't and so religion became partially incorporated into our brains." In support of his idea he entreats us to consider the "boring molecule of LSD". "You take

it and you have these extraordinary experiences. It can't be LSD doing it, this means the brain circuits must be there and LSD is just turning them on... there is something in our brain that leads us very easily to mystical and religious beliefs."

Wolpert himself, despite his evolutionary origins, subscribes to a secular view of life. He insists that his book is neither an argument for nor against religion. "I'm not against religion so long as they don't try to interfere and impose it on other people." Even as a Vice President of the British Humanist Association, the organisation behind the recent bus campaign that had London buses bearing the slogan, "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life," he is not too keen on atheists interfering with religious beliefs either. Did he agree with the campaign? "No, absolutely not. It's not going to have an effect... but Richard Dawkins did sell 2 million books."

There is a sustained pause in our conversation when we ask Professor Wolpert if he has any advice for budding scientists. "It's tricky... you've got to choose the subject you really care about. Work on a problem that really matters to you," he counsels. Currently, Professor Wolpert is writing a new book about the science of ageing. He will be appearing in Cambridge on Friday March 20th, for round two of the Telepathy Debate.



Violent Upheaval

ROMEO AND JULIET: A STORY OF HATRED AND BETRAYAL? CHARLOTTE WESTENRA SHOWS LAURA FREEMAN WHAT BRAZILIAN POLITICS CAN TEACH US ABOUT SHAKESPEARE'S VERONA

Director Charlotte Westenra is not having any of this 'star-cross'd lovers' business. "Of course it's a love story" she says, "but the love story is there *despite* the fact that they live in a world generated by hatred." Taking on *Romeo and Juliet* can feel like reinventing the wheel. The play has been through every permutation and reimagining possible. Prokofiev did it in tights, Zeffirelli did it with Lawrence Olivier, *West Side Story* set the action in 1950s New York, Baz Luhrmann gave us *Romeo + Juliet* to a pop-rock soundtrack, and *Shakespeare in Love* offered a sneak peak at *Romeo and Juliet*: The True Southwark Story.

Westenra argues that her production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Cambridge Arts Theatre is different because it is not the traditional misadventured romance with a few fight scenes on the side but a play about "a society that is completely fractured. *Romeo and Juliet* can't be together because society won't let them." *West Side Story* and Baz Luhrmann came close to apprehending this, casting the Capulets and Montagues as rival gangs, but the film posters are revealing: Tony and Maria kissing on a fire escape, the angelic Claire Danes and her knight in armour Leonardo Di Caprio kissing at the costume party. The guns and gangs are simply fillers in between the real business of romance. The poster for Westenra's *Romeo and Juliet* overthrows all romantic conventions. Brutish and confrontational, James Walker's bloodied, shirtless Mercutio displays his wounds like a risen Renaissance Christ and, face contorted, lets out a convulsive scream of rage, despair, and vengeance. *Romeo and Juliet*, our erstwhile hero and heroine, are nowhere to be seen.

Is Westenra a cynic, then? It's not the impression she gives over coffee on King's Parade. She is ebullient, talkative and full of praise for her mentors, her colleagues, and her cast. Jack Monaghan and Lucy Evans as the eponymous lovers are "ah-mazing". But she has a sharp political streak and it is this keen sense of social injustice, of "top-down corruption" which motivates her choices as a director.

While studying Drama at the University of Manchester, Westenra attended a workshop run by the Theatre of the Oppressed, a charitable organisation founded in 1971 by Brazilian politician Augusto Boal to address injustice in Rio's slums. The players ended the session with the inviting proposition, "See you in Brazil." Westenra took them at their word and joined the company in Rio de Janeiro.

The Theatre of the Oppressed began its life in Rio's troubled favelas, the outskirt slum-cities forgotten by politicians and largely abandoned by the police force. Boal,

a prominent member of parliament, developed a branch of 'Legislative' or 'Forum Theatre' which encouraged his audience to participate in and direct plays drawn from everyday adversities. By engaging his audience as "Spect-actors," Boal gained an insight into some of the favelas' most pressing problems. Having identified the very real and immediate injustices in Rio's slums, Boal presented his findings to Parliament, and, thanks to Legislative Theatre, the Rio Assembly have passed and continue to pass laws to alleviate the pressures that make life difficult in the favelas. One of the Theatre of the Oppressed's great triumphs was the introduction of a witness protection scheme for residents who report to the police on the drugs trade.

Westenra is familiar with the theme of justice gone awry. She began her career running drama workshops at HMP Styal, and went on to direct *Gladiator Games* at the Crucible Studio in Sheffield and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* at the Donmar Warehouse (both plays condemn fatal cracks in the prison system). At the Donmar she worked under Michael Grandage and subsequently directed *Frost/Nixon* and *Piaf* on their West End transfers. With such a cosmopolitan résumé, what brings her to Cambridge? "It's the history," she tells me. "Think of all those great actors who started off in Cambridge. You want to tap into that talent right at the beginning of their careers."

But even in Cambridge, in the august company of the Marlowe Society, Rio is not forgotten. Westenra's reading of *Romeo and Juliet* is inspired by Augusto Boal's essay 'Romeo and Juliet: A Story of Hatred and Betrayal', in which Boal argues for the corrupted heart of Shakespeare's most performed romance. The Prince, the supposed dispenser of justice, is an ineffectual threat maker. The play opens with the Capulets and Montagues on the verge of civil war. A hot afternoon descends into a brawl and the Prince intervenes, stating that he has already given three warnings. He claims that this is the last pardon he will give. Boal argues that four pardons is already several pardons too many: "A society of hatred becomes entrenched, as in Brazil today, where no one obeys the law."

During rehearsals, Westenra reminds her cast, "*Our* prince in *our* version has completely lost control." Verona, then, is a thoroughly modern state, although Westenra has maintained a period setting. She defends her choice of a 'traditional' backdrop for *Romeo and Juliet* ('traditional' is a dirty word when it comes to Shakespeare adaptations). "The reason I'm keeping it period," she rallies, "is because I want to use sword fighting. There's all these wonderful lines about: 'Give me

my long sword, ho!' 'Draw if you be men' 'What, drawn, and talk of peace?' and 'Put thy rapier up.'" She wields the lines like a true swordsman and admits, "I want to hear the clink of metal on metal."

It is a bold directorial decision. Rehearsals are punctuated by the staccato clash of blades and the seductive slash, slash, slash of swords like butchers' carving knives. The fight scenes are choreographed by RADA fight director Bret Yount. He's taking no prisoners. "If Romeo drops his elbows," Yount warns Rob Carter's Tybalt, "just smack him." Westenra argues that it has to be convincing. *Romeo and Juliet* is a play that degenerates into chaos, an adrenalin- and

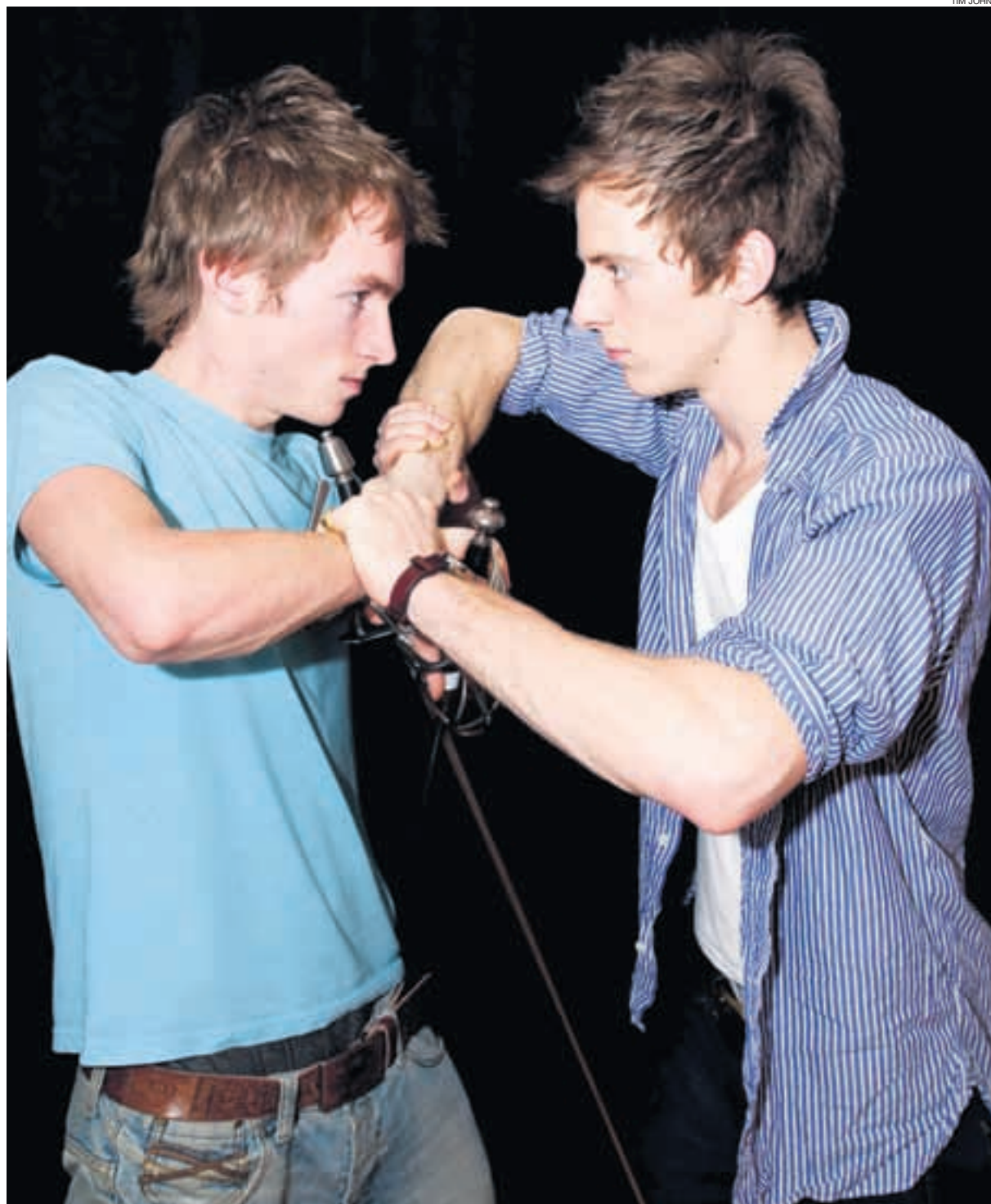
machismo-fuelled brawl in which the wrong man is killed. It starts with something as simple as a bitten thumb and ends with blood on the piazza flagstones. In the pivotal fight scene there are eleven swords and half a dozen daggers on stage. When Romeo stabs Tybalt, his blade flexes to a sickening curve as it strikes flesh. Stage fighting too often falls into the trap of mannerism, of stagey *pas de deux*, artfully choreographed fencing matches with no real sense of threat. Under Yount's instruction the fights are visceral, and commanded by senseless violence. He jokes that it is 'Romeo and Juliet: Revolutions'. The thrilling silken draw of metal and the lattice of flying blades are

magnetic, tense and utterly convincing.

The cast clearly relish the power of their blades. In between runs there's boasting over who has the best sword and Lord Montague can be heard making lightsaber noises while combating thin air. Boys with toys. But that's what *Romeo and Juliet* is really about. Tybalt, Mercutio, Romeo, and Benvolio are angry young men, fired up by a hot summer and schooled in the hatred of their parents. They will bite a thumb in haste, and with no laws, no firm government, murder their kinsmen in the fray.

Romeo and Juliet is at the Arts Theatre, March 3rd-7th.

TIM JOHNS



View from the Groundlings



Oscar Toeman tells us what's what in theatrical week 6

I was going to use this article to plug *The Tempest*, but we sold out last week so I don't need to. Instead, I'm going to attempt to stick as many terrible puns as possible into a 400-word piece.

But first, Marlowe Masterclass nominee Jess Hyslop's new play *The Heights*, which won the Madhouse Writing prize, is on at the Judith E. Wilson Studio until tonight (Friday 27th), and with shadow puppetry, a very fine cast and an accredited script, it promises a great deal. But will it hit the heights? There's only one way to find out.

Also in the air this week is *Night Breath* at the Corpus Playroom, a piece which will leave you gasping; the choice of the stifling playroom to show this work is perfect. In a similar vein, Caryl Churchill's powerful new piece, *Seven Jewish Children*, a ten minute play about the ongoing Gaza/Israel conflict, is on in the Larkum next week: be warned though, it's as one-sided as a military response.

One play starting tonight is Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, which can be found not in the "gutter to the end of its days," but up at Churchill. Be sure to make the trip.

Looking ahead very quickly, BATS have got their act together, and scheduled two intriguing productions – *Cardenio*, Shakespeare's 'lost' play, reimagined by Bernard Richards, and *Sodom*, by the Earl of Rochester. Which to me sounds a bit like *The Libertine*, the play where naked girls sat on large ceramic dildos and sang while being pulled around by midgets. It sounds like a future Big Fish Ents night. Talking of Big Fish, *Crystal Maze: The Musical* is also hitting the streets, up at Robinson. "A love story, set in the infamous maze," one must hope that it doesn't lose its way.

And finally, something to get excited about at the end of term is the *Miscellaneous Theatre Festival 2009*, an event which has been continually growing in stature and reputation. Featuring work by, amongst others, Ollie Evans (*Gnades Fraulein*), Marlowe Masterclass nominee Emma Hogan, and the (big breath needed) soon-to-be-great-you-heard-it-here-first Edward Herring, this FREE festival is not to be missed.

So there you have it: absolutely loads of stuff still to see. And you thought things were winding down.

THEATRE

Richard II by William Shakespeare
ADC Theatre, February 24th-28th
Dir. Tom Attenborough; CUADC
★★★★★

Good omens abounded when the cast came on stage dressed in the khaki and black military-esque outfits that seem to have become the apparel of choice for productions of Shakespeare's histories: the opening scene took me back to CAST's *Henry V* with its atmospheric choreographed fight 'dances' and fast paced, hard-hitting dialogues. However, rather disappointingly, the costumes are where the similarities ended. The stage was covered in soil, which the actors used as one of their sole props throughout. Dead flowers added some colour to the otherwise black stage.

The play had many shortcomings that prevented it from ever developing into the gripping, tense drama it aimed to be. The actors frequently addressed lines onstage, towards the king, only occasionally interspersing this approach

with conversations in profile. Because of this, it is almost impossible to comment on most of the actors' facial expressions, because we saw them so rarely. To really add to the difficulty of glimpsing the actors, the whole stage was plunged into a soporific semi-darkness.

These set and lighting choices meant that brilliant delivery of the lines was necessary to engage the audience, particularly as the whole play is written in verse. Alas, for the most part this did not happen: many lines appeared to be gabbled and it was a strain to catch every word. Jagger, Carter, Audsley and Press really stood out, as they delivered clearly, with resonant diction, which was such a relief and these actors were a pleasure to listen to. Bannister's portrayal of Richard II had overtones of a young, petulant, uncomplicated child,

which generally worked except that his adopted accent was difficult to tune in to and caused him to mutter key lines monotonously. Underplaying the lines was a problem as it gave the play a very slow pace and shattered any possible tense climaxes.

Nevertheless, Audsley must be highly commended, bringing to life every role she played, and Rogers' embodiment of the elderly Duke of Gaunt was most convincing. There were glimpses of directorial brilliance, namely the composition of characters at the back window and the backlighting through the door. The gloom of the stage, lighting-wise, the drab costumes and the droning delivery of significant lines led to a rather bland performance of what could and should have been a gripping historical drama. *Victoria Ball*



ZING TSJENG



JAMES MURDOCH

The Medics Revue 2009
ADC Theatre, February 25th-28th
Dir. Lydia Chambers
★★★★★

I have to admit that I had scribbled pre-show notes such as "crude, minimal set" and "good projector," just in case the evening's proceedings were too dull to find anything to write about. Dull, in retrospect, was the one thing this show was not.

In short, it was farcical and over-theatrical. Lines were projected knowingly out towards the audience, winks, cheesy tuneless dance numbers galore, and so on. I half expected a thigh slap. One performer, spotting that I was poised in the front row with my notepad, decided then to glance down at me to check if I was laughing. In every. Single. Sketch.

The show had flaws, but none of them mattered. The awkwardness, the poor over-characterisation, the total

lack of punch lines, none of it mattered. It was still absolutely hilarious. And it's not just a case of "it's so bad it's good," as some of the material was incredibly strong.

There was a noticeable reprise of ideas, such as a fraught mother-son relationship, which cleverly steered the production away from sketches based on its main 'Borat' theme. Modern cultural references on the whole worked for the show (a *Lord of the Rings* sketch was particularly well-timed), providing a refreshing foil to the largely studenty nature of the majority of the other sketches. This is not to say that they were amateur, or resorted to crude sex references or Cindies jokes.

I did get the sense that certain sketches based in university dorms

were the result of an amusing in-joke or story in the medic community that one of the writers "had to get in." The evening was even more amusing as a result, as an objectively weak joke would result in resounding bellylaughs from the large audience – while my friend and I sat there having no clue what was going on, and laughing at this reaction.

Sketches featuring Yang Chen in particular prompted riotous laughter and applause. The sight of a man swearing at juggling balls as he dropped remains the funniest thing I have seen on the ADC stage. Chen was the star of the night, demonstrating a real skill for timing in a show that will leave you both bemused and amused. *Juliet Shardlow*

DAN STRANGE



The Heights by Jess Hyslop
Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, February 25th-27th
Dir. Hannah Love; Telltale Productions & Madhouse Theatre
★★★★★

The Heights won the Madhouse Theatre prize. You can see why: it's completely mental. Surreal; mysterious; absurdist; and experimental, it sounds a decent enough excuse for an evening trip to the Sidgwick site.

From playwright Jess Hyslop, *The Heights* is an innovative piece of new writing whose action centres upon a 'House in the Wilderness', and the strange goings-on of Ambrose and his eclectic mix of 'guests'.

Essentially, the play is an allegory presented through the medium of a Tim Burton-esque fairy tale. There were some challenging themes on display here (the allegorical role of the Fall in representing the weaknesses and toils of mankind;

Adam and Eve as Punch and Judy; and the idea of time as a constant, yet ominous reminder of mankind's destiny).

But Hyslop's laudable writing ambition ultimately proved the play's downfall. The problem was that there were just far too much going on here to create a coherent, fully developed piece of theatre. In just eighty minutes we had several MONSTER themes to get our heads around (and even the small matter of domestic violence at the end). Despite some classy moments (like the eloquently composed lullabies and monologues) I came away disillusioned by the smorgasbord of half-baked 'messages' that the play sought to affirm.

To the production's credit, some of

the visual effects were superb. The set was weird and wonderful; a selection of items suspended on long ropes above the dining table provided an intelligent counterpoint to the external material world. Once the items were removed from the ropes, all that was left were hooks; a bleakly proleptic image.

Whilst most of the acting was safe rather than spectacular, special mention must go to Alashiya Gordes for her portrayal of Orpha and for managing to make a drowsy character anything but soporific to watch.

Frustratingly, despite a promising concept, this play never really reached the pinnacle that its title promised. *Alex Winterbotham*

The Tempest ★★★★★ *Tickle the Bishop* ★★★★★ *MOVE!* ★★★★★

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

The Goat or Who is Sylvia? by Edward Albee
Corpus Playroom, February 24th-28th
Dir. Isabel Taylor; Revived Emmanuel Dramatic Society
★★★★★

Everyone loves Albee. He's a little edgier than Miller, yet he takes fewer risks than many of his European counterparts; the audience knows that they can comfortably settle in for a couple of hours of slightly left-of-field but still quintessentially American drama. And this was what caused many of this production's problems; their uncertainty about whether to satirize or empathize with the middle-class intelligentsia they portray in *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* stems from Albee's own ham-fisted attempt to do both.

The Goat is billed as a tragi-comedy, but the jokes lacked bite, and attempts to incorporate them into the performance undermined the tragic consequences of the play. The focus on the 'comic' meant that the opening scene dragged, and it was only when the actors freed them-

selves from the shackles of these jokes that the production really picked up.

Josh Stamp-Simon's Martin on occasion suffered from this uncertainty, sometimes bordering on a parody of Woody Allen (surely one is bad enough these days?). But generally his nervous, antsy performance made his self-indulgent character suitably punchable without ever isolating him from our sympathy. And despite the poor comic timing (and the occasional wobbly American accent), all the actors deserved the audience's attention, performing well in the contained environment of the Corpus Playroom.

This contained setting became almost claustrophobic as the play progressed, the characters pushing themselves up against the white walls in reaction to Martin's revelation, as if hoping to escape the

restraints of their environment. Despite the uncertainty within the production, Isabel Taylor directed the play with verve and intelligence. As piece by piece the furniture was upturned, the set was left eerily peopled with a number of human models, emphasising Martin's increasing isolation.

And yet, for a play written in 2002, *The Goat* is incredibly dated. Of course I'm not demanding that productions be infused with credit crunch metaphors, or have pictures of Obama hanging on stage, but this performance could not, at times, alleviate the sheer tedium of the script. Bestiality does not necessarily make something interesting, or funny, and this production's attempt to incorporate both pathos and bathos meant that it ultimately sacrificed both for neither.
Nick Beck



TIM JOHNS

Context



Week 7: The Chairs and Theatre of the Absurd

Eugène Ionesco's (pictured above) *The Chairs*, on next week at the ADC, is a seminal example of Theatre of the Absurd.

The term was originally coined by Hungarian-born critic Martin Esslin, who made it the title of his 1962 book on the subject - *Theatre of the Absurd* refers to a particular type of play which first became popular during the 1950s and 1960s.

Staging the ideas of French philosopher Albert Camus who, in his 1942 essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, defines the human condition as basically meaningless. Camus argued that humanity had to resign itself to recognising that a fully satisfying rational explanation of the universe was beyond its reach; in that sense, the world must ultimately be seen as absurd.

Theatre of the Absurd openly rebelled against conventional theatre. It was, as Ionesco called it, "anti-theatre." It was surreal, illogical, conflictless and plotless. The dialogue often seemed to be complete gibberish. And, not surprisingly, the public's first reaction to this new theatre was incomprehension and rejection. When *The Chairs* debuted in Paris in 1952, many critics did not know what to make of the play. A few praised the production. Renee Saurel believes the play is "hauntingly beautiful and perfectly structured under its surface of incoherence."

Most critics were not as kind. Some regarded it as a little bit strange. Others were just plain confused. This is hardly surprising though, considering the author seemed just as lost. In the programme for the original production of *The Chairs*, Ionesco wrote, "As the world is incomprehensible to me, I am waiting for someone to explain it."

By the time the play was revived in Paris in 1956, however, most critics and audiences seemed to have got it, and lauded Ionesco for his unique staging and profound sense of humour.

In truth, *The Chairs* is not that confusing at all. Yes, the 'guests' are represented by chairs but once you've got passed that you're fine.

If you really want a show that you are very unlikely to understand, try watching Beckett's *Breathe* (1970) - a play often labelled as the ultimate conclusion of The Theatre of the Absurd. The entire play consists of noise in the place of dialogue. Personally, I don't get it. But I'm pretty sure that's the point.

Tim Checkley
The Chairs is on at the ADC from February 4th-7th at 11pm.



AMELIA VINEY

Night Breath by Bryan Oliver
Corpus Playroom, February 24th-28th
Dir. Robyn Hoedemaker; Homerton Amateur Theatrical Society
★★★★★

When I shuffled in to watch *Night Breath* last night I had no idea what to expect. Well, I say that, but that's not quite true. "*Night Breath*," I thought, "I've never heard of it: perhaps it's new - oh God, it's not going to be a studenty, pretentious load of old post-apocalyptic balls is it? Because that's what it sounds like." Needless to say, I was very wrong: it's not new, it's by Bryan Oliver. Guess what though - it very much is a load of disastrous guff.

The set consisted of some scraps of screwed up newspaper, muddy-looking blood-smeared walls, a chair with a broken leg and a wee person curled up in a ball who was desperately trying not to look like a person by being cunningly draped in rags and other bits of miscellaneous rubbish.

The rather sheepish Dee-Dee (Nalan Burgess) then comes in and tries to light some candles. At this point, the wee person starts into life, throws off her ingenious newspaper disguise and violently threatens to attack Dee-Dee with the chair. The punchy chameleon turns out to be Yana (Leonie James), an ex-teacher who now, covered in dried mud, looks uncannily like Stig from *Stig of the Dump*.

We learn slowly, thanks to allusions to "your people" and "the camps" and "the soldiers", that some sort of civil war and genocide has happened. It all happened, like, not that long ago and we are possibly in the Balkans somewhere - definitely Eastern Europe - maybe with a dash of Rwanda thrown in, and then sort of all capped off with

a healthy squeeze of the 1984 plot and stuff. Now, is it me or is that not just a teeny-weeny bit offensive? Surely you can't just harvest atrocities for a litany of grisly details to stick in your puffed up play can you? Or is that what passes as being terribly artistic and informed these days?

Anyway, aside from the script, there was a fair bit to celebrate. Across the board the acting was very strong. Nalan Burgess carried off Dee-Dee with a great deal of compassion and Sophia Sibthorpe grappled with the conflicting ferocity and sadness at the heart of Pinky with extreme precision. Unfortunately, such precision was not reflected by the flabby and half-baked script that the talented director and performers had to work with. *Nathan Brooker*

MICHAEL DERRINGER



Crystal Maze: The Musical by Simon Burdus & Peter Facer
Brickhouse Theatre, Robinson College, February 25th-28th
Dir. Okey Nzelu & Peter Facer; Big Fish Theatre
★★★★★

Robinson College used to be famous mainly for Nick Clegg-related reasons, but not any more. Its Brickhouse Theatre really is currently hosting a musical adaptation of Channel 4's cult 90's game show *The Crystal Maze*.

As with the original, we watched host Richard O'Brien lead six contestants, wearing awful Vanilla Ice tracksuits, through the maze in the hope of getting crystals that buy you prize winning time in the Crystal Dome.

Let's just be honest, in terms of production quality, this one was a real shocker: weak singing, horrendous scene changes, nervous acting; oh yeah, and the curtain went up 35 minutes late.

But hang on, what the hell was I expecting from *Crystal Maze: The Musical*? I actually reckon the production is just, just saved from its manifold flaws by the sheer silliness of it all. Needless to say, this is certainly the only show this term where you will see giant dancing bananas, the camp awfulness of Richard O'Brien masterfully captured by Fergus Ross Ferrier, and a Crystal Dome made out of tin foil and chicken wire.

And I haven't even mentioned the ludicrous plot. Sorry to spoil it, but I have to tell you this. OK, Channel 4 is secretly kidnapping the contestants so that it can sell them to a Mexican slave-trader with a Geordie accent called

Juan, and use the proceeds to fund new US sitcom *Friends* that will be shown on TV everyday for the next 20 years, thus securing the station's financial future. This was, of course, all revealed through a song. The chorus was "Save our station with your subjugation," and it included lines like "Veronica, you'll pay for Monica, Joss, you'll pay for Ross, but who will pay for Rachel?"

Don't go if you like your theatre slick and polished, but if you're up for a laugh, why not? In a way it was all quite refreshing. The Cambridge drama scene does perhaps take itself just a little too seriously, and this is one show that definitely, definitely, didn't.
Joel Massey

VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 13): Quite. "I thought you were going to come in Latex," says Norah, her disappointment almost tangible. "No," you clarify, whilst almost touching her disappointment, "I said I would come 'come in late x'. Not 'Latex'. I was giving you a cheeky kiss. Capeesh?" She capeeshes, and the confusion is over. You return her virus and give up bog-roll for Lent. Anyway, I'm running out of space, so we'll reconvene on page 28.
»p28 Hurry up!

iWatch

Week 7: Secret Life of the Motorway, BBC4, Wednesday 8pm, available on BBC iPlayer



Anyone who assumes a documentary on motorways would be boring is a closed-minded fool – the sort of clot who would assume that the first motorway in Britain was the M1. In actual fact, it was the Preston bypass. As this excellent documentary revealed, there is a wealth of history behind getting from A to B in a hurry.

Motorways are now so ubiquitous that it is easy to forget that they are in fact of very recent formation. Whereas fascism brought motorways to Italy and Germany decades previously, in 1956 Britain was still persisting with a road system laid out in a pre-motorised age. Britain's quaint country lanes and town high streets were becoming increasingly congested, and it was time to – literally – speed up the pace of change with the greatest public works since the building of the Victorian railways.

The recollections of engineers and construction workers, and the footage of old Public Service Broadcasts, betray an unashamed spirit of optimism and high expectations, seemingly centuries removed from the blaze and ironic tone of today. The welfare state had been formed, Britain was pulling out of the austerity of the early fifties and a collective sense of an imminent arrival at New Jerusalem was all pervasive. After the completion of the M1, sight seeing buses offered trips down the new motorway, and families piled into the car just to drive up and down the new road – the M1 was a destination in itself.

The heroes of this film were most certainly the Navvies. Between 1951 and 1961, half a million Irish labourers came to England to take part in the public works projects. The majority of workers on the M1 were Irish, so many so that two Catholic priests were brought over from Ireland to be present at the building site, and to the navvies. These labourers, tough as old boots, drank as hard as they worked; as one remembers, “They didn't so much give us wages as give us beer tickets!”

After watching the documentary, I would still claim that everything about motorways is ugly; the stark signs, the mouldy concrete bridges and the dark grey tarmac can be pretty soul destroying. However, many of the voices on the documentary insisted on the beauty and magnificence of these roads. When allied to a spirit of optimism and change, these now boring and functional blights on the landscape were once magnificent portents of the future.

Rob Peal

MUSIC

*NME Awards Tour
Florence and the Machine, White Lies, Friendly Fires and Glasvegas
The Corn Exchange, Friday February 20th
★★★★★*



Glasvegas

Last Friday saw the NME Awards Tour, tastemaker for new music, arrive at its Cambridge stop, with the big-draw Scots, Glasvegas, being supported by the bright new things of Britain's indie scene.

Show-opener *Florence and the Machine*, fronted by the enigmatic Florence Welch, could well be the elusive 'next big thing', or a victim of over-hyping. Winning the Critics' Choice Award at last week's Brit Awards, it's easy to forget her album isn't out until the summer. However, her set on Friday proved she is just that special.

The NME tour has been no stranger to quirky ladies, hosting Skunk Anansie (with bald singer Skin) and CSS's Lovefoxxx in previous years; but, decorating the stage with a harpist and bird cages, Florence took bizarreness to a new level. 'Between Two Lungs' was a stunning opening, with Welch demonically banging a drum before unleashing her incredible voice. Despite the early stage time, a considerable crowd had gathered for last year's single 'Kiss with a Fist', though it sounded tame in comparison to werewolf-inspired new track 'Howl'. With such a mesmerising stage presence, the Kate Bush and Bjork comparisons are obvious. Her cover of 'You Got The Love' could have wiped the floor with Candi Staton, providing a thrilling set closer and a fantastic start to the night.

Where so many young bands thrust into larger venues fail, *White Lies* have upped their game perfectly. Harry McVeigh's vocals feel as effective as ever, particularly in opener 'Farewell to the Fairground', and their bass-heavy tracks sound stronger here, the band keeping the delicacy of their record, without sacrificing any power from their show.

With a back catalogue that's more than a little dark, *White Lies*' show was so perfectly maudlin. But the songs aren't slow dirges, dragging around emotionally-drenched, dying melodies; these are tracks played with pace and potency. Particularly in a venue like the Corn Exchange, those

at the back experience a very different show to those standing nearer to the stage. Here, *White Lies* set themselves apart; Friday's set permeated the whole crowd, not just those at the front of the stage. And in introducing their last song by saying "We are *White Lies*, this is 'Death'", they may well be contenders for the best line used to close a show ever.

There's something quite remarkable about *Friendly Fires*' live show. Relatively sedate in interviews, the pounding funk of opener 'Lovesick' transformed frontman Ed McFarlane into an irrepressible dancing machine. Utterly compelling, the band's fast-paced set maintained momentum with the early highlight 'Jump in the Pool'. Its layered percussion was matched by a frenetic red and blue light show, interspersed with lasers, for a sublime rendition of 'Skeleton Boy'.

The sheer dance potential of *Friendly Fires*' self-titled debut has been criminally overlooked: with the exception of the superb balearic Aero-plane remix of 'Paris', it's a shame DJs haven't transformed tracks like 'White

Diamonds' into the bona fide anthems they are live. Even in more down-tempo moments like 'Ex-Lover', it was impossible not to be carried away by the sublime synth-laden euphoria of the most entertaining band on the line-up.

And so the headliners finally make their appearance. The figures of James Allan and his clan emerge to rapturous applause, barely discernible against the blacked-out stage. A brief pause, a mumbled introduction from the frontman, and *Glasvegas* explode into 'Geraldine'. The guitars serrate the air and the drumming has a tribal feel, before Allan's Scots howl ekes every drop of emotion out of the lyrics.

From here on in, there is no let up. 'It's My Own Cheating Heart...' and 'Flowers and Football Tops' are blasted out in all their cathartic anthemic glory, the latter extended until every brick in the Corn Exchange was ringing to its Victorian foundations. Who ever said that shoegazing was dead? With *My Bloody Valentine*'s resurgence last year, and Glasvegas' JAMC-like wall of noise, we should all throw our hands in the air in joyous rapture (and hope that those hands contain earplugs). The headliners' set seemed to sustain a feedback-drenched energy throughout, barely wasting a second of its short intensity.

And, in a haze of hair gel, Raybans and distortion, the band leave the stage. Our ears ringing and our eyes dazzled by the flashes of what has to be one of the best light shows of recent times, you can't help but leave contented: any concerns for the future of British music were quite ably, and loudly, washed aside on Friday night.

Paul Smith, Lucy Bryant & Laurie Tuffrey

*The Joy Formidable @ Green Mind's 8th Birthday (Part 1)
The Portland Arms
Saturday February 21st
★★★★★*

Appearances can be deceiving; The Joy Formidable are a perfect illustration of this point. When the band took to the stage of the Portland Arms on Saturday night, we were met with three reasonably unassuming, seemingly shy band members. It could be argued they looked sweet.

The disparity between the band's look and their sound was clear with the very first notes of their set. The Joy Formidable make an impressive noise for their number; they got the attention of everyone in the room and held it. With a debut record that sold out before it was even released, they've got the attention of a few more people than those in the crowd on Saturday night.

The band had a live sound which was a beautiful balance between sweet songs with a little darkness that were played with intense determination.

They have incredible presence. With an impressive effects pedal-to-band member ratio, this distortion-heavy sounds brought to mind thoughts of '90s grunge, in particular Smashing Pumpkins, whilst the set's pace and energy brought to mind more contemporary indie bright-lights such as Blood Red Shoes.

Highlights of their set included the new single, 'Cradle', and fan-favourite, 'Austere', which they closed the show with. On the record, *A Balloon Called Moaning*, these tracks stand out, but live they really take off. The songs have a subtly aggressive quality to them which is achieved via a careful balance of all the band's instruments. One is never allowed to scream over the others. This is a restrained, perfectly mediated anger; the scariest kind.

While The Joy Formidable's lyrics

occasionally focus on quite emotional, sometimes serious material, these songs are steered from any dangerously sentimental territory by the bile of Ritzzy's delivery. This girl has teeth. With this and her good looks, she has no doubt numerous Debbie Harry, Karen O and Courtney Love comparisons to look forward to, but as a musician Ritzzy has a style all of her own.

To put it simply, this show was amazing. It was a highlight of the term, and quite probably one of the best I've ever seen in Cambridge. The band have said



Florence and the Machine

CLASSICAL, FILM & LITERATURE

Wagner, Long and Brahms

King's College Music Society and King's Voices

King's College Chapel, Sunday February 22nd

★★★★★

Presented in the lower half of King's College Chapel, this concert promised choral and orchestral warmth in a veritable orgy of late Romantic harmony.

The orchestra began with Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, a work first performed for the composer's wife in their bedroom, but this intimacy was immediately gobbled up by the cavernous chapel. Though the acoustic blurred all before it, the faulty intonation and out of time string-playing still detracted from the performance to such an extent that any semblance of nuance when straight out of the (stained glass) window. The first violins made that squeaky sound which occurs when some players fail to scramble high enough to a top note and the horns were far from majestic. The last



chord told the whole story: nearly bearable, but not quite.

One of the advantages of James

Long's *Chaconne* was that it was more difficult to tell whether the right notes were being played or not. Its long sustained dischords worked well with the resonance of the space, and tempting aural snippets of Shostakovich and Ligeti were all flying around, reaching a dystopic tritonal climax. The dance section which followed was more easy on the ear with some form of identifiable melody, wafted gently over the audience by the nine players. As contemporary music goes, this was very endurable, but it's certainly not going on my iPod.

Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem* brings together passages from Luther's translation of the Bible and was bravely sung in German by the King's Voices. The opening was

unexpectedly beautiful and the balance between the forces was excellent throughout. Problems were to be had, however, with sloppy consonants and straining of tenors and sopranos to reach their upper registers. There seemed to be a lack of enthusiasm, excepting a jolly fine bass effort, and this reflected in the music. The two redeeming features of the concert were the magnificent baritone solo part, as sung by King's chaplain, Richard Lloyd Morgan and some finely crafted wind solos, notably flute (Alfredo Deano) and oboe (Emily Ross). The chorus no doubt went away with a huge adrenaline rush and sense of achievement, but the only shiver down the audience's spines was brought on by the February cold.

Andrew Browning

Three Monkeys

Dir. Nuri Bilge Ceylan

Starring: Yavuz Bingöl, Hatice Aslan and Ahmet Rifat Şungar

★★★★★

Three Monkeys is one of the most beautiful films I have ever seen. Not beautiful in an obvious, flock-of-parrots-in-an-orchid-garden kind of way; more like the faded appeal of a sepia photograph kept in Helen Mirren's handbag.

Events are set in motion when a local politician runs over a pedestrian one night and then pays his usual driver to take the blame and serve nine months in prison. During this time, a series of affairs, betrayals and suicide attempts unfolds, with only a comically morbid ringtone offering any glimpse of humour. Still, I laughed more than last week. There are only really four characters, and the plot is at times pretty thin, but there is still a lot to like here, especially if you have a taste for tragedy.

The director Ceylan and his cin-

ematographer, Gökhan Tiryak, work incredibly well together to produce a film full of diminished colours, strikingly composed shots and menacingly designed lighting. As the deserving winner of the Best Director prize in Cannes, Ceylan clearly knows what his audience wants to see, and enjoys not giving it to us. Some very intimate scenes are shot from a great distance, and many of the key events in the film occur off-screen. Most memorably, we are given lingering, uncomfortably intimate close-ups of characters as they grapple with their demons (which are many and unpleasant). If Shakespeare had hired a mime troop to perform *Hamlet*, confiscated their invisible ropes and told them that all their pet kittens were terminally ill, it wouldn't be far off what we have here.

This is a ponderous, contemplative film, with very few explosions and essentially no appearances by Vince Vaughn. It begins and ends with a roll of thunder, and presents a thoroughly unpleasant vision of domestic hell and the tragically inevitable breakdown of a family with a budget of 25 spoken words a day. It sounds depressing, and it is, but at least it's trying to do something interesting. It doesn't depend on a crowd-pleasing ending, a steroid-filled comeback kid, a shouty Winslet, a pouty Cruise or the Satan-spawn that excreted *He's Just Not That Into You*. It just relies on



you to trust it, make the jump over the subtitles and the sadness, and spend an hour and a half watching something with real ambition.

Tom Morris

Love's Civil War. Elizabeth Bowen and Charles Ritchie: Letters and Diaries 1941-1973

Ed. Victoria Glendinning

Simon & Schuster, out now

★★★★★

Victoria Glendinning, Elizabeth Bowen's biographer, has just released a collection of Bowen's love letters, written to the love of her life, Canadian diplomat Charles Ritchie.

After a cull by Ritchie, not all of Bowen's letters survive, and none of his, so the story of this thirty year-passion is an intermingling of Bowen's letters with Ritchie's diaries. This peculiar sense of omission – losing Ritchie's responses, and Bowen's private thoughts – is oddly fitting with this strange romance.

When the pair met in 1941, she was 'companionably' married and a few years older than him. Ritchie was clearly stricken with her, asking his diary "how can a woman of forty with... the air of a don's wife... have such a body?" This enchantment – he calls her "a witch, but

a good witch" – continued to her death. Bowen often wrote that being with him was her only 'reality', and when she died he declared "the Poetry gone – now Prose endless prose Prose to the last of my life." Ritchie married a cousin seven years into his affair with Bowen, continued to have other affairs, and occasionally alludes to coolings-off. Moving in her post-Bloomsbury, polygamous society, Bowen, though she had difficulty with Ritchie's marriage, refused to take it "au grand tragique". At one point she writes "My inability...to 'take' the fact of your being married to someone else is a sort of deformity in me, like my stammer. Help me with it."

One of the diaries' most interesting threads is Ritchie's simultaneous enchantment with and intimidation by Bowen as a writer. Early on he concludes that he

"very much doubts" that he would "ever have fallen for her if it hadn't been for her books," and later suggests that when with her "I become like a character in one of her stories – a romantic character observed with love." Her writing sometimes unnerves him, however, as he wonders if she "thinks of it as a 'fairy tale' – a word she once used about it."

This collection gives an interesting insight into Bowen's writing process, and into the lovers' sophisticated society; figures include Iris Murdoch and Lyndon Johnson. However, the book is essentially a tragedy, of two people waiting thirty years to enter the 'reality' of their love. Bowen always kept a 'home' for the married, constantly-travelling Ritchie, but it was not until her death that he longed to return to it.

Colette Sensier

Take V

Celeb career changes



Five of the Best

Mickey Rourke

What do you call a man who suspended his acting career for four years to become a boxer, ran for a WBA title and then came back to acting to make a film called *The Wrestler*? You call him Mickey Rourke. Or 'sir'.

Henri Rousseau

Originally a custom's official, taxing farmers who bought their produce to the Paris markets, Rousseau went on to become a celebrated painter, feted by Picasso and Signac. Très bon!

Ronald Reagan

Nicknamed the 'Great Communicator', Reagan had a 28-year-long acting career in Hollywood before becoming the 33rd US President.

George Foreman

The lean, mean, boxin' powerhouse stopped fightin' and started calorie reducin' by introducin' the Lean, Mean Fat Reducing Grilling Machine.

Ringo Starr

The man who "wasn't even the best drummer in the Beatles," according to John Lennon found his niche lending his Liverpudlian tones to children's TV programme *Thomas the Tank Engine*.

Five of the Worst

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Mistaking the 'I'll be back' catchphrase for political agenda, the 'Governator' is now the Governor of California after relinquishing his career as a human wall.

Joaquin Phoenix

A recent interview on *The David Letterman Show* saw the actor-turned-rapper (above) appearing decidedly worse for wear. Key quote: turning to Phoenix, the host said "Well Joaquin, I'm sorry you couldn't be with us tonight."

Jeffrey Archer

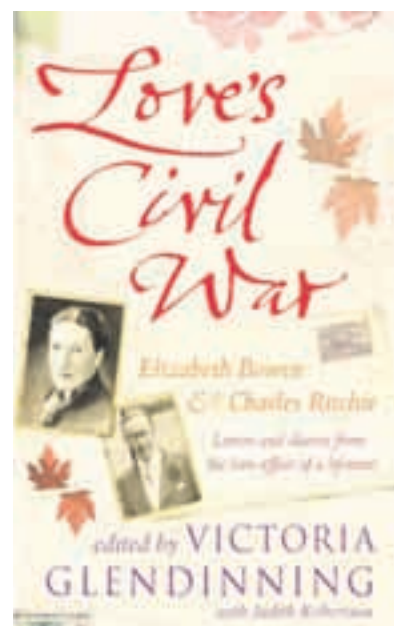
Perverting the course of justice: from politician to novelist to convict in three easy steps.

David Icke

Bad news guys, turns out all the world's being controlled by lizards. No, it's true: former football player-turned-Isle of Wight-dwelling conspiracy theorist Icke says so. Now, all bow to the Lizard King...

Eric Cantona

The former Manchester United star's film career hasn't really taken off, only notable for a bit part in the first *Elizabeth* film. Très mauvais!



VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 13): "What are you giving up for Lent?" you ask her, pertinently. "Why - I'm giving up vomiting," Norah replies, also pertinently. Two can play at pertinence, it seems. But her pertinence is more problematic than yours, you soon realise: if she's giving up vomiting, she probably won't want her virus back. With a heavy heart, you therefore elect not to give it back to Norah until Easter.

Great Works Of Art In Cambridge

#25: Three Figures by Sean Crampton

Churchill College

As far as Cambridge collegiate architecture is concerned, Churchill wins hands down for sheer monotony. Nikolaus Pevsner, that great chronicler of British buildings and champion of all that is concrete, devoid of character and oppressive praised Churchill College as “an outstanding conception”. If supersized nuclear bunkers arranged on a Centre Parks scheme are your thing, then Churchill is indeed outstanding. Mercifully, in the course of the College’s history, some perspicacious Churchillian saw the need to enliven this paean to concrete with a collection of sculpture.

There’s a Barbara Hepworth sculpture in the grounds entitled *Four Square: Walk Through* cast in bronze (though looking suspiciously like concrete). Hepworth was a suitable choice for what was then a women’s College; she left her triplets with the nanny in order to pursue her artistic career. Good feminist behaviour.

In the south-east corner of the grounds, Sean Crampton’s *Three Figures* are mounted on a plinth, defiantly clad in a delicate shade of concrete. The *Three Figures* is the most exciting work in Churchill’s spartan grounds. The figures

are mechanically abstracted to a series of brutal, jagged planes. They appear to wield machine guns welded to their arms. Crampton had served as a second lieutenant in Italy in 1943 and 1944. On a reconnoitre mission in January 1944, he and his party stumbled upon a belt of mines. In the dark, Crampton’s foot struck an ignition switch. He held firm while his companions retreated and then, lifting his foot, allowed the mine to explode. Crampton was severely injured. Later he was awarded the Military Cross and George Medal for bravery.

In the aftermath of an amputation and a long, drawn-out period of rehabilitation, Crampton developed a new sensibility to the figure. His *Three Figures*, then, are soldiers, so dehumanised by war that their bodies have taken on the metal edge of a grenade, an automated rifle, a tank. Their forms are shattered by the ricochet of bullets and the explosions of land mines and their limbs have been truncated by amputations. Their metal casing serves as protective armour, but, at the same time, annihilates individuality. The three shattered veterans proclaim: we were soldiers. *Laura Freeman*



TIM JOHNS

Sex in the University City



Week 7: One Night Stands

You know that *Simpsons* episode where Bart runs for class president, and Homer paints him a campaign poster that reads “SEX! Now that I’ve got your attention...”? Well, that was basically the technique employed by my sixth-form history teacher. He believed no historical topic, be it the origins of the Russian Revolution or the decline of the Third Reich, could keep our skittish adolescent focus if it didn’t descend hastily into a discussion of Trotsky’s mistress or Goering’s foot fetish.

When he ran out of tangentially relevant historical perversions, he would just remind us all of his favourite fact: that any woman can go up to almost any man, tell him she wants to have sex, and no sooner has she spoken then they will be getting to know each other biblically in the nearest car/phone-box/history textbook supply cupboard. Despite his failings, this anonymous (now sacked) history reprobate had a point. While men, given their greater tendency to be, well, axe murderers, have less success in propositioning women with no preamble, women can if they are so inclined demand from any undergrad a hasty walk back to college, and most, if not all, will respond with disbelieving enthusiasm.

One night stands give you a glimpse into another student’s life/interior decorating choices (*South Park: The Movie* posters and Edward Hopper prints both charmless in their own ways). In addition, there is always the possibility that, as you emerge from the VK Cherry haze, you will be treated to your host’s choice of ‘mood music.’ A good example is a friend who endured an entire album of crackly Jimi Hendrix, a strange choice when, as she put it, “Sex is ridiculous enough without having to keep to the rhythm of ‘Cross-Town Traffic.’”

And soon the nasty realisation dawns that your life is not, and never will be, a scene from *Cruel Intentions*, and while an hour ago you may have felt empowered, now you are dealing with an over-zealous Caius economist (say), who won’t give up until you’ve either faux-screamed loud enough to get the room portered or fallen implausibly asleep.

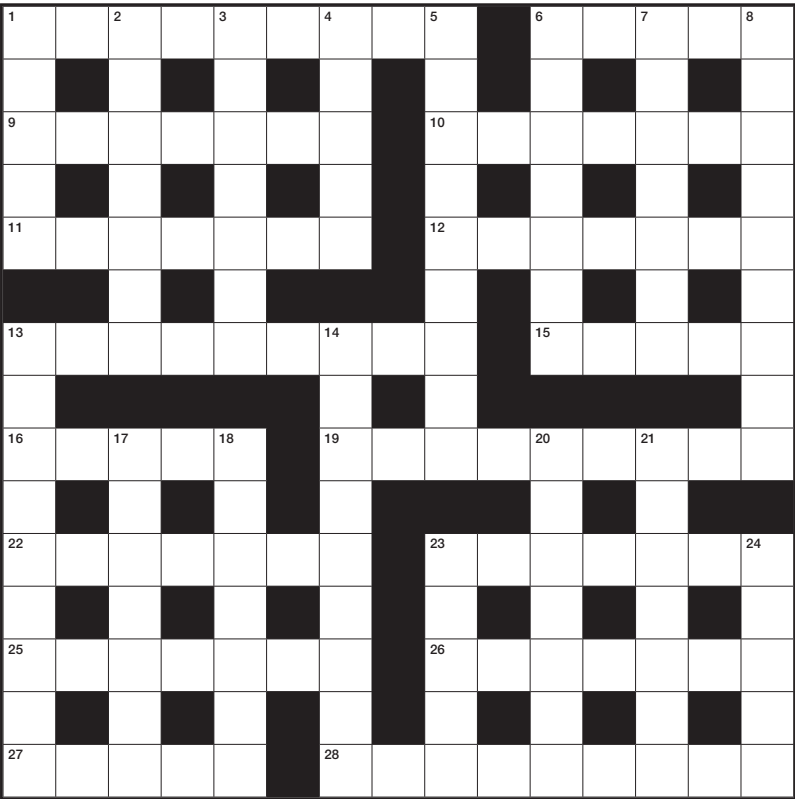
Finally, when leaving in the morning, do not wince in the accusing sunshine: hold your head high and act the model of carefree empowerment. You might even be convinced, until you get your forgotten tights UMSeD to college. Betty Friedan would be proud. *Tricky Phaelen*

Games & puzzles



Varsity Crossword

no. 501



Across

- 1 1 x 1 of the 1s (3,6)
- 6 Exhaustive military method showing strain, with German leader’s invasion replacing victory (5)
- 9 Elaborate bedroom containing not me, but (shortly) you and I (7)
- 10 Booking, perhaps, a fashionable way to communicate (7)
- 11 Many battles not starting after toy money used abroad (7)

- 12 The most time-consuming pig, eating little, is Latin (7)
- 13 A change of direction regarding image (5-4)
- 15 Berio’s tonality, retrograded, contains something incorrect (3,2)
- 16 Pirate unbounded at sea with a sort of headgear (5)
- 19 Soundly beaten, remove an arbitrary number? (5,4)
- 22 Flit about before a gangsta greeting – cheers (5,2)

- 23 Colloquial demonstration comprises one third of noughts and crosses (or so the Americans would claim) (7)
- 25 Mostly undiluted, an amoeba has one composer (7)
- 26 “Detective – gosh!” exclaimed a bit as the French say (7)
- 27 A well-known broadsheet supplement follows Simon to places (5)
- 28 What would exist, had equal to a flatter inclination (3,6)

Down

- 1 Perfectly round, alternative place of rest (5)
- 2 Perfectly matched with European singer taking question (5,2)
- 3 Fashionable insect good at chilling (7)
- 4 Monsters made of minerals eating girl’s head (5)
- 5 Free-thinking poets entering bath, implying euphemism (2,2,5)
- 6 Somewhat similar to 8 (3,4)
- 7 Obvious evil never stops to make an impression (7)
- 8 A bit of self-reference when? It’d go wrong (5,4)
- 13 Insect, in love, runs away with kudus, perhaps (9)
- 14 Camus even to test out a new series, one which carries on when nobody’s watching (9)
- 17 Initially, art fits without any precision (2,5)
- 18 What 24 demand could be rawness (7)
- 20 Regarding quantity – a couple of nuts and marinade to start, on a bed of fried rice (7)
- 21 Busy criminal gone hot (2,3,2)
- 23 Bad smell after turning up a load of dirt – idiot (5)
- 24 1 and 2 down, for instance, arbitrarily require solving (5) *Set by Hisashi*

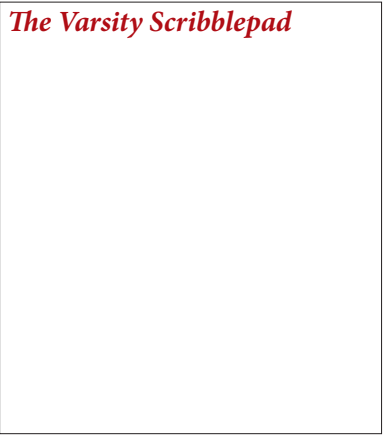
Sudoku

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.

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

WWW.DJZ28INK.COM / MADE BY GARETH MOORE

The Varsity Scribblepad



Last week’s solution

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

Answers to last week’s crossword (no. 500)
Across: 1 Koh-i-Noor, 5 Blight, 10 Armenia, 11 Arbitrator, 12 Shrove, 13 Peacock, 15 Alcoholic, 16 Patsy, 17 A-Team, 20 Knobbler, 23 Epstein, 24 War room, 25 Nieces, 26 Blowfish, 27 Nudity, 28 Rap sheet. Down: 1 Keats, 2 Homeric, 3 Nineveh, 4 Oral, 6 Labia, 7 Get lost, 8 Turnkey, 9 Gazpacho, 14 Slaking, 15 Agamemnon, 16 Pub crawls, 18 East End, 19 Mae West, 21 Idolise, 22 Rim-shot, 24 Wilma.

VOMIT ADVENTURE (STARTS ON PAGE 13): Good plan: by chundering all over the ballot papers, the returning officers, the other candidates and a smattering of the voting public, you soon get Norah’s attention. Only problem is that whilst you’re chundering the virus escapes and hides amongst all the vomit. Norah is not pleased and never lets you borrow her viruses again. Oh well: win some, lose some.

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Quick Catch-up

University Catch-up

Rugby League

With the Varsity match less than a week away, the Rugby League Blues fought back from 16-6 down at half time against tough opposition, to win their eleventh consecutive game: perfect preparation to regain the Varsity trophy.

Recently crowned champions of the BUCS division, they went into this game against the Harlequins U18s with great confidence.

Quins started the stronger and made raids into the light blue twenty metre area but good defence kept them out. Fighting back, the Blues' Luke Tyson scored from close range for the first points of the day.

However the try only served to fire up the young guns and they hit back with three tries before half time.

The scoreline was 16-6 and a fair reflection of a side who had punished mistakes ruthlessly.

The second half was a carbon copy of the first with the first points going to Cambridge: captain for the day Paddy Hunt crashing over on the left hand side. An accurate kicking game from the halves James Hunt and Rupert Wingate-Saul meant that errors then started slipping into the Quins' game.

Cambridge piled on the pressure allowing Aaron Sonenfeld to shoot through, leaving the score line in the balance with only a few minutes remaining.

The comeback was completed when hooker George Sykes planted the ball down at the side of the posts and with the conversion, Cambridge took the lead for the first time with the winning score, 24-20.

The Cambridge team seemed thrilled at the win, which was the first against Harlequins in four years. This victory will hopefully send them on their way to a Varsity match win in London. Based on this performance, it's definitely a team worth supporting.

Thanks to Stan Knowsley

Varsity Catch-up

Karate

Cambridge secured another re-sounding victory against Oxford at Saturday's Karate Varsity Match, the club's third win in a row.

In the kata event, a commanding performance from British and German champion Roman Sztylek set the tone for total Cambridge domination.

Further classy performances from Nim Sukumar and Paul Smith completed a Cambridge 1-2-3 in the Men's A.

On to kumite and up first was Smith who comfortably eased past the Oxford first man.

Steph McTighe dominated the women's event, taking control of both of her fights, and there were further wins for the others.

However it was in the Men's B where the real excitement was with Andreja Erbes producing the point of the day.

A win for Mike Hayoun and a hard-fought draw for Chai rounded off an excellent day and a clear win for the Light Blues.

REPORTS

Rugby Boys beaten by Wooden Spoon

» Cambridge pay dearly for big mistakes in what could have been a comfortable win

Jimmy Pickles	
Cambridge	33
Spoon A-As	36

The Wooden Spoons match is always a friendly affair and a fitting celebration at the end of a tough season for the Blues Squad. It's a chance for the leavers to make their last big hits in the blue and white hoops of Cambridge and for the younger men to learn just one more quick step, one more trick pass before their mentors depart (though probably not from Trevor Boynton).

Sadly the match did not go as well as the Blues would have liked, as the score shows, but this was largely down to individual costly errors which would not have been made in a match of any real importance.

It would be easy to single out occasions where tackles were inexcusably missed, particularly when the slippery Spoons full back Adam Thwaites was on the ball. At this stage in the season, though, criticism is unlikely to be taken seriously by the rugby squad.

The Spoon A-As back line looked to play a quick, running game and Cambridge's (perhaps understandable) lack of absolute concentration and commitment played right into their hands: Their tries came largely

from individual dashes.

James Wellwood epitomised Cambridge's match: two or three times he failed to watch the high ball right into his hands, but he also pleased the spectators with some immensely powerful runs and a beautiful under-the-arm offload to Pat Crossley for the Blues' third try.

Chris Lewis had a good last game for the side he has represented 49 times. As well as scoring a try he was also involved in Cambridge's best move of the match: Crossley sent the ball right over the top of the lineout and it was spun on to Lewis on a typically strong charge. Getting quick ball from the contact, the back line sent it straight out to sub Will Balfour who put it down in the corner.

The entire process took only a few thrilling seconds.

Outgoing captain Jon Dawson's memory of Cambridge will be pock-marked with moments of such genius. I expect he also enjoyed seeing his successor, Dan Vickerman, walk over the line for a try.



Cambridge halt a breakaway runner

Fearless football Blues outplay Northampton

» Cambridge take their chances well to defeat stubborn opposition

Rob Jones	
Cambridge	5
Northampton	2

The Blues faced Northampton on Wednesday, looking to build some momentum in their BUCS promotion battle and for the run-up to the Varsity Match at Craven Cottage.

Northampton started well and forced two corners in the opening three minutes. Showing grit in the tackle, determination in the air and some slick interchange moving forwards, they asserted themselves impressively on the match.

A nervous Cambridge suddenly settled and some good hold-up play from Matt Amos allowed Johnson and Rutt to press forwards. With a clever flick, Amos put through Baxter, who crossed back from the by-line for Amos to volley powerfully into the bottom corner.

Cambridge were further rewarded

for their positive football when Rutt gathered a poor clearance from the goalkeeper and sent a beautiful curling lob into the top right corner of the net from thirty yards.

Though Northampton seemed unflustered by the second goal and continued to push forward, the Blues extended their lead in the 27th minute.

Striker Matt Amos showed great skill in the penalty area, before squeezing a pass through to Michael Johnson, who let the ball run before placing it low and hard into the bottom left-corner.

The score-line perhaps flattered Cambridge, who were actually in the throngs of a real tussle with stub-

born opposition. Northampton battled their way back into the match and their captain put them on the scoresheet with a sublime lob on the half hour mark.

But the fightback was short-lived: in the 35th minute, Amos lost his marker to latch on to a long-ball, collecting it calmly before firing into the bottom-corner to restore Cambridge's three-goal lead. At the half time whistle the game looked all but over.

The dramatic opening moments of the second half were to put a completely new complexion on the match, however. Just seconds after the restart, Northampton's lone striker rifled in a spectacular shot on the turn to make the score 4-2. With the wind and slope to their advantage, it looked as if Northampton might be able to claw their way back into the game.

Cambridge were not to be intimidated and reacted to this test of character with encouraging composure. Through patient passing they eventually recovered a dominant position in the game.

In the 58th minute, Rutt made a cut inside from the right wing with a surging run and won a free-kick in a dangerous position. Baxter stepped up to take it, and struck it sweetly beyond the keeper's reach and into the left side of the goal.

Cambridge now looked supremely comfortable. When Northampton missed an open goal in the 63rd minute their heads dropped. For the rest of the game they gave the ball away cheaply and allowed the blues to control the possession and the tempo of the match.

The only blemish was an ankle injury sustained by Michael Johnson in the closing moments. The Blues will hope for a quick return for the striker, whose partnership with Amos will be crucial against Oxford in March.

The Week Ahead

International Six Nations Rugby Cancel your Friday night plans, because Wales-France is on the box and it is guaranteed to be a good un. Then tomorrow, stay put as Scotland take on Italy, followed by England's desperate stand against the Irish at Croke Park. Fri 27th, Sat 28th, BBC 1 and 2	College Lent Bumps It all comes to a climax tomorrow with the final races of the Lent Bumps calendar. It's close at the top and even closer down the bottom, and with May Bumps order to row for, it should be very exciting. Get out there and get shouting for your college. Sat 28th, The Cam, from 12.40
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College Cuppers Rugby With a couple of rounds safely out of the way without the unnecessary bother of actually playing any matches, only the cream of college rugby is left to fight for the title. The big one this week is John's-Jesus; always worth a watch. Tues 3rd, John's Pitches, 2pm.
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National Carling Cup Football The 49th Carling Cup Final sees old enemies Sir Alex Ferguson and Harry Redknapp go head to head once more. United have already eliminated Spurs from the FA Cup this year, but Redknapp may yet have something up his sleeve. Sun March 1st, Sky Sports 1, 3pm.

**Dan
Hitchens**

*Sport
Comment*



Angels and Demons

Last week, in one of those frightening accidents which have made our world such a dangerous place to inhabit, I refereed a game of football. The refereeing was entirely unpremeditated: I turned up as a substitute for my College team and was suddenly set upon by various captains explaining that once again all the relevant international bodies had failed to provide an official, and that out of the twenty-three people who happened to be on the sports ground at that moment, I was almost certainly, in their opinion, the best qualified for the role.

It is not unfair to say that my performance was markedly that of an amateur; nevertheless, in the strange course of the ninety minutes I came to understand what must be obvious to anybody who has refereed a game of sport, but to me at least had been invisible. And it offers an answer to the difficult question many football fans have wondered at: why, given the abuse, the anger, the possibility of getting it completely wrong, would

anyone be a referee? Here is the best reply: because the referee does not actually make any decisions.

Of course a referee does decide some things, in that he adjudicates a dispute; but not in the way a parent adjudicates between two childrens' claims to a toy. The rules of football make the decisions; the referee is only interested in the rules. He is vaguely aware of two

world he is a part of. He jogs around an entirely different pitch to the one where games are won and lost, or even where decisions are 'good' or 'bad'. They might be right or wrong, but only right or wrong in the context of the rules. Since nothing so abstract as rules can take offence or make a protest, the referee has nothing to fear except his own self-criticism.

'The referee is not just impartial: he has no idea of what it is like to be partial'

teams giving all they have to overcome each other, but his interest in the competitive aspect goes no further than a distracted curiosity. The referee is not just impartial; he has no idea of what it might be like to be partial.

That may seem a tiny distinction, but it is what makes the referee's job possible. Like the angels in *Wings of Desire*, the referee cannot touch the

And this is why they are so unflustered by crowd chants and player abuse. The referee is only really performing an intellectual exercise out of his own interest. He is taking an exam. If, during your exams, angry crowds besieged the hall and called you rude names, while people you didn't know walked around saying that you were short-sighted or lacking in common

sense, you might be put off; but if you were a good candidate you would ignore this bizarre commotion and get on with the paper. The good referee turns, perplexed, from the abuse, and gets on with applying the rules.

Footballers find it hard to empathise with referees just as ecologists find it hard to empathise with lumberjacks: they look at the same thing in entirely different ways. Managers misunderstand referees even more, because their situation is exactly opposed: off the pitch but completely engaged in the competitive nature of the game. That is the reason for the wounded sulkiness of a Ferguson or a Mourinho.

So if you want to know how it feels to be an angel, I recommend refereeing a football game. Though perhaps I was lucky. The game ended in a comprehensive thrashing for which no referee could be blamed. It is, indeed, quite reassuring when the horribly insistent question oppressing your conscience as you lie awake in bed: was the eighth goal offside?

F-F-F-F-Freestylin'

MARI SHIBATA TALKS WITH ABBAS FARID ON THE THE FOOTBALL FREESTYLE MOVEMENT

Those reading this will probably associate sport with world record achievements by individuals, teams or nations. No surprise then that dance won't fit into this category. But if ice-skating can achieve a place in the Olympics as a sport, then some dances like break-dance could too, especially with its power moves so close to the concepts of gymnastics. An upcoming star in the football freestyling scene, Abbas Farid reckons that using a football in conjunction with his breakin' tricks might add a further sporting flavour.

At our joint breakin' and football freestyle performance at Armaan, the CU Pakistan Society Ball, a couple of weeks ago, Abbas spoke vividly about the discovery of the new movement. "Football freestyling was first promoted through the Nike Freestyle Campaign in 2001 when a competition for sport freestylers was held. Owing to the huge success of this competition new freestyle sport awareness continued – one of those was football freestyle."

Abbas was soon heavily involved. "I entered the Second Nike Freestyle Championships two years later in 2003, which I won. This became the starting point of my journey to become both a skilled and powerful football freestyler, and part of promoting the movement."

Abbas explains his unusual combination of football and breakin'. "I always wanted to be in the sporting scene. I started off aiming to be a professional cricket player, but I moved away from it when I was thirteen. I became interested in both football and breakin' around the same time just by going to breakin' jams and being inspired by the FIFA World Cup in 1998. As someone who was passionate about both, to meet a scene that allows the freedom to combine the two is the best thing that has happened."

His mission to inspire future generations of freestylers means total dedication in refining his own style. "I really recommend everyone to pursue gymnastics, as it teaches even the small-

est bodies to maximise their physical abilities. Handy for breakin' power moves which I now practice on my new mats in my living room! I really want to showcase those in my upcoming battles – I still get nervous trying those things out in public."

At this point, I suggest the possibility of compiling acrobatic promotional videos. "No," he says immediately; "I want to save all my new acrobats for the bigger platform, to win, and for the audience to gasp with amazement!" Can't wait to see some of that.

On the subject of impressing audiences, we touch on fame. "On the most recent Red Bull freestyle competition, they used my logos in more than sixty countries without asking for copyright permission. That silhouette was me... but I don't care, I'm not an attention seeker. I'm here to prove that sport can be malleable like an art, developing your very own character and staging your personality on show. On top of your physical presentation, polishing up your look with rare clothing helps shape up those subtle differences – I'm obsessed with footwear!"

He takes off his trainers and shows them to me. "I found these Nikes in New York last year. Aren't they great? Haven't seen anyone wear them since, I want to perform in them soon. One place I really want to go shoe-shopping is Japan – they seem to have numerous limited edition products there!" The combination of both rhetorical physical training and flexible performing attitudes makes football freestyle a uniquely relaxed and enjoyable sport.

Finally, I ask Abbas whether football freestyle will develop a history like the other sports. "Give it time, each country is currently developing a style. In my opinion, Japan and Korea are currently at the top, but the immense technical power from the Dutch and Brazilian playfulness is tricky for others to imitate. Sooner or later there might be a specific genre of music that may be associated



with it, although I personally prefer the old-skool hip-hop style as that's the music I've always breaked to. In the meantime, I want to represent the UK

and appeal the movement to be worthy and ambitious in a different way from a standard sport or dance." I wish him all the best.

Cooney's Marathon



**Lauren
Cooney**

Week 7

In which Lauren takes inspiration from the Oscars.

My run today was inspired by the Oscar clips I have laughed (yes, and cried) at in the last 24 hours. I'd like to thank my mother for encouraging me to run this ridiculous race, the nice man in Sportworld who sold me a succession of ill fitting trainers, God for making this week so much warmer than last, Jim, Greg, and Biff, oh you're always smiling Biff, Jade Goody for remaining an inspiration and fighter until the very end, *Varsity* for allowing me to share my innermost feelings, and oh God, Paula Radcliffe, who rises again, you are my brother. My Gawd.

This wasn't entirely pointless, and helped me occasionally to forget the slow speed at which time actually passes, as well as briefly ignore my lower leg stiffening. The week has taught me that it is even possible for the soles of your feet to hate you and everything you stand for.

Marathon manuals advise 'visualising' as a coping technique for long distances. Think of your goal, and picture yourself achieving it, and surely you too will one day be able to swap that shampoo bottle for a golden statuette.

Sometimes when I am lagging I imagine that it is race day and I am about to pass a crowd of my jeering friends. Although this helps me speed up it has the unfortunate by-effect of making me run 400m or so with my middle finger up.

I tend to be all too conscious of my running persona. The swearing sprinter is the split personality of the wounded soldier; a veritable Jekyll and Hyde. The swearing sprinter transforms into the wounded soldier when things get that bit too much/tiring/achey. The new solution involves limping, panting, looking sorry for myself, and giving noble glances to passers-by, hoping that they will think I am in considerable pain and have been running for hours.

But today's run, in the spirit of Oscar ceremony, transcended the boundaries of method acting, and had me in genuine pain. The ceremony aspect came from the taxi I had to flag down to drive me home. Looks like physio time on Monday.

My justgiving page is in the process of being set up but is reliant upon the charity receiving their gift aid tax reference number. Be patient people, your pockets will be lightened shortly.

In case you didn't get a chance to check out the charity last time, here is their website for you to peruse: <http://www.cambridger-apecrisis.co.uk/>

Interview: Sam Davies

Britannia Rules the Waves

JENNY MORGAN INTERVIEWS THE DARLING OF BRITISH SAILING, CAMBRIDGE GRADUATE SAMANTHA DAVIES

By the time Samantha Davies sailed into Les Sables d'Olonne in the moonlight on Valentine's Day, she had already navigated her way into the hearts of many. The third person to cross the finishing line of the gruelling Vendée Globe 2008/09 after more than ninety-six days at sea, she was met by hordes of family and friends and many of the excited locals, despite the unsociable hour.

For this is not just a blonde girl in a pink boat. Sam is only the fourth woman ever to complete the race, and holds the second fastest female time after Dame Ellen MacArthur aboard Kingfisher in 2001. "I've just sailed around the world!" said a breathless Sam as her support team boarded the boat. "It's amazing!"

The Vendée Globe is known as the Everest of solo sailing, and with good reason. Now in its sixth edition, it attracts the best (and the bravest) single handers from all over the world, though few have managed to oust the French from their dominant position. It incorporates stages around all of the three great Capes – Good Hope, Leewin, and Horn – facing the dangers of icebergs and screaming gales of the infamous Southern Ocean, and taking on the high risk North Atlantic in mid winter after three months at sea. Sam clearly relished the challenge, deciding to do it "because it's the longest race I could find to be alone at sea!"

Extreme and dangerous, many sailors fail to complete every year. This time around, three boats dismasted on the second day and Yann Eliès found himself stranded and helpless after breaking his leg eight hundred miles south of Perth. Sam selflessly left her race path to sail to his rescue, although in the end the Australian Navy beat her to it. Her time was corrected as a result. "There are many things beyond our control, and it takes just one thing to go wrong and the whole race is over. When something happens to someone else you imagine it happening to yourself in that situation, it's quite scary."

Sam is no stranger to disaster. In 1998 an attempt at a non-stop round the world race in an all-female crew headed by her childhood inspiration Tracy Edwards was halted when they suffered a dramatic dismasting. Since then she has built up an enormous amount of experience in trans-Atlantic and round Britain races, all the while aiming for her next big chance.

Her ability to come back from the brink is evidence not just of her steely determination, but also of a genuine and astonishing talent. She cut her teeth on the Mini Transat and French Figaro circuits, racking up the racing miles in smaller and joint crewed boats. She also trained with the prestigious Pole France, a top level solo racing squad, before progressing to these individual classes in December 2007 with her first solo race from Brazil to France.

But her talent really came to the fore in the Vendée Globe where she averaged a cool 12.02 knots for the

whole race and was one of the few sailors to cover more than four hundred miles in one day.

Not bad for someone for whom racing was not always a definite lifetime ambition: "When I started university I never thought I'd make it in sailing. I actually wanted to be a yacht designer, working on the marine side of things. I saved my sailing for the holidays."

In fact, throughout her time here she never sailed for the Blues. "I didn't sail at Cambridge, as I was already competing offshore at weekends and they took an all or nothing approach. In fact my main sport was rowing; I was the Lady Margaret Boat Club captain and trialled for the lightweights. I also swam with the Cambridge Swimming Club and played Water Polo for John's!"

Despite appearances, her time at Cambridge was not wholly spent on or in the water. She completed an Engineering degree, something which she says has been incredibly useful in her chosen career. "The engineering knowledge I gained from four years at Cambridge has been invaluable. Everything I learnt I use; it's really why I'm where I am now. It's amazing how much you need your brain for a sport like this. And it's good to have a balance – I think it gives me an edge."

Whatever her previous aspirations, Sam has clearly found her niche in life. While other competitors talked of the trials and tribulations of life at sea, the effervescent Brit could not emphasise enough

how much she had enjoyed herself for the duration of the race. Talking of her "holiday heaven" alone aboard a souped-up yacht in some of the world's most beautiful locations, her positivity and refusal to cry were refreshing to those keeping track of the race.

But she has never doubted her decision to pursue such a demanding race or even the sport in general: "I love what I'm doing. Sailing is more than a sport; it's a passion, an adventure. I've always said that if I ever wake up and don't want to go training then that's the time I'll give up. Still now, I've never had a day when I haven't wanted to get up. I'm just so lucky to have this opportunity to do a job that I love."

A large part of her enjoyment and indeed her success is the relationship she has built up with her sixty-foot yacht, Roxy. Designed and built in 2000 by this year's winner Michel Desjoyaux, the yacht already has two Vendée Globe titles to her name. "I would describe my relationship with Roxy as like that between a horse and rider. You need each other, but it's a purely professional match. Roxy was a great proven boat, meaning that I could get out there straight away, and I had 100% confidence in the technical side of her."

Sam took over the boat in 2007 and had it modified slightly to suit a female sailor, with chocks to help her balance when reeling in the sail and a stronger winch. Her sponsors, Roxy, then had it repainted in bright pink and orange, ready to stand out

in the Vendée line up.

The boat was sometimes a source of annoyance, however, as, at nine years old, it just didn't have the power and the speed of some of the newer models. "It was sometimes frustrating that she is no longer the fastest on the water, even when sailing at 100%. Having said that, a lot of newer, faster boats never got to 100% due to technical issues, and this race is about endurance."

Roxy clothing have stood by Sam and are thrilled with her results. "As soon as we met Sam we just knew she was perfect for us, she represents everything we are about as a brand and a lot more," said Marketing Director of Roxy Europe, Maritxu Darrigrand. Who knows, they might be the ones to help fund her step up to the next level to fulfill her dream of a Vendée Globe win in 2012.

After all, Sam has made clear her ambitions for a repeat attempt at the ultimate round-the-world race, but next time in a different boat. "She was perfect for the Vendée. But now I'd love to have a new one, and maybe combine my two passions by helping to design and create it from start to finish. That's all part of the adventure. Before the race begins the adventure."

Indeed, the adventure is just beginning for this particular sailor. Riding a wave of popular support and admiration for her fantastic performance and extremely likeable personality, I think we'll be hearing a lot more of Sam and her boat of hearts in the future.

Sam's Race

From the start Sam kept pace with the newer boats. Up to the Equator she never dropped lower than fifteenth place.

After the Doldrums as she crossed in the Southern Hemisphere she stayed in fourteenth, despite losing more than three hundred miles in four days stuck in light winds around the St Helena high.

She surfed her way along the Southern Ocean swell still in fourteenth, just 560 miles behind the leader at that point.

Sailing into the Kerguelens, avoiding her first icebergs, she crept up to tenth as many of her rivals got into difficulties. Then she had to abort her race plan to sail to the rescue of the injured Yann Eliès, before continuing, now very much alone, towards Australia.

With more fellow competitors falling by the wayside as a result of a series of active low-pressure areas, Sam was up at eighth by the time she reached the Antipodes and then fourth as she rounded Cape Horn.

With around 7000 miles still to go, Sam struggled up through the South Atlantic, pretty much neck and neck with Marc Guillemot.

Only when the latter's boat lost her keel was Sam able to push ahead into the Azores and finally cross the line in third place.



Sam battles the ocean on board Roxy

JEAN-MARIE LIOT/OPPI

REPORTS

Basketball teams bomb at Varsity

» *The Men's Blues are the last of the teams to flop against their experienced Oxford counterparts*

Pranav Sood

The Cambridge men's team took to the court on Saturday afternoon as the climactic act of a compelling day of basketball.

Oxford had had the better of the day's earlier fixtures, with the Cambridge Lions (men's IIs) having lost 85-76 in a nail-biting encounter and the women – despite a heroic effort from Kim Lamza – slumping to a resounding 98-43 defeat. Nonetheless, the atmosphere was upbeat ahead of the game, with some in the Cambridge camp even quietly confident that the Light Blues could pull off a shock victory against an Oxford team boasting several American college-level players.

The first quarter began in frenetic fashion with Cambridge, under the leadership of Hugo Drochon, defending stoutly and occasionally attacking with real flair. Silky work from guard

Cambridge	59
Oxford	93

Chris Bohn saw the Light Blues take an early lead before their Oxonian counterparts rallied, leaving the scores level at 21-21 and the spectators' mouths watering at the prospect of a genuine contest.

Eager not to disappoint, Cambridge continued in much the same fashion in the second quarter, regularly resorting to physicality to neutralise Oxford's key playmakers.

However, just when the Dark Blues were starting to look flustered, Drochon suffered an unfortunate ankle injury and had to be substituted. This seemed to cause a lapse in Cambridge's collective concentration and a prolonged period of ill-discipline from the home side saw the visitors go into

half-time leading 41-26.

Oxford burst out of the blocks with immediate effect at the start of the third quarter, seemingly oblivious to the comically insulting jibes being made by one particularly enthusiastic member of the home crowd about their unusually hirsute limbs.

Before long, the Dark Blues were playing the free-flowing Basketball that has become their hallmark over the course of this season and even the excellent Bamiedakis was powerless to prevent the away side from stretching their lead to 72-40 at the end of the quarter.

A marginally improved performance from Cambridge in the fourth quarter, courtesy of some important contributions from Alan Aralbayev, did little to halt the progress of the Oxford juggernaut. Eventually the visitors cantered to an easy 93-59 victory, thereby completing a day of Oxonian domination.



Oxford soar above the Cambridge defence

Fencers cut Oxford down to size

» *It's a Light Blue whitewash for the fencing Varsity teams*

Varsity Sport

On a sky blue Saturday morning the 102nd fencing Varsity Match took place in the Old Exam Halls amidst a vast and vocal crowd of Cambridge supporters.

Starting the day were the men's seconds, led by captain Richard Booth. Coming up against some strong Oxford opposition, the men fought hard to wrest the advantage in the sabre. Following on from them, Tom Williams' épée team finally wrapped it up to take

Cambridge women	117
Oxford women	114

a narrow 127-120 victory. Next up were the women's Blues. Staring down Oxford at their strongest, in the foil, they managed to keep the overall difference to a minimum, which they then smashed aggressively in the sabre. Captain Agnes Foeglein was par-

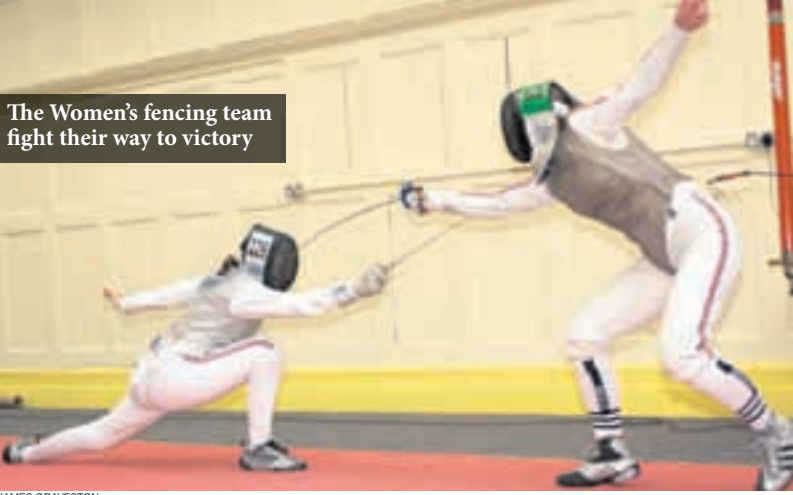
Cambridge men	122
Oxford men	92

ticularly strong in this phase.

With the scores level, there was everything left to play for in the épée and the match remained too close to call. The Blues' star player, GB international Hannah Shackleton, took the lead, only to be caught by her Dark Blue opponent. With just thirty seconds left on the clock, she flèched quickly and repeatedly to steal victory right from underneath the noses of the favourites by a score of 44-41. Those three points were enough to guarantee the overall victory on a satisfying day for the ladies.

The women's seconds were the only Blues team to halt Oxford last year, and were on equally good form this time around. The first bout was abandoned for passivity, but then Emma Lough, who only played at Novice level last year, took the initiative with a high-scoring win.

Taking advantage of Oxford nerves the team produced a confident and accomplished display of fencing. Although the Dark Blues briefly pulled ahead in the sabre, Sarah Scholtz was



The Women's fencing team fight their way to victory

Varsity Preview

Hockey

See the Blues battle it out in the 109th Varsity match next week. The men have had a fantastic season and will be looking to finish in fine style. The women, meanwhile, have lost twice to Oxford so far this season, and will be hoping for a turnaround in fortunes. Either way, there's all to play for.

Tues March 3rd, Women 2pm, Men 4pm, Southgate Hockey Club.

Varsity Preview

Lacrosse

All three first teams are in action this Saturday on the spectator-friendly Parker's Piece. The men have suffered variable form recently, whilst the mixed have twice been thrashed by their Oxford counterparts this year. Only the women look certain for a win, but can they set the tone for a hat-trick of Oxford domination?

Sat Feb 28th, from 12.15pm, Parker's Piece.

Varsity Preview

Women's Football

The last two Varsity confrontations have ended in penalties, with Oxford taking the honours the first time around but Cambridge coming back for last year's title. The Blues will be hoping for a smoother ride in this year's match. The Eagles, on the other hand, will be hoping for a repeat performance of last year's whitewash.

Sat Feb 28th, Eagles 10.30am at Grange Road, Blues 2pm at Fenners.

Varsity Preview

Rugby League

The Blues have had a cracking season. With just two losses to their names since October and an impressively high scoring rate, they travel to the home of the Harlequins in high spirits. Their Oxford counterparts have had a more erratic time of it lately, but funny things happen in Varsity Matches. Nothing's certain.

Thurs March 5th, 7pm, Twickenham Stoop.

Quick Catch-up

Varsity Catch-up

Trampolining

For the third time in the last four years, Cambridge defeated Oxford to win the trampolining varsity match on Saturday.

Cambridge showed its considerable depth, dominating the C team competition. All four Cambridge bouncers completed their routines to a high standard and Suzanne Tobin took the individual competition.

As the B team competition started, Oxford reminded the Cambridge team that they meant business. They demonstrated the importance of finishing all ten skills. A strong individual performance by Cambridge's Brioney Gee wasn't enough and Oxford snuck home by 0.9 points.

All competitors performed strongly in the A team compulsory routines, leaving the teams tied going into the voluntary. Bouncing first Carol Evans started Cambridge on a positive note. Next, Nuala Tumelty performed near to her best routine and Cambridge held a narrow lead. Kate Bramall maintained the standard by finishing a well controlled voluntary routine. With the Oxford captain and veteran, Jenny Crowter, to bounce last, Cambridge was relying on its final bouncer, GB representative, Asha Bayliss. Bayliss completed a strong routine with a total difficulty of 9.1 (the equal highest ever in a Varsity Match), sparking jubilant scenes amongst the Cambridge crowd. After four strong Cambridge routines, there was little Crowter could do to influence the result. She completed an almost flawless routine to claim the A team individual trophy and finish off the highest standard varsity match in the history of the competition, but the Cambridge team took the A team victory, and the match, by 2.5 points.

The win will boost the confidence of the Cambridge A and B teams as they prepare for BUCS finals in Bristol on March 22nd 2009.

Varsity Catch-up

Rock Climbing

This was only the fifth rock-climbing Varsity Match and, bar one minor blip, Cambridge has taken victory at every recorded encounter. The Cambridge team was somewhat apprehensive; Oxford has access to a good training wall in their city and always put out a strong team. The match did not disappoint. Once the four male scores and two female scores were added together Cambridge had come through to win with a score of 2200 over Oxford's total of 2140. Performance of the day has to go to Ben Safdi who dominated the men's category beating his nearest Oxford rival by 175 points. Fred Lyon took second place for Cambridge. Nika Engberg won the women's category, cementing a whitewash of individual wins. We look forward to the BUCS meeting.

Sport



Sailing wonder Sam Davies...

Jenny Morgan interviews the
Vendee Globe success story,
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VARSITY MATCH RUNNING TOTAL: CAMBRIDGE 11, OXFORD 9. NEXT UP: HOCKEY, LACROSSE, RUGBY LEAGUE, WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Cam comeback in netball Varsity

» Harriet McGrath's netballers storm ahead in the second half to steal the Varsity honours

Jenny Morgan

I used to play netball, back in the day. I know my shoulder pass from my elbow. But my, how things have changed. The passion and the power exhibited in sixty breathtaking minutes of hard and nasty netball on Saturday were nothing like my plimsolls and gym-knickers version. This was something else. And it was fantastic to watch.

Cambridge were the first to take the lead, a cheeky interception followed by an obstruction by the Oxford keeper handed an easy penalty shot to the Cambridge attack. But it was not to last. Oxford called for calm in the frenzy of the first few minutes, and were soon rewarded with their own penalty which they duly put away.

The play switched continuously from one end to the other in a fast and exciting first quarter. Perhaps getting a little too frenetic, the Cambridge passing quickly started to go awry, and the sharp shooters from Oxford were punishing every slip in accuracy.

Soon the visitors had pulled ahead by two, but a great interception from the Cambridge keeper Emma Rowley gave the Light Blue attack the chance to hit back. Captain Harriet McGrath was getting a hand to everything at centre but it was not quite enough to disrupt the Oxford possession for anything more than a fleeting instance. As the whistle went for the first fifteen, Cambridge trailed with four goals to Oxford's six.

But Cambridge were straight back into the game, drawing level shortly after the restart. Taking advantage of the Oxford ill-discipline in defence, the attacking duo of Rebecca Crawshaw and Jo Nicholson worked well around the post and kept popping away the shots to stay just one or two behind for the next ten minutes.

Oxford were now looking more controlled and clinical, making their way methodically up the court to pull further ahead just before half time. But somehow Cambridge dug deep and clawed it back to a level fourteen all in time for the break.

Cambridge	34
Oxford	31

Hot off the restart once more, this time Cambridge took the lead within seconds. Wing attack Emma Darke was on hand to deliver the ball beautifully under the post for her shooters, something Oxford would struggle with for the rest of the match. With Jess McGeorge substituted on at goal attack making the most of the neat feeds into the attacking circle, the goals kept coming and Cambridge kept the lead.

The game turned into a physical battle in this third and crucial quarter. Players on both sides were repeatedly pulled up for contact, and the penalties racked up at both ends. In fact the Oxford captain and her opposite player were warned several times that they needed to calm down or risk further disciplining.

Then, with seven seconds left on the clock, McGrath went down injured after an off-the-ball encounter to gasps from the home crowd. Pulling herself up until the whistle went, her team were still only two goals ahead; there was still a lot to play for.

But the final quarter was a time for Cambridge to finally turn the screw. Pulling further ahead immediately, they put five and then six goals between themselves and the Dark Blues. Oxford were struggling with some erratic shooting, and the Cambridge defence were hot on the rebounds to send it straight back down to the other end where McGeorge and Crawshaw were waiting with open arms.

With just four minutes to go, at 31-27 to the Light Blues it looked like it was all over. Credit must go to Oxford for fighting right to the end, putting the last shot away just ten seconds from the final whistle. But it was not to be, and as the Dark Blue captain sank to her knees, the sports hall erupted for the Light Blue victory.



Cambridge's Emma Rowley defends her goal

The netball had been fast and furious, with both teams equally hungry for the victory. If the two enemies continue in this vein, here's looking forward to next year's encounter.

Mention must go to the seconds who played a tough opposition earlier in the day, just losing out by two goals in an equally close and exciting Varsity confrontation.

View from the River

Silas Stafford



The London Tideway, where the Cambridge-Oxford Boat Race is held, is hands down the worst piece of water I have ever rowed on. If you combined the worst aspect of everywhere I have rowed, you would get the tideway.

It has the floating condoms and hypodermic syringes, it has the corkscrew bendiness, it has the never-ending flow of boat traffic, and it has the fierce wind-churned waves. Add to that the ripping and reversing tidal currents. Add to that the fact that somebody thought it was a good idea to change traffic patterns with every tide.

This past weekend we trained in London. After a couple of calm technical rows, we did full rate pieces over the racecourse. As we launched, moderate winds agitated the waters, but it was manageable. We warmed up though the increasing winds, and pulled up ready to the start-line.

Never before in rowing has it occurred to me that experienced rowers could capsize an eight-man shell. It did now. Waves came crashing over the low gunnels, ramped up to head height by their impacts with the riggers. Mashing my knuckles into the gunnels became inevitable as the waves clipped my oar. The only thing I could think about was putting my oar in the water and driving the legs. As we rounded Hammersmith bridge, the water calmed as quickly as it had risen, leaving us exasperated and easily afloat with six inches of water in the bottom of the boat.

I think the tideway's astringency has much to do with its promiscuity. World-class athletes travel halfway around the world to train there. There is a sense that if you can row on the tideway, you can row anywhere.

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