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Our critics round-up the best events of this summer: a nod to what we loved when the sun still shone



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After an historic win in cricket, a look through the sporting annals to celebrate this summer's victory



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Star of The Inbetweeners and Footlights alumni Simon Bird on leaving Cambridge and going back to school



VARSlTY

Friday October 2 2009

The Independent Student Newspaper since 1947

Issue no 700 | varsity.co.uk

Admissions '09: still selective



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MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

- » 1 in 3 state-educated freshers went to grammar school
- » 12 per cent of new students come from the top 20 secondary schools

Beth Staton and Emma Mustich
News Editors

Students from non-grammar state schools are still struggling to get into Cambridge. New admissions figures for 2009, compiled by *Varsity*, reveal a significant access gap in the state sector between grammar and non-grammar school students.

Admissions head Geoff Parks claimed the findings are testament to the fact that "selective education works".

Although Cambridge's admissions statistics usually stress the split between independent and 'maintained' schools, the new figures show a more complicated picture. Whilst 48% per cent of this year's

intake came from state schools, the proportion of state school students is dominated by students coming from successful and selective grammar schools, to a degree inconsonant with national figures.

Of all state-educated students matriculating this week, 34 per cent were educated at grammar schools. Nationally, just 3.8 per cent of students attend these academically selective institutions, which are only provided in 36 Local Authorities.

Of the 2,999 British-educated freshers, just 717 (24 per cent) are from non-grammar state schools, despite the fact that, based on figures from the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and the Sutton Trust, such students make up 90 per cent of the national school leaving population.

Dr Parks, whose tenure at the Admissions Office has seen the scrapping of Cambridge's separate Cambridge Application Form and the attached fee, said the statistics highlighted the complexity of achieving equality in British education.

"It's very clear that a young person will thrive if there's competition within the school they're in," he told *Varsity*. "At grammar schools and independent schools there is an expectation of going to university; effectively once students are through the door they're in a system that will make them into a competitive applicant, and very little can go wrong."

"They are limited only by their own ability, whereas at some comprehensive schools there's less support,

students may be put off applying, and so on."

An impressive 70 per cent of the UK's 233 remaining grammar schools have sent pupils to Cambridge this year, and the average grammar school fresher can expect to be accompanied by two or three classmates. On the other hand, a significant minority of the UK's over 3,000 'mainstream' non-grammar state schools sent pupils to the University, and those that did sent an average of 1.7.

The findings echo those of previous years. Results for 2008, published in the University Reporter this April, show that last year 33 per cent of applications from grammar schools were successful, compared with a 25 per cent success rate for

Continued on page 5

King's Dean found dead

Varsity News Team

Glasgow-born Reverend Ian Thompson, former Dean of King's College Chapel, was found dead from asphyxiation in a suspected suicide at his home in Great Shelford last Thursday. Cambridgeshire police have said that they are not treating his death as suspicious.

Mr Thompson, 50, was ordained in 1994 and spent five years with the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney. He became Dean of Chapel at King's College in 2005, having previously held posts at Selwyn and Newnham Colleges.

In a statement, his widow Ann spoke of the affection in which his colleagues and friends held him, testified by the hundreds of cards and messages she has received. Mr Thompson's yearly readings at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols were familiar to millions.

A Strathclyde Police source has confirmed that in 2007 a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal in connection with "historical indecencies" allegedly committed by Mr Thompson in Ayrshire.

Scotland's Crown Office has since confirmed that the late clergyman was under investigation for allegations of sexual assault. A spokesman said: "We can confirm that the Procurator Fiscal in Kilmarnock received a report on December 4 2007 relating to Ian Thompson, in connection with incidents in the 1980s and 1990s."

Tributes page 4

Mary Midgely
Darwin and his betrayal at the hands of Dawkins.

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In Brief

Law Professor argues for lower age of consent

Speaking last week on Radio 4's 'Iconoclasts' programme, law professor John Spencer, a Fellow of Selwyn College, called for the age of consent to be lowered.

Spencer argued that the current age of consent criminalises "half the population": "In theory, the paedophile offences in the Sexual Offences Act make criminals... out of normal children and young persons, for doing things that children and young persons often do, and no sane person thinks are seriously wrong."

MPs including Ann Widdecombe and David Davies have objected to the argument, as have many religious organisations, including some who argued that the debate should never have been aired on the BBC.

Judge Business School in Abu Dhabi

Cambridge University's Judge Business School has joined forces with UAE University's College of Business and Economics to establish and support a centre for executive education in Abu Dhabi. Open enrolment will commence in 2010 with each university providing customised programmes for students and industry representatives.

Varsity at the Guardian Student Media Awards

Seven Varsity staff writers have been shortlisted for Guardian Student Media Awards based on work they did for the paper last year. Zing Tsjeng (Emmanuel) and Decca Muldowney (King's) were shortlisted for Best Student Features Writer; former Editor Michael Stothard (Homerton) for Best News Reporter; Andrew Spyrou (Churchill) for Best Critic; and Charlotte Runcie (Queens') and current Editor Robert Peal (Sidney Sussex) for Best Columnist. The winners of each award will be announced at a ceremony in London on November 25.



» A 70-foot mural, drawn by Quentin Blake to celebrate the University's 800th Anniversary, was unveiled at Addenbrooke's this week. Each of the mural's 15 panels, one of which is shown here, depicts a different stage in the history of the University. To see more, visit www.800.cam.ac.uk.

University prepares for potential swine flu outbreak

Gemma Oke
Senior Reporter

New guidelines for students and Colleges have been prepared in anticipation of a second wave of swine flu cases as students return to Cambridge for the new term.

College guides state that affected students should be quarantined and will not be admitted to hospital or routinely visited by a doctor or nurse "unless very unwell." They should rely on friends for medicine and food.

Advice for students emphasises the importance of good hygiene practices, and suggests that all students purchase a personal supply of over-the-counter flu medication and a thermometer to help identify and alleviate symptoms of the virus. Colleges are expected to distribute 'flu packs', including face masks and self-care instructions, to students who fall ill.

Students who think they have swine flu are asked to contact their Porter's Lodge and the National Pandemic Flu Service to confirm

their symptoms. Anti-viral medication such as Tamiflu can be collected at Chesterton Hospital by nominated 'flu friends', who should provide proof of their own and the affected student's identity.

A spokesperson for the University told Varsity it is "likely" that more antiviral collection points will be established, but that their location was as yet unconfirmed.

He continued, "It is predicted that we will see a significant upturn in cases around the start of October when students return to Colleges, in line with the national pattern. This is why the Swine Flu Working Group has been meeting regularly over the summer to make sure our plans are robust and well-communicated".

"The College system is ideal for coping with the spread of the disease as good pastoral care and advice can be issued quickly and effectively, flu friends can be easily identified. One of the keys to coping with the situation is that there are effective communication channels which is just what the collegiate system provides."

One third of Trinity students achieved firsts this year, taking the College to the top of the table for the first time in 11 years.

Eight Colleges retained their position on the table, 11 dropped places, and ten increased their standing.

Sidney Sussex suffered the biggest fall this year, dropping eight places from 14 to 22.

TOMPKINS TABLE 2009			
Ranking (2008)	College	Tompkins Score	% Firsts
1 (3)	Trinity	68.83%	33.40%
2 (2)	Emmanuel	66.99%	26.20%
3 (1)	Selwyn	66.91%	26.80%
4 (4)	Gonville & Caius	66.85%	26.30%
5 (11)	St. Catharine's	66.58%	27.10%
6 (10)	Pembroke	66.00%	28.10%
7 (6)	Churchill	65.48%	25.40%
8 (5)	Magdalene	65.35%	23.30%
9 (15)	Trinity Hall	65.03%	22.90%
10 (9)	Corpus Christi	64.88%	22.00%
11 (7)	Jesus	64.81%	21.50%
12 (16)	Queens'	64.08%	23.10%
13 (8)	Christ's	63.88%	23.20%
14 (20)	St. John's	63.51%	21.20%
15 (12)	Downing	63.44%	19.70%
16 (17)	Peterhouse	62.99%	23.60%
17 (19)	King's	62.24%	20.20%
18 (13)	Clare	62.18%	19.70%
19 (18)	Robinson	62.16%	20.10%
20 (22)	Girton	61.80%	17.30%
21 (21)	Fitzwilliam	61.23%	18.30%
22 (14)	Sidney Sussex	60.75%	14.40%
23 (23)	New Hall	60.30%	15.70%
24 (24)	Newnham	58.98%	12.20%
25 (25)	Homerton	58.25%	13.10%
26 (26)	Hughes Hall	56.30%	16.70%
27 (27)	Wolfson	55.03%	7.90%
28 (29)	St Edmund's	52.96%	9.40%
29 (28)	Lucy Cavendish	52.90%	6.70%

Trinity tops Tompkins

Trinity have topped the Tompkins table for the first time in 11 years, with over one third of its students achieving firsts. The table, compiled for The Independent, allocates a score of 100 per cent for candidates achieving a first, 60 per cent for a 2-1, 40 per cent for a 2-2 and 20 per cent for a third.

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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Banned US shock jock to speak at the Union

Helen Mackreath
Senior Reporter

Dr. Michael Savage, a controversial right-wing American radio host and political commentator, is scheduled to speak at the Union Society

on October 15 this term. Savage's invitation came despite the fact that he is officially banned from entering the UK under a dictate imposed by Jacqui Smith in May of this year.

Savage has been invited to argue for the Opposition in a debate on the motion, 'This House Believes

Political Correctness is Sane and Necessary'. In his invitation letter to Savage, Union President-elect Jon Laurence described Savage as "more qualified than anyone to talk about the subject of political correctness in America and Britain".

Savage will be debating alongside family campaigner Lynette Burrows and Conservative MP Ann Widdecombe, and against New Statesman Senior Editor Mehdi Hasan, Times columnist David Aaronovitch, and blogger Robert Sharp.

The fact that Savage is not allowed into the UK means that his appearance at the Union will have to be made via live video link from San Francisco. Other public figures to speak to the Union via video link in recent years include the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi.

Savage has gained notoriety as the outspoken presenter of America's third most popular radio programme, 'The Savage Nation', which receives a regular audience of eight to ten million listeners across the US. A self-proclaimed "conservative nationalist", Savage has voiced strident opinions against illegal immigration and in support of the English-only movement (for the establishment of English as the

official language within the US). He has angered numerous communities in America with his fiery rhetoric; for example, he alienated the autistic community in 2008 by claiming that increases in autism diagnoses were the result of attempts to gain disability payments by "poorer families who have found a new way to be parasites on the government", and crossed the Roman Catholic Church in 2006 accusing them of giving assistance to undocumented immigrants.

The confrontational style of his delivery and the radical nature of his views have led some other commentators to accuse him of "fostering extremism or hatred"; his perceived threat in this regard led him in May 2009 to be listed as one of sixteen people banned from entering the United Kingdom. A spokesperson for the Home Secretary at the time accused Savage of "abus[ing] our standards and values to undermine our way of life".

Savage accrued greater press coverage in the UK for his resulting threat to sue the then Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, for what he called "substantial damages". Accusing her of circulating "false and defamatory" material about

him, Savage demanded £100,000 and a personal apology from Smith, according to the Mail on Sunday, which reported the story at the time. Savage also encouraged his radio listeners to boycott British products.

Many commentators in Britain have questioned the wisdom of banning a symbol (however extreme) of free speech, claiming the move reflects a growing obsession with political correctness in Britain. However, as of the date of this writing, Savage remains officially banned from entering the country.

Some of Savage's supporters have vocally encouraged him to take part in the Union debate, arguing that it provides him with a dramatic forum for his views. In his online blog, Ellis Washington, Savage's authorized biographer, has urged his "Prometheus" to "go to Cambridge University... and bring sanity and Reason back to England and America". He also glorifies Savage as "our gladiator in the arena of ideas who will wage intellectual battle against the socialist barbarians who have prevented him from stepping foot on their land".

PhD student detained at Tel Aviv airport

Beth Staton
News Editor

A Chemistry PhD student from Darwin College was recently detained in the airport at Tel Aviv for 19 hours while attempting to visit his grandparents in Israel.

Jameel Zayed, who was travelling with his brother, was held at the Israeli airport for nine hours before being moved to a cell at a detention centre.

He describes being repeatedly interrogated and strip searched before he and his brother, who are both British citizens and live in Cornwall, were sent back to the UK.

No explanation of the decision to send the brothers home was given by Israeli officials, who told the men only that they were being forced to leave "for security reasons".

Jameel, who says he visits Israel at least once every two years, said that his detention for five or six hours of luggage checks and questioning is routine when travelling to the country. However, this was the first

time he was held for longer than that, and the first time he has been sent home.

Whilst he and his brother were in custody, authorities confiscated their electronic equipment, including the men's SIM cards, took apart both men's luggage, and obtained fingerprints and other personal data.

Mr Zayed describes a "vitriolic" interrogation, in which his interrogator assumed that he was of Palestinian origin and singled him out for his study of Chemistry. "As soon as I said I was a chemist the interrogator said I was getting more interesting by the minute, that she had been thinking of letting me in but was now changing her mind," Jameel reports.

"My supervisor and I have a grant with the British Council to do research in Israel next year. What am I going to do when I get to Tel Aviv airport – are they going to turn me away?"

"No reasons are being given to us, or the British Embassy staff" he says. "Even if I apply for a visa I have no way of knowing whether I'll be let in next time I visit."

Visa processing delays are obstacle for overseas students

Matthew Symington
Senior Reporter

A delay in the processing of student visa applications means that many overseas students admitted to Cambridge University this year will be unable to enter Britain in time to begin their studies.

Stringent new visa regulations introduced in April by the UK Border Agency to prevent bogus students entering the country have led to a greater than ever amount of international students having their visa applications refused, as well as a massive backlog of applications still unprocessed.

The new regulations require overseas students to fill out a complex application form, provide letters of approval from their sponsoring institution and also submit biometric data - 10 digit finger scans and a digital photograph - at their nearest British Embassy.

The Cambridge Colleges have agreed that undergraduates facing problems entering the country will be given until November 3 to begin their studies, after which time students still refused entry will have to discuss possibility of deferral until October 2010. Entry deadlines for MPhil and one-year research students are to be set by their Departments.

The implementation of the new visa regulations in April of this year met with grave concern from most British universities and independent schools. Vice-chancellors from

several of Britain's leading universities travelled to Beijing to discuss the issue with the British Ambassador there amid fears that Asian students were being put off from applying to British universities.

Speaking to *The Times* in June, Dominic Scott, chief executive of the UK Council for International Students, said refusal rates in the

first two months of the new system were in excess of 60 per cent: "This is not about counter terrorism, it's not about illegal immigration, it's about well-qualified students who have failed on some very small technicality of the application process, it has put some very powerful and damaging messages around the world."



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The Reverend Ian Thompson, 1959-2009

The Reverend Ian Thompson was one of the first people I encountered when I arrived at King's. He was the dean of both our College and its chapel and I was not surprised to meet a person of authority and faith. But Ian was a lot more than that. He was a bright and caring man, committed to his students until the last day; he was a friend. I will miss our stimulating discussions that would more than often go beyond strictly College matters: the stories about his travels to Greece, the meaning of tradition and change, the importance of a tolerant and open community. King's will not be the same without him. Goodbye, Ian.

*Aris Komporozos-Athanasiou
President, King's MCR*

Among his many other duties and roles, Ian found time to be a member of the Cambridge University Boat Club Committee, and to be Senior Treasurer of the Cambridge University Combined Boat Clubs.

Ian worked hard for the benefit of rowing in Cambridge. He was active in establishing excellent working relationships and cooperation with the Town rowing clubs, essential (though previously sadly neglected) if Town and Gown are successfully to share Cambridge's most important recreational facility, the River Cam. More than anything, this will be the lasting testament to Ian's foresight and talent for getting things done.

He was an extraordinarily talented and gifted man, who made a big impact on very many aspects of Cambridge life other than down on the river. He led a very full life here, and his enthusiasm, professionalism, and sheer ability ensured that he succeeded in all his ventures and projects. He will be sorely missed.

*Dick Pryce-Jones
Executive Secretary, CUCBC*

Ian meant a lot of things to a lot of people. He was a great support to the choir and Chapel, a rowing coach to those in King's and outside, a great friend and mentor to his Theology students and a figure of authority who seemed to effortlessly combine a whole host of roles. As Lay and Chapel Dean he brought the two sides of the court and College closer together. A tolerant, caring and open-minded person he symbolised all that was best about the College. He will be sorely missed whether in Chapel, on the rowing lake, or in the early hours of the morning looking over things at the termly mingle.

*James Kanagasooriam
King's College Choir*

It is difficult to talk about Ian as a College Chaplain without falling into superlatives. His humanity, compassion and zest for life shone through everything. Hundreds of students and staff will remember Ian for a cheerful greeting, a fabulous sense

of humour and a profound concern for them as human beings. On the first night of each Freshers' Week at Selwyn, Ian would arrive in the bar having learnt the name of every single new student. I remember him driving through the night, four hours out of his way, to drop me off in the rural wilds of north Norfolk after two friends' wedding in Kent! But Ian's cheerfulness and kindness were not ephemeral – they were grounded in a genuine interest in others, and a delight in creating and sustaining community. Ian had a profound sense of justice and compassion; his was the Christianity of justice for the poor, and healing for the sick.

To porters, bedders, kitchen staff, fellows and students he was always dependable, trustworthy, solid "Ian". His faith was deeply orthodox, and his priesthood sacramental, but this was exercised as much in the bar as at the Altar. Christianity was credible with Ian Thompson because his humanity matched the depth of his faith.

The Reverend Dr Jamie Hawkey

It is with the greatest regret that the College announces the death of the Dean, the Reverend Ian Thompson. He was a man of wisdom, energy and great compassion, and his loss will be most keenly felt by all members of the College and the University, as well as by his wide circle of friends.

*Reverend Richard Lloyd Morgan
King's College Chaplain*



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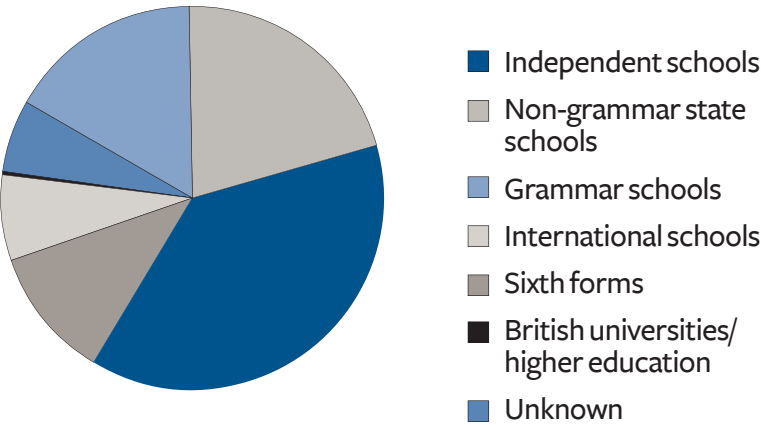
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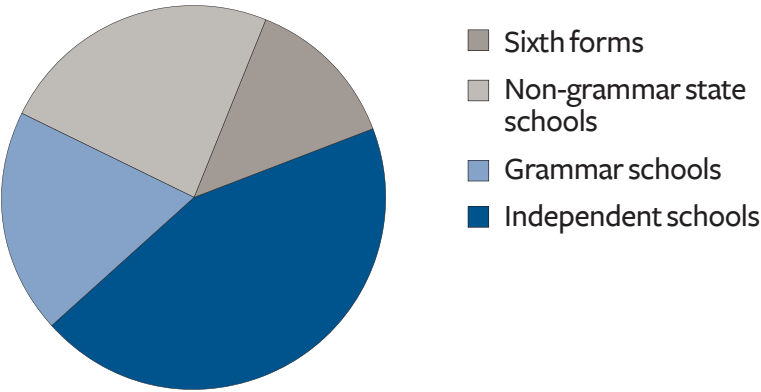
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Admissions 2009: the breakdown

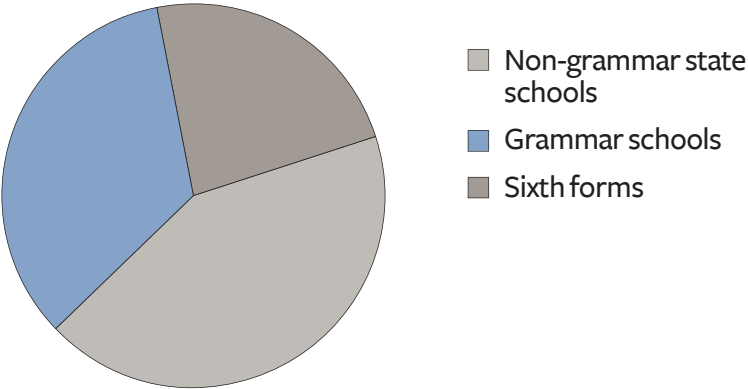
»All confirmed offer-holders, September 2009



»Offer-holders from British schools



»Offer-holders from British state schools



Continued from page 1.

'comprehensive' school students who applied. Independent school students, popularly considered the most likely to get into Oxbridge, had an application success rate of only 32 per cent.

According to the Sutton Trust, grammar school students in England comprise about 3.8 per cent of state-educated 11-16-year-olds. Since Wales and Scotland no longer have grammar schools, but Northern Ireland has a disproportionately high number (69 in total), we have taken this as the British figure.

The number of independent school students with confirmed offers is still disproportionate to the national makeup. 44 per cent of new British educated students are from independent schools in the UK, despite the fact that, according to the ISC, only 6.5 per cent of all British students are educated privately. 38 per cent of the total 3,464 students were from the British independent sector.

A further seven per cent of new students come from overseas. Approximately six per cent of students applied independently of an institution.

The predominance in these figures of fee-paying 'feeder' schools, which traditionally send large numbers of students to the University, is marked. Just over 12 per cent of students come from the top 20 institutions to gain places. Of those 20 schools, 14 are fee-paying and only one further north than Cambridgeshire. Six in the top

20 are grammar schools in Greater London and Essex, and two are sixth form colleges.

The position of some non-fee-paying schools in the top 20 highlight the discrepancies between prestigious state institutions, such as Hills Road Sixth Form College in Cambridge, which dominate admissions, and other 'comprehensive' schools which have no marked presence in the best Universities. Evidence also suggests a higher proportion of 'middle class' students in grammar schools. According to the Sutton Trust, 12 per cent of students in non-grammar state schools are eligible for free school meals. In grammar schools the figure is 2 per cent.

In addition to the grammar/non-grammar school divide, the state sector is complicated in further ways rarely demonstrated by official admissions statistics. Of all state-funded schools sending pupils to Cambridge, a large proportion have received above average commendations in Ofsted inspections. Similarly, those non-grammar state schools which are oversubscribed, and find themselves with too many applications per place, must necessarily employ some selection procedure to discern between potential pupils. They excel as a result. St Marylebone Church of England School in Westminster, for example, received eight applications per place in 2008, and sent six pupils to Cambridge this year. Recognising the ever complex nature of the access situation, Dr Parks said the Admissions Office took into account the polity of the student's school. "The situation is more complicated than just state or independent," he said. "A child coming from a very good, over-subscribed comprehensive school, or an established and successful college like Hills Road, will have had a similar level of support as those from independent or grammar

schools," he said.

"What this does show us is that we need to work more cleverly to improve the access situation in Cambridge, working with schools to identify those able students and the ways they can be further supported."

In response to these statements, CUSU Access Officer Joe Farish said, "We have seen a steady increase in Cambridge's state school intake over the past few years. CUSU is working hard to ensure this trend continues."

The figures used in this article were derived from information released to *Varsity* through the Freedom of Information Act. The information listed the most recent schools of all applicants "who have met the conditions of their offer and have not subsequently withdrawn or deferred their place as of 22 September 2009", and is based on UCAS data.

Definitions

A *maintained* school is supported at least in part by money from the state. Our category of 'other maintained' schools includes all state-funded schools that are not designated as grammar schools by the Department of Children, Families and Schools (DCFS) or the Northern Irish Department of Education.

There are six categories of 'maintained' school: Academies, Foundation Schools, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, Community Schools, and City Technology Colleges.

Grammar schools, of which there are 164 in England and 69 in Northern Ireland, are designated selective by the DCSF/Northern Irish Department of Education. They are not fee-paying.

Independent schools receive no money from the Government.

717
Number of students coming to Cambridge this year from non-grammar state schools

70%
Percentage of UK grammar schools which sent pupils to Cambridge this year

Profile: Westminster School

Westminster is set in the centre of London, surrounded by the famous Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. The school is not included in national or league tables. Pupils sit the Cambridge pre-U examination as well as A-levels. Last year, 90% of A-Levels achieved by Westminster students were A grade, and 2007 saw a remarkable 80 out of 193 pupils go on to Oxbridge, with the majority of the remaining students attending Russell Group Institutions.



Profile: London Oratory

The London Oratory is a secondary comprehensive school in Fulham. Like Westminster, the Oratory is co-educational from age 16. The school's admissions process is influenced by its Roman Catholic 'voluntary aided' status. Its 160 first form places are given in the first instance without reference to ability, but in the event of oversubscription priority is given to Catholic pupils according to criteria including attendance at Mass and residence in the Oratory parish. Over the past five years, access investigations have found the school guilty of breaching admissions codes by interviewing prospective pupils and their parents.

This year, five freshers are coming to Cambridge from the London Oratory.

Profile: Hills Road

An exclusively A Level college which charges no fees for entry, Hills Road sent 32 of around 900 students to Cambridge, and usually sends slightly more to Oxford. To gain admission to the oversubscribed college, students need to achieve a B GCSE in their chosen subjects, a higher grade than usually required for sixth forms. About 12 to 14 per cent of its intake comes from independent schools and amongst those who go on to Oxbridge the independent school proportion is the same. Assistant Principal Nigel Taylor attributed much of the school's success to an adult learning environment where bright pupils are challenged, and said any pupil who wished to apply to Oxford or Cambridge is encouraged to do so. We've got a 'have a go' approach which helps to demystify Oxbridge."

Top 20 schools for admission 2009			
School	Places	Day cost (per year)	Location
Westminster School	32	£19,626	London
Hills Road Sixth Form College	32	£0	Cambridgeshire
St Paul's Girls School	26	£15,165	London
North London Collegiate School	24	£11,925	London
Raffles Junior College	24	£133**	Singapore
Sevenoaks School	24	£16,413	Kent
Eton College	23	£28,080*	Berkshire
Queen Elizabeth's School	22	£0	London
Tonbridge School	21	£21,537	Surrey
Manchester Grammar School	19	£9,240	Manchester
Peter Symonds College	19	£0	Hampshire
Hwa Chong Institution	18	£89**	Singapore
Royal Grammar School, Guildford	18	£12,462	Kent
The Latymer School	18	£0	London
Magdalen College, Oxford	18	£12,627	Oxfordshire
St Paul's School	17	£17,388	London
Colchester Royal Grammar School	17	£0	Essex
Winchester College	16	£27,405	Hampshire
The Tiffin Girls School	16	£0	Surrey
Oundle School	15	£16,515	Cambridgeshire

*Boarding only

**Per month

Politico



CUSU Explained

Following an intense and widely reported election for the CUSU presidency, our students' union does appear to have a certain freshness to it this year. This, in spite of the fact that three of the six sabbatical officers were elected uncontested, including our new figurehead, Tom Chigbo, whose competitor Guolong Li pulled out of the elections amid accusations of homophobia.

The "Sabbs" are, in their own words, "responsible for the day to day management of affairs" along with thirty elected, non-sabbatical student executives and more experienced permanent staff members who oversee business direction and Ents.

CUSU was originally formed in the 1960s as an amalgamation of individual Colleges' JCRs but has come a long way since. The organisation acquired its first sabbatical president in 1970 and was finally recognised by the University in 1984. Commanding a budget of £400,000, and with such a large taskforce, it carries much clout. Whether it ultimately has a tangible effect on our University lives, however, is a contentious issue with the recent bitter collapse of CUSU Ents eliminating what many saw as its principal function. Nonetheless, they certainly get some things right. CUSU's Access campaign can be singled out for both high aspirations and strong results.

Still, challenges remain. Unlike nearly every other students' union in the country, CUSU lacks a campus bar to create a physical hub for the University. Furthermore, providing student representation, welfare support and Ents, as individual JCRs do, CUSU struggles to remain relevant in an environment where every student has a union they can relate to at the closer College level.

To keep you in the loop, this column will report on the fortnightly meetings of the CUSU Council, the legislative body of the union, which sets directives and policy for the "Sabbs" to enact.

A fiery term in the crucible of Cambridge student politics? Long Monday nights coming soon to a cold college auditorium near you? Bated breath.

OLIMCFARLANE

Varsity Profile: Suranga Chandratillake

» CEO and co-founder of Blinkx, the "remote control for internet video"

Nine years after graduating, Suranga Chandratillake has worked in investment banking, R&D and consultancy, as well as founding Blinkx. And "the best period of my life" is still how he describes his time at Cambridge. "Cambridge teaches you how to juggle lots of different things", comments Chandratillake, a former Editor of *Varsity*.

This entrepreneur's story should be an inspiration for the Credit Crunch generation. Finishing his degree when the dotcom bubble was at its zenith, there were "lots of options" for a CompSci but Chandratillake was laid off three months into his job when the bubble burst. "That experience makes you very opportunistic", he says, with the benefit of hindsight and nine years having cooled the passions of disillusionment. "The job you take on graduation is no monumental decision. Try out different things," he recommends.

In Chandratillake's view, the internet will become "the conduit to our media experience". With a few competing channels, "television is set up to create a few popular shows" where the internet offers variety. In fact, the coup of the internet has already begun. "It's phenomenal" that Google, only 13 years old, has become "the biggest media company" in the world by stock-market valuation.

Now CEO of the world's most comprehensive video search engine,

he believes that images and video are the future because "we're all visual beasts". Blinkx's edge lies firstly in "being agnostic on content and

39 million

Hours of video indexed and fully searchable on the website

111

Patents protecting Blinkx's technology

quality", only censoring reported or pirated items. Secondly, rather than keyword search, Blinkx's technology is like "a pulse-taking of what's going on in the internet" using advanced speech recognition systems. With web content burgeoning, an accurate search-engine is invaluable, ensuring that when I search *The Hills* my pathetic Saturday night plans aren't interrupted by an onslaught of geomorphological documentaries.

Afraid of being too Jeremy Paxman and not enough Michael Parkinson, I refrain from enquiring after the company's balance sheet, which is still in the red. But Chandratillake satisfies my intrigue without instigation, stating that the company is growing at an unprecedented rate and breakeven is expected in the next eighteen months.

The area is, indeed, "fascinating".



Trawling the web, Blinkx finds "phrases and names come out of nowhere" as events occur. Five years ago, "Barack Obama" wasn't a common search item and "Fallujah" would have been as familiar to a San Francisco speech recognition system as Bognor Regis is to Fallujah's population.

Chandratillake was labelled Young Global Leader Honoree by the World

Economic Forum this year, but says his start-up was no "monumental decision". "I just saw a gap in the market", he said. And he encourages others: "Try running your own business. What's the worst that could happen?"

AVANTIKA CHILKOTI
Blinkx is currently hiring in Cambridge. For details, contact Kat Malinowska at kat@blinkx.com

Hi! Society: Shadwell Opera

» Shadwell's *Magic Flute* wins a Herald Angel Award at Edinburgh Festival

Shadwell Opera, a company of Cambridge students set up less than a year ago, have been awarded a prestigious Herald Angel Award for their production of Mozart's *Magic Flute* at the Edinburgh Festival. This accolade, along with a string of first-class reviews, was the result of months of hard graft from the 53 cast and orchestral members.

The student-run company was set up in January 2009 by Jack Furness and Aidan Coburn, Music students at Gonville and Caius and named after 17th century poet laureate and fellow Caian, Thomas Shadwell. Following the success of their first production *Così fan tutte* which received a 5* *Varsity* review, director Jack Furness chose the witty *Magic Flute* libretto translated by Kit Hesketh-Harvey (Clare alumnus, of *Kit and the Widow* fame). Although the company's main focus is on giving promising singers "the opportunity to take part in operas given to critical, paying audiences", they also endeavor to make opera accessible to younger student audiences through performance in English

and the use of "original, unusual and imaginative venues". After performances at three Cambridge venues (the Cambridge Union, the Master's Garden in St John's, and Gonville and Caius College Hall) to notably youthful audiences, the company took their production to Edinburgh.

It was Hesketh-Harvey's idea to perform at the Masonic Rosslyn Chapel, knowing that the Countess of Rosslyn was keen for such an opera to be staged there. The chapel has become something of a tourist attraction itself since being brought to attention by Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*. This venue was thus ideally suited to Mozart's use of freemasonry symbolism and mystery. The result was a sell-out: "We knew several weeks before we set off that all the performances had sold out, which was both exciting and terrifying and we knew there had been a lot of interest from critics and the media. We even had the *Today* show ring up at one point for an interview. However, no way could we have predicted the critical acclaim that followed, with the

national 5* reviews and then the award which made it worth sleeping on a church hall floor for two weeks," said producer Elly Brindle.

The Herald Angel Awards, sponsored by the Bank of Scotland, have marked out exceptional talent at the largest arts festival in the world since their inception in 1996. Each week of the festival one Herald Angel is awarded. A cursory glance

down the list of past recipients places the Shadwell in reputable company along with the Mighty Boosh and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

As for Shadwell's next move - there are plans in the pipeline for another opera in Lent term, as well as several other offers in the UK and abroad. So, as *The Scotsman* declared, these really are "ones to watch"! ANNA HARPER



»The production team receiving their award at the Edinburgh Festival

University Watch



Edinburgh

As this year's intake of freshers will be the biggest on record, it is not only the loans system that is reeling with the strain. Several universities have sent first-years hunting for private accommodation and put up "no vacancies" signs outside university accommodation. Edinburgh University has been compelled to convert single-bed accommodation at Chancellors Court into doubles fitted with bunk beds and offered to freshers at a discount. A desperate effort to accommodate a rising number of students or a cunning effort to curb Freshers' Week promiscuity?

Exeter

On results day this year, 190 would-be Exeter students suffered the most tumultuous 24 hours since Joyce's *Ulysses*. Their initial excitement on receiving letters of acceptance disappeared later that day when they checked UCAS online to find that they were, in fact, victims of a clerical blunder and had actually been rejected from the university. The students, most of whom had performed exceptionally well in their A-levels, had missed the five days of Clearing but were offered places for 2010. The UCAS equivalent of being dumped by text on February 15th?

Tufts University

The Massachusetts university has enforced a new rule whereby students living on campus are prohibited from "any sex act in a dorm room while one's roommate is present", reported student publication *Tufts Daily*. The new rule requires that any sexual activity in dormitories must not affect the privacy or sleep of roommates. The university's Office of Residential Life and Learning implemented the rule in response to several complaints from students uncomfortable with their roommate's activities. One assumes Edinburgh's constitution will require similar amendment soon enough.

Cambridge Spies



Bells and Ribbons

One member of King's choir, renowned for having the voice of an angel and the penis of an ox, has taken on Cantab status this year, to the dismay of the university's female population. The impressive size of this boatie's package was first confirmed by his Spandex-clad antics at Bumps last term and again in some festive photographs spotted on his phone by his choir-boy peers. Said images found our man with his package decorated, ribbons and all, and showcasing more than just good gift-wrapping skills.

Style comes best not cramped

A larger-than-life theatrical auteur spending his summer contributing to the festivities held at the Athens of the North was lucky enough to secure some minge on the fringe one evening. Despite his drunken state, our auteur's famous charm managed to direct her towards his room, where they proceeded to undress and recline. A blink away from doing the deed he was struck by pain, leapt into the air and fell unconscious on the floor. His baffled seductee, saddened by the evening's un-fulfilment, had questions answered by his screams of "Cramp!" as he fell ingloriously to the floor.

Slash on the lash

This Monday at Fez one outrageous chappy, impatient with intoxication, just couldn't control his bursting bladder. The prospect of mounting an entire two flights of stairs to a proper privy seemed far too much of an exertion for this delightful fellow. How did he escape from this puerile predicament, you ask? Why, he just relieved himself on the bar. Simple enough. Just watch where you put your drink down this Sunday night.

Buckingham

What should you, male university lecturer, do with that girl in class who "flashes her admiration and... asks for advice on her essays"? "Enjoy her! She's a perk." So wrote Buckingham University's Vice-Chancellor Terence Kealey in a recent satirical piece for the Times Higher Education Supplement. Surely the traditional, paltry perks - the free lunches, complimentary parking spaces and the odd bit of

embezzled stationery - should have sufficed. Kealey's piece, "Lust", part of a larger feature on "The Seven Deadly Sins of Academia", has caused a stir for its nonchalance in the face of the Space Age student-teacher sex taboo. In a statement of response he defended his article as "a moral piece" but what is perhaps most alarming is that the article has forced so many academics onto the defensive; it seems Kealey's sex talk may come just a little too close to home.

Oxford

The society formerly known as the Oxford University Conservative Association (OUCA) has been firmly reprimanded following reports of racist jibes at the society's hustings last term. Students standing for election that evening were allegedly invited to tell the most inappropriate joke they could think of. The society, which comprises 700 students from the university, has been forced to

change its name (removing the 'Oxford University' prefix) and has been excluded from the university's Freshers' Fair, banned from recruiting more members next term. Michael Howard has since declined an invitation to speak at the society which will be allowed to re-apply for affiliation with the university once improved conduct has been demonstrated. As former OUCA president Margaret Thatcher might say, 'It's a funny old world.'

College Watch



Sidney Sussex

Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill OBE has been appointed the 25th Master of Sidney Sussex College, taking over the post from Professor Dame Sandra Dawson when her statutory term ended this August.

The new Master's remarkable academic career has featured time at Cambridge, Oxford, Reading and Leicester Universities as well as a stint at Princeton in 1991. He was a Fellow and Director of Studies in Classics at Magdelene and a Joint Lecturer at Jesus.

His accomplishments extend to editing the foremost journal in his field, the *Journal of Roman Studies* and he is currently leading the Herculaneum Conservation Project, which has involved new excavation and made novel discoveries.

In an e-mail to the college's students it was said that Professor Wallace-Hadrill sees his new role as being "at the heart of college life to generate the self confidence of an institution, to promote and build on a convincing shared vision, and to lead a sustained team effort".

He is wished every success for his term as Master.



Kings

At King's College, the traditional role of a bedder is being overhauled this term, bringing the etymology of the title into question.

From provision to laundry, King's students will now have to take full responsibility for their own bedclothes, as students at many other Colleges already do.

However, a variety of "bedding packs" are being offered for purchase at varying prices. At nine pounds for three sheets or fifteen for a whole set, one almost forgets to query the origin and history of this thrifty bedding.



Caius

Yesterday, Stephen Hawking retired from his position as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics after 30 years in the post. The title has been held by the likes of Sir Isaac Newton and Charles Babbage and was first presented in 1664 to Isaac Barrow.

Hawking reaches his 67th birthday this coming January, the age at which policy dictates the post must be handed over. Applications to fill the position are currently being processed by the university.

The station was one of many honours for the fellow of Gonville and Caius College. Hawking holds no less than twelve honorary degrees and received a CBE in 1982 as well as being awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the premier civilian honor in the US, this year.

As well as his genius, Hawking is renowned for his wit. He once commented: "Einstein was wrong when he said God does not play dice. Consideration of black holes suggests, not only that God does play dice, but that He sometimes confuses us by throwing them where they can't be seen."



STEVEN BOND

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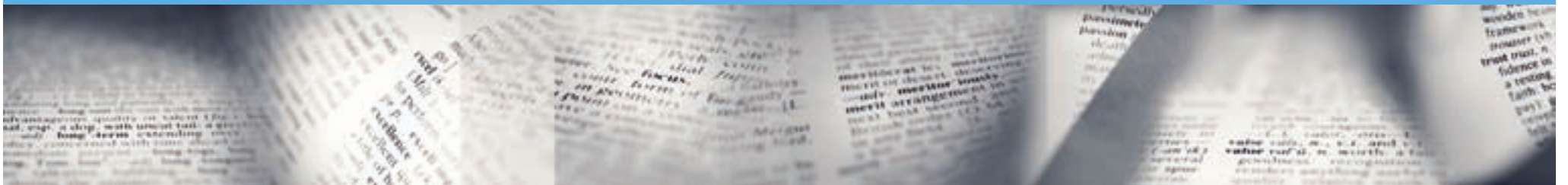
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THE ESSAY: The Mistake About Darwin

The word *Darwinism* now serves as the name of an ideology, a politico-spiritual-moral stance which can readily be used as a battlefield. Considering how much trouble Darwin took to prevent this happening, today's rows may seem a little surprising. But the truth is that science never is really distinct from the rest of thought. Scientists, being human, naturally draw their background assumptions from the life around them. In every age they take for granted large ideas which seem obvious at the time, and they sometimes find it natural to see these as scientific truths.

Thus Newton welcomed certain apparently miraculous aspects of his theory, such as gravitation, because he thought they provided extra proofs of God's existence. And, with equal confidence, today's Dawkinsians welcome Darwin's view on evolution as proving the exact opposite. But since these are not really physical doctrines at all, they cannot be discussed in terms of the physical sciences. They need different conceptual tools.

This entanglement with religion has not, of course, been the first ideological twist to overtake Darwin. Social Darwinism – which ought really to be called Spencerism since it came from Herbert Spencer – carried the message that the 'survival of the fittest' (Spencer's phrase) ought to be imposed on every aspect of human life. Thus, for instance, organized charity was merely misguided self-indulgence. Darwin hated this view. Spencer, however, preached it all over the United States in the 1880s, so effectively that he outsold every other philosopher there during that decade.

Today's neo-Darwinists have moved away from politics to the still more exciting sphere of metaphysics. Here they claim that competitive natural selection is the prime explanatory principle for every kind of process – biological (through genes), social (through memes), and perhaps also cosmological. (Peter Atkins explains, in *The Creation*, that the Big Bang itself resulted from competition – within

150 years after *The Origin of Species*, natural selection has been twisted into a superstitious worldview, says the philosopher MARY MIDGLEY. Modern science – and Darwin's own writings – tell a different story



the previous nothingness – between rival possibilities, the fittest of which eventually prevailed and became real.) Thus the destructive effect of competition is, as Daniel Dennett puts it in *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, a 'universal acid', a kind of explanation that supersedes all other major thought-patterns.

As Richard Dawkins says on page 1 of *The Selfish Gene*, Darwinism has taught us that 'we no longer have to resort to superstition when faced with the big problems; Is there a meaning to life? What are we for? What is man?' And in expounding the ideas that we can use instead, these theorists display a one-sided, melodramatic, fatalistic insistence on the bloody-mindedness of life – a trait which actually links them quite closely to the earlier Social Darwinists. It is none too clear, either, why they do not think that a belief in entities such as memes, or possibilities jousting in space before the dawn of time, is superstitious.

Darwin carefully avoided all vast moral and metaphysical speculation, because he thought the world

was genuinely mysterious and our knowledge of it extremely limited. And he used the idea of selection solely to explain biological evolution, never suggesting for a moment that it should be used anywhere else. Even within that biological sphere, he emphasized that he did not think it was the sole cause of evolutionary change. He added that he did still think selection was the main cause. But he expressed a sense of disproportion – of the need to find other contributory causes. Scientists today are beginning to look for these. Their investigations make it plain that the workings of natural selection are not in the least like the model of 'blind chance' that is cited by modern neo-Darwinians.

So what, by contrast, is the neo-Darwinistic meaning of life? In *River Out of Eden*, firmly subtitled 'A Darwinian View of Life', Richard Dawkins expounds its essence – 'The universe we live in has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference... DNA

neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its tune.'

This passage mixes an officially impersonal, objective scientific account with an unbridled mythical melodrama to very strange effect. On the impersonal side, all that needs to be said is that physical science does not deal in questions of meaning or value, so it naturally has nothing to say about the point or purpose of life. What Dawkins is claiming here, however, is that science has proved there is no such point or purpose.

But the latter part of this manifesto tells us, even more surprisingly, that life does indeed have a meaning – a horrible one. The phrase 'pitiless indifference' only makes sense if it describes a conscious being who is capable of pity and fails to feel it when he ought to. Like the constant talk of 'ruthless selfishness' in *The Selfish Gene*, this language builds a colourful picture of a callous, manipulative demon in whose hands humans are helpless.

Why would a readiness to explain

everything by natural selection bring anybody to such a doctrine? The trouble here surely comes from an unbalanced emphasis on the competitive, destructive side of the creative process. But as Brian Goodwin points out in *How The Leopard Changed Its Spots*, co-operation is active in the cosmos as well as competition. Darwin's work dwells equally on both factors. In his *Autobiography* he wrote of the 'impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe...as the result of blind chance or necessity'. He added that 'the mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic.'

As for the concept of purpose, anyone who wants to know how scientists treat it today should read the last chapter of the cosmologist Paul Davies's excellent book *The Goldilocks Enigma*. Davies describes the problems that recent discoveries about the fine-tuning of the universe pose to physicists. After surveying the possible alternatives, Davies concludes, citing the agreement of several eminent colleagues – 'It seems to me that there is a genuine scheme of things... I do believe that life and mind are etched deeply into the fabric of the universe, perhaps through a shadowy, half-glimpsed life-principle.' Among biologists, Simon Conway Morris expresses similar views. This way of thinking does not, of course, put us back in Newton's position. But it surely does draw this whole topic away from the Cold War approach of science-versus-religion and lay it open for serious thought once more.

Mary Midgley was formerly Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Newcastle on Tyne, UK, and has written many books, of which the most recent are *Science and Poetry*, *The Myths We Live By* and a memoir, *The Owl of Minerva*. A longer version of this article was published in *The Bible in Transmission* and may not be reproduced without prior permission from the Bible Society.

Underrated Week 0: John Ruskin



John Ruskin predicted that his work would be best understood during periods of social and economic crisis. He was right. *Unto the Last* was published in 1862 at the

height of Victorian prosperity and confidence, and the art critic's foray into social and economic thought was met with near-universal derision. *Fraser's Magazine* spoke for many when it claimed 'only a genius like Mr. Ruskin could have produced such hopeless rubbish'.

However, by the time of his death thirty years later, Ruskin was the most influential thinker in Britain. The borrowing figures of London public libraries in 1894 found Ruskin was the most popular contemporary writer on economics. In 1906 W.T. Stead compiled a survey of the reading habits of the first Labour MPs and their Liberal allies. Ruskin came top with 17 references, while Karl Marx received just two. Indeed,

in 1920 Bernard Shaw said that Marxism was so weak in Britain because those looking to mount an attack on capitalism had already found their prophet in Ruskin. Not bad for an Oxford academic and self-proclaimed 'violent Tory of the old school'.

The reason for Ruskin's metamorphosis from eccentric loony to national sage was recession. The late nineteenth century was characterised by mass unemployment, severe housing shortages and economic downturn. As the Victorian adherence to a laissez-faire vision was looking increasingly shaky, Ruskin's popularity soared.

Facing a similar economic downturn today, we would do well

to recall why Ruskin proved so popular. His fundamental message was that capitalism's faith in market economics as a perfectible science legitimises individuals wilfully to ignore moral, spiritual and environmental concerns. Although he was no socialist, Ruskin's moral critique of capitalism was enthusiastically adopted by the British left.

Another reason for Ruskin's desire to moderate the earnings of the rich was his perception of society as organic and interrelated, in which 'large fortunes cannot honestly be made by the work of any one man's hands or head'. Therefore, he was emphatic that no wealth comes without a responsibility towards the society that has provided the

conditions for individuals to earn it. He had a vision of employers as considerate and inspiring 'captains of industry', a far cry from the anonymous grey suits of today.

Many of us who prospered from the boom years are now questioning anew whether the frenzy of materialism and consumerism that infused our lives actually made us happy. Therefore, we can benefit from the prophesied national tightening of belts by recalling the mantra that pervades *Unto the Last* – Ruskin at his most profound – 'There is no wealth but life'. ROB PEAL

Rob Peal has been shortlisted for Best Columnist in The Guardian Student Media awards.

VARSITY

Established in 1947

Issue No 700

Old Examination Hall, Free School Lane, Cambridge, CB2 3RF
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State of the Schools

In recent years, Cambridge has come a long way in terms of access. Exclusive societies and archaic traditions may hang on, but they no longer set the tone of the University. The days when students from aristocratic families could dine on High Table and College sports teams were selected according to the prestige of one's school are most definitely over.

Nevertheless, the admissions figures touted by Cambridge University, proclaiming the success of their widening access programmes, are misleading. Last year, 59 percent of students were from 'maintained' schools. But rather than being your local comp, a significant number of these schools are in fact highly selective establishments such as grammars.

Varsity embarked on this issue's research to break down the stats and unearth the reality that an overwhelming proportion of students come from just a handful of schools in a similar area. It doesn't take a genius to surmise that the majority of these students come from the same socio-economic background.

Whether Cambridge is primarily to blame for this is debatable. As Vice-Chancellor Alison Richard claimed last year, Cambridge should not be viewed as a tool for social mobility. To a certain extent it is up to the Government to provide the educational improvements necessary to transform these figures. But then again, merely tugging on the levers of central policy will do little to change things. A way needs to be found to individually infuse schools throughout Britain with the thirst for knowledge which is required to gain admission to Cambridge.

Welcome Freshers

It may appear that there is no worse time to become an undergraduate. According to the press you will get swine flu, you won't get your student loan and when you do it will have to be paid back with interest. Oh, and there are no jobs waiting for you when you graduate.

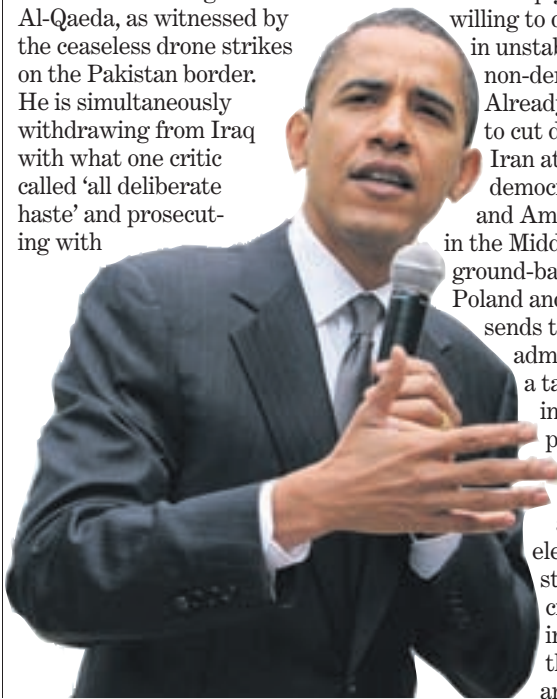
So you may as well make the most of Cambridge life whilst you're here. Despite our claims that the student body is more homogenous than official statistics suggest, there are a bewilderingly diverse array of lives that can be led here, and a surprisingly varied group of people who lead them.



Christopher Stanton

When Barack Obama took office last January, most commentators understandably assumed that he would place foreign affairs at the bottom of his in-tray for the first few months in office. America was, after all, in the middle of the most severe economic crisis in decades. In reality, the President has often put foreign affairs at the top of his agenda, ranging from his decision to increase US commitment in Afghanistan to his announcement that he would pursue global nuclear disarmament. There has thus been plenty of material for observers to mull over as they attempt to determine what sort of foreign policy Barack Obama will pursue.

Many such analysts, from UK journalist David Blair to US author Fareed Zakaria, have decided that Obama is a foreign policy realist. And indeed, at first glance, there is much that supports this view. He has downgraded the rhetoric, and the profile, of the 'war on terror', which did so much to alienate American allies worldwide. Yet he has continued the global war on Al-Qaeda, as witnessed by the ceaseless drone strikes on the Pakistan border. He is simultaneously withdrawing from Iraq with what one critic called 'all deliberate haste' and prosecuting with



Befriending unreliable tyrants is the opposite of realism. But does Obama know the difference?

renewed vigour the neglected war in Afghanistan. Most importantly of all, whereas his predecessor was accused of attempting to spread democracy by force, Obama has proved willing to downplay human rights and pursue deals with China, Russia and Iran, in pursuit of a more peaceful and safer world. None of his speeches were as eloquent as his silence and subsequent near-inaudible condemnations when Iranian security forces were shooting street protestors in the summer. Thus keeping pathways open for dialogue – even with the bloodstained Ahmadinejad government – would apparently make Obama a true worshipper at the altar of Realpolitik, driven by the dictum that the ends justify the means.

However, I think that recent events reveal that this is not an accurate description of foreign policy as practised by Barack Obama. While the Obama administration may believe that it is acting pragmatically, a closer look reveals that this new, realistic foreign policy is not actually realistic. Obama's foreign policy is based on working with other nations, but his willingness to work with unreliable and untrustworthy leaders endangers this approach.

Put simply, Obama is far too willing to deal with and place trust in unstable, authoritarian and non-democratic governments. Already, he has seemed willing to cut deals with Russia and Iran at the expense of the democracies of Eastern Europe and America's traditional allies in the Middle East. Abolishing the ground-based missile shields in Poland and the Czech Republic sends the signal that this administration recognises a tacit Russian sphere of influence, a dangerous precedent to set in light of the Russo-Georgian war. Moreover, tolerating Hamid Karzai's election rigging in Afghanistan and Nouri al-Maliki's creeping authoritarianism in Iraq sends the signal that America will protect and defend fledgling

tyrants where it sees them as supporters, a tactic which has been employed frequently in the past, and has contributed to the USA's poor global image.

It is on the issue of Iran, however, that Obama deserves the strongest criticism. His much-vaunted attempts to establish dialogue with the regime have failed, and further sanctions seem unlikely to impede its steady progress towards a nuclear bomb. The revelation at the end of September that Iran has built a second nuclear facility indicates how much progress they are making. If Obama is not willing to take more effective action on this matter sooner rather than later, there is the real risk that Israel will step in with military action, which would have catastrophic consequences.

Obama's error, here as elsewhere, appears to be to ignore the fact that liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes will possess opposing interests by their very natures. Authoritarian leaders, unchecked by the rule of law, internal dissent or public scrutiny, are far more likely to manipulate the international community, break their promises, and indulge in dangerous and risky adventurism. This is to their advantage, for war and the fear of war allow leaders such as President Ahmadinejad to justify their own authoritarian rule as required to procure safety against a hostile world. Conversely, democracies tend to favour peace and stability, since electorates often punish their governments for unpopular, unsuccessful or unjust adventurism abroad; and whereas instability is bad for democracy, dictators flourish where there is chaos and fear.

Obama should know this: he is in power today largely because the American electorate grew tired with George Bush's wars, and the atmosphere of fear they created. The likes of Ahmadinejad rely on perpetuating that insecurity to endure in power. They neither want nor need peace or safety. Under these circumstances, Obama must realise that such people do not make reliable partners with whom to conduct foreign policy, and adjust his dealings with them accordingly.

Letters to the Editor

Students sometimes complain that they do not hear enough about local politics. But parties produce lots of literature and often, it is your college which stops you from receiving these essential updates. One porter of an unnamed central college told me that "if there's a party logo on the leaflet or the envelope, then it gets chucked away". Other colleges apply so many rules that it becomes almost impossible to distribute leaflets.

Please confront your colleges, your Porters, Dean, Master and JCR president, to make sure that nobody is stopping you from receiving political leaflets. We should not regard these leaflets as junk mail. Political parties exist to promote to you their vision for a better society, and with a general election just a few months away, we should listen.

Dom Weldon
Chair, Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats

Recently I was overlooking the Cam, sitting on a patch of cement at an ancient Cambridge college of progressive reputation. An elegantly garbed porter came over and belittlingly asked me: "You can read these signs in English, can't you?" She subsequently repeated herself - twice, with her vocal disparagement increasing exponentially. Now, racially and ancestrally I am Indian and I suppose my complexion reflects this. Not the first time this has happened to me at some of the more traditional Cambridge colleges, and no non-racial outward reason comes to mind.

I would not characterise this sort of treatment as virulent racism - but it is certainly racial *insensitivity*. The University community can set the paradigm here with small things: a candid debate at the Cambridge Union, more insightful examples at the University employees' diversity training workshops - can make monumental differences. Let this rooting out of prejudice be the enduring legacy of Cambridge 800.

Riddhi Dasgupta
Clare Hall

Would it not be more appropriate for Cambridge students to succumb

to Spanish flu in lieu of the swine variety, thus continuing the



University's traditional maintenance of largely irrelevant aspects of yesteryear?

Sue Pymond
Trinity

Email letters@varsity.co.uk by Wednesday lunchtime for the chance to win a bottle from the Cambridge Wine Merchants. Letters may be edited.



Charlotte Runcie

Ignore the media's teenage crush: Twitter is an intelligence-free zone which will soon be forgotten

what is damaging intelligent thinking and reporting.

But this is what the media have become: a mirror for the whimsical musings of the nation. Media organisations are frantic to get us to 'share our views', whether it's in the form of blog comments, emails, or messages sent via Twitter. I have the most beef with that last one.

You'll have noticed that big corporations are obsessed with Twitter. They seem to have collectively concluded that the best way to appear totally modern and in the mindset of the youth is to foster a passionate, obsessive relationship

“News outlets have become a mirror for the whimsical musings of the nation”

with Twitter. The last time I turned on Radio 1, Fearne Cotton mentioned Twitter four times in the ten minutes I was listening.

Now, the BBC is strictly prohibited from using any kind of product placement. Google their 'undue prominence' policy and you'll see what I mean. I have a feeling that constant and hyperactive mentioning of Twitter is rather in breach of their

own guidelines. After all, Twitter is a huge international brand, valued last week at over a billion dollars.

But the BBC isn't alone in its teenage crush. Everyone, from news outlets to spammers, is having a go. The hip, glitzy presence of Stephen Fry and friends is what first inspired the diseased and struggling media to pounce on microblogging like rats on a biscuit, but the greedy latecomers don't realise that even though Fry has thousands of virtual accounts hanging on his every 140 characters, those followers aren't going to be as enthusiastic about someone peddling obscure porn or financial updates. Twitter doesn't guarantee you an audience.

In fact, it might even lose you one. A couple of weeks ago, an amazing news story broke. It was the discovery of water on the moon. The thing is, the corporate media didn't break it. The story was under embargo until the day of a NASA conference, which was to reveal all to the public and the waiting press. But the news leaked, and, days before the embargo was due to be lifted, it was storming through Twitter, mutating and gathering speed. The media lost their headlines. It must have been heart-wrenching – like finding out your boyfriend's been sleeping with your best friend. Or hundreds of best friends.

The media made Twitter and eventually turned it against them.

But Twitter's already ruined. When the new kid gets popular, everyone wants a piece, and for months now organisations have been splashing their presence all over it and milking it for every drop of advertising potential. Twitter is 2009's MySpace. Remember when MySpace was only just beginning to become so ad-ridden as to be unusable, its inboxes straining under the weight of incoming spam? Yeah, that's happening to Twitter.

The easiest way to see this is to click on a 'trending topic'. It's like waking from a century-long cryogenic sleep; the world has been thrown to the mercy of advertising robots and pornography, and most of the sentient humans that remain are illiterate and feral. Spambots tweet again and again, like SONAR, hoping that somewhere across the internet somebody will, for a second, scan their profile and try to win a free iPod.

Twitter is not the future of social interaction nor the saviour of the media. It could easily be their downfall. Soon its discerning users will get bored of their current squeeze and move on to new romances, and Twitter will be left crippled and alone, the crack through which we glimpse a shadow of the end of days. Basically, I'm sticking with Facebook.

Charlotte Runcie has been shortlisted for Best Columnist in The Guardian Student Media awards.

Not-Sci



Leading readers a merry dance

A fellow scientist recently demonstrated DNA coiling via expressive dance: he curled into a ball and lay motionless next to the test tubes. We laughed hysterically. Unfortunately *The Times* weren't doing the same when they decided to print an article entitled 'When dance meets science'.

The piece remarks: 'At first glance, the links between science and dance aren't obvious.' Are the links between science and dance obvious even after reading the article? After a pint of beer and two hours of deep thinking? Not to me.

They try to persuade us this has some legitimacy because the choreographer interviewed had 'spent months working with the department of neuroscience at Cambridge University on the interface between mind and body'. Months working on what exactly? Is the word 'interface' a substitute for 'vague something or other'? And collaborating in what way? I can almost guarantee he wasn't working as a technical scientist since the man in question, Wayne McGregor, although an award-winning choreographer, is not a trained scientist – a fact conveniently omitted.

There are more comic moments to come: 'classical ballet strives for order and logic' – and 'scientists do too'. And 'science is about exploration and the new, and challenging everything you have learnt, and so is art.' Almost everything in academia, or any profession in fact, has an essence of order and challenging what you've learnt. Interestingly, another choreographer mentions that he gets funding from science charities to hold dance and science 'workshops' and there is a 'big interest in learning about science through dance'. Big interest from who exactly? Anyone over the age of five?

The Times quotes the artistic director of Birmingham Royal Ballet who once read a book about Einstein and chuckles, 'What a crazy bunch scientists are.' We're not crazy enough to communicate with dance. If we were, I would pirouette gracefully in the direction of a less ridiculous article. SITA DINANAUTH

Museums & Galleries Drop-in Event

Thursday 8th October at The Fitzwilliam Museum

Drop in to the Courtyard between 12pm and 4pm

Discover the world-class art and collections on your doorstep

Bring this advert and receive:

FREE art poster & a **FREE** sample of 'the best brownie in Cambridge'
(subject to availability)

Get a taste of Cambridge's fantastic collections / Meet staff from the Museums / Find out how you could get involved

John Everett Millais, The Bridesmaid © The Fitzwilliam Museum

The
Fitzwilliam
Museum

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

Whether your passion is Egyptian antiquities or Impressionist masterpieces, medieval manuscripts or Renaissance sculpture, Oriental pottery or 20th-century art, the Fitz has it all.

See works by Titian, da Vinci, Rembrandt, Caneletto, Gainsborough, Monet, Degas, and Picasso, enjoy diverse temporary exhibitions, and walk amongst contemporary sculpture on the lawns outside.

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Open Tuesday – Saturday: 10am-5pm / Sunday: 12pm-5pm
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1RB
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Portrait of Ezra Pound, © Kettle's Yard

KETTLE'S YARD

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A beautiful and unique house containing a distinctive collection of modern art, Kettle's Yard was founded by H.S. 'Jim' Ede as a place where visitors would 'find a home and a welcome, a refuge of peace and order, of the visual arts and of music.'

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Have a drink, see some art and find out more about Kettle's Yard collections, exhibitions, events and the Picture Loan scheme - get a work of art for your room for £6.

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Open Tuesday – Sunday: House 2.00-4.00pm, Gallery: 11.30am-5.00pm
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Theatre rep 30

The best of Cambridge in Edinburgh reviewed

VARSITY

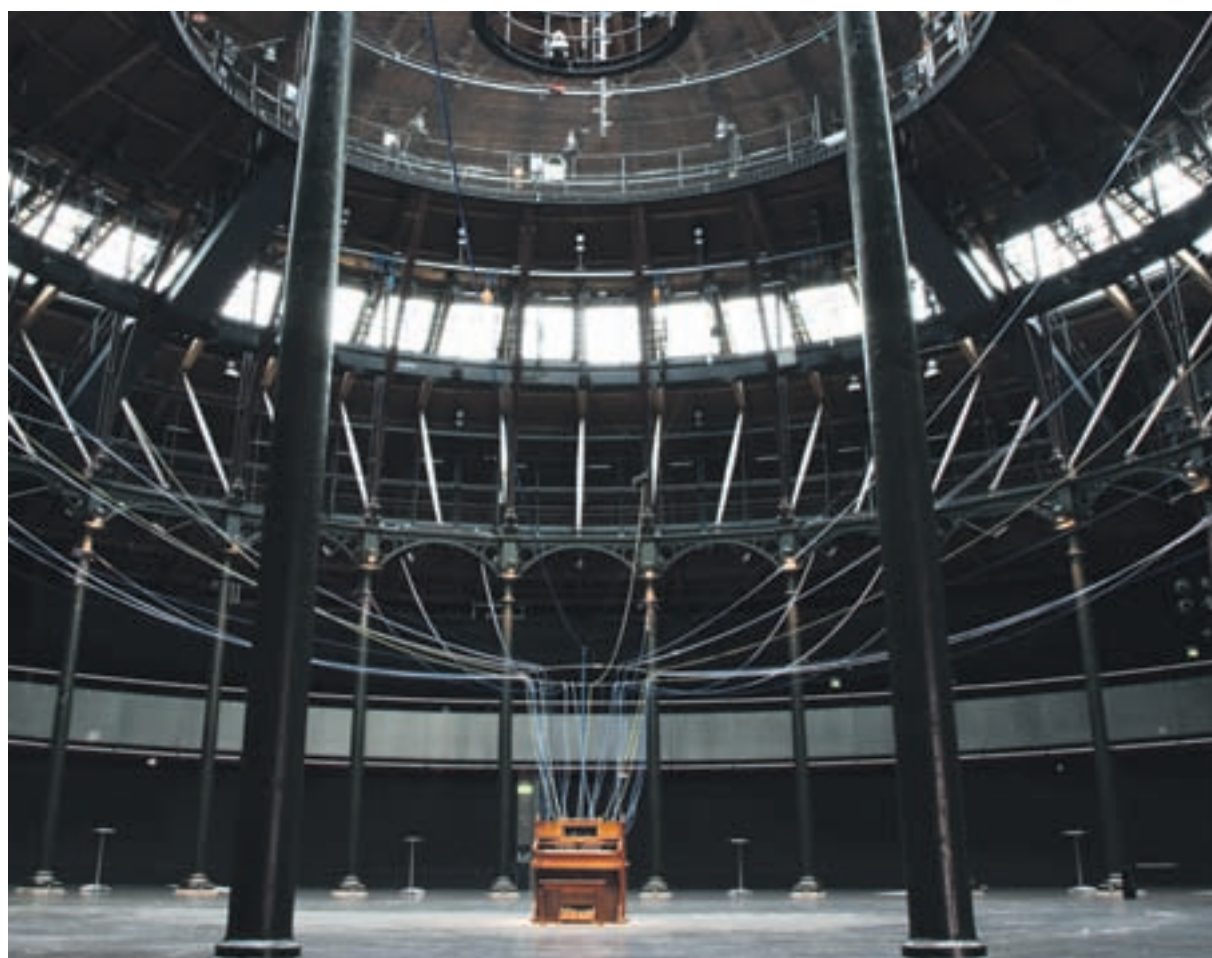
Vulture

Arts, Features, Reviews



Fashion p 16

The last of the summer sun as Paradise is found



Not just another brick in the wall

Elizabeth Dearnley discovered that in north London, David Byrne was setting art to a different tune

It's not every day you come across a building that has been turned into a huge musical instrument.

Courtesy of 'Victorian steam-punk technology', however, that's exactly what happened at the Camden Roundhouse this summer, when the steam engine repair shed-cum-theatre in north London was transformed into a delightfully surreal, playable art installation.

A rickety wooden church organ stands alone in the centre of the bare, industrial grey space. Blue and yellow wires fan out from the back like a giant electronic peacock tail. Each wire is attached to a part of the building: an iron beam, a water pipe, a hollow column. "Please play" is stenciled on the floor in inviting, Ikea-yellow letters. Every time a key is pressed, some part of the building clangs, whistles or rumbles. It's odd and fantastical, like King's College Chapel

re-imagined by Tim Burton.

Playing the Building is the brainchild of David Byrne, co-founder of new wave group Talking Heads in 1974 and mastermind of many subsequent musical and artistic

"It's odd and fantastical, like King's College Chapel re-imagined by Tim Burton."

projects, from the soundtrack to the film *The Last Emperor* to municipal bike-rack design in New York.

The installation, which first appeared in an old factory building in Stockholm in 2005, works solely

by mechanical means. The keys on the organ cause hammers to rap on the pillars, air to whistle through the ceiling pipes, and the girders of the roof to rattle.

The Roundhouse rotunda attracts people of all ages, some sitting at the organ, some pressing their ears against clattering pillars, others wandering round the huge space. A little girl sits playing the organ along with her teddy bear; a group of art students, in print dresses and Beatles-style admirals' jackets, follow close behind. I queued below a hooting section of ceiling, waiting for my turn to play the rafters.

The keyboard is divided into three sections: high notes play the pillars, middle notes the pipes, and bass notes the motors. Tapping the top keys experimentally, the pillars rattle like metallic woodpeckers. My partner for the duet counters with a growling bass. Some sustained chords produce an

eerie, wuthering, whistling sound through the pipes of the building, at once mechanical and melancholy. Growing more ambitious, we embark on an arrhythmic, percussive duet and after a crashing finale reluctantly relinquish the seat to the next group of players.

Walter, a cheerful gap year student working as a volunteer steward observes that "At first people were a bit shy about having a go, but evidently word has got around." He gestures towards the enthusiastically clanging, whistling and rumbling crowd. Have there been any particularly memorable performances? "There was this one guy with long straggly hair, who just went mental on it," he recalls, grinning, "and at the end everyone gave him a round of applause. And then he stood up, put one finger in the air" – miming this – "and said, 'Ah, but is it art?'"

Wandering round the rotunda

and chatting to fellow Roundhouse-organists, the general response is positive, albeit occasionally bemused. Some, like Gavin, a recent graduate from Winchester College of Art, wax evangelical about the experience. "This is what art ought to be about!" he cries. "It's so democratic – anyone can play...they can go to their mates and say, 'I just played the building – it was weird, man!'"

Playing the Building blurs the line between art and audience in an effective and original way. Each week the Roundhouse hosts a weekly jam session, where visitors are encouraged to bring along their own instruments to make up an impromptu Chalk Farm philharmonic. As a stand-alone instrument, however, the organ mingled with the murmuring of the spectators, is striking in itself, transforming both building and audience into a clattering, chattering orchestra.

The Oxbridge Novel

Cambridge

The Masters, C P Snow

Political machinations in the Senior Combination Room in this chilly evocation of a pre-central heating Cambridge.

Porterhouse Blue, Tom Sharpe

The Masters as redrawn by Hogarth. You'll never look at a Porter in the same light again.

At the Villa of Reduced Circumstances, Alexander McCall Smith

Visiting German philologist Professor von Inglefield, celebrated for his seminal work *Portuguese Irregular Verbs*, struggles with the grizzled in-fighting of college life.

May Week Was in June, Clive James

Lugubrious raconteur James recalls Cambridge's absurdities in his famously unreliable memoirs.

The Glittering Prizes, Frederic Raphael

Graduates struggle with life after Cambridge when their promised prizes turn to ashes

Maurice, E M Forster

Forster's novel of homosexual romance in King's College. Fearing legal battles Forster inscribed on the first manuscript: 'Publishable, but worth it?'

The Other Place

Brideshead Revisited, Evelyn Waugh

The stuff of a thousand Oxbridge applications and a thousand flannel jackets. Et in arcadia ego.

Zuleika Dobson, Max Beerbohm

When the beautiful Zuleika arrives in sex-starved Oxford the university loses its senses. Judas College suffers a stampede, the High is a riot and BUMPS degenerate into chaos.

Jude the Obscure, Thomas Hardy

Jude dreams of being a scholar at Christminster, a thinly veiled Oxford. One of Hardy's characteristically cheerful novels

Northern Lights, Philip Pullman

Magical epic set in Jordan College, in a parallel Oxford peopled by daemon familiars



Singing the Blues

Cambridge legend **Tom Sharpe**, veteran author of *Porterhouse Blue* and *Grantchester Grind*, tells **Laura Freeman** how the University lost its magic and why whiskey and cigars are better than sex

Tom Sharpe, holding forth through wreaths of pipe smoke is refreshingly blunt on the subject of the Oxbridge novel. "I loathed *Brideshead*." He draws "loathed" with loaded disdain. He is equally damning in his appraisal of twenty-first century Cambridge. Ugly architecture, ghastly town planning and, "ever since they built that garage" he spits, "Cambridge has lost all of its magic. All of it." At the age of 82, filling and refilling his pipe as he talks, Sharpe is a confirmed Grumpy Old Man.

By the sounds of things he was a grumpy young man too. "I didn't like it when I was there" he says of Cambridge and of Pembroke. "It was a sporting college. Trying, pretending to be an intellectual college." He recalls that he was neither a sportsman nor a scholar. Nor, by his own admission, a gentleman. Sharpe informs me three times that he is "a nasty man" and produces illustrative anecdotes: arguments with the Dean of Pembroke (Sharpe accused him of being un-Christian. The Dean countered with the baffling assertion that he "took a cold shower every day,") with a rich publishing magnate ("that swine of a bastard") and with his agent.

I'm not convinced he is as nasty as he claims. He is blunt, certainly, unwilling to pander to delicate sensibilities or political correctness, or to feign deference in the face of money or power, but underneath his own belligerent rhetoric he is anxious about his daughter, devoted to his wife and loyal to his colleagues.

In the light of his own unhappy experiences at Pembroke was *Porterhouse Blue* an attack on the Cambridge experience? "I don't attack real people or real places" he insists. "I don't write reality. I just write silly books." There is however a germ of truth in Sharpe's novels. The Cambridge undergraduate reading *Porterhouse Blue* or its sequel *Grantchester Grind* inevitably sees their own college as model and inspiration. Sharpe clarifies: "Certainly there are Porters and there are dons. And there were ones I didn't like. I particularly didn't like the Dean of Pembroke." It's a lasting grudge that gets aired more than once. "He was all in favour of nuclear bombs and submarines" Sharpe sniffs.

He sounds, though Sharpe might deny it, like the relentless moderniser Sir Godber Evans who at the beginning of *Porterhouse Blue* makes his inauguration speech as Master of Porterhouse College. Sir Godber is in favour of the abolition of meals in hall and the introduction of contraceptive

dispensers and female undergraduates. In a financially desperate moment he considers offering the American Phosgene Corp. facilities for their research into nerve gas. Stodgy, over-fed, intellectually impoverished Porterhouse reels from the shock. A *Porterhouse Blue*, incidentally, is a heart-attack induced by port, Madeira, and whole-roasted ox.

Porterhouse Blue is Cambridge in burlesque. In the book's most notorious scene, hapless undergraduate Zipser inflates several hundred prophylactics, attempts to dispose of them up a chimney and inadvertently blows up a First Court staircase in the process. Sharpe reminds me that in his day "if you went to bed with anybody, you got sent down."

Sexual misadventure is a recurring theme in Sharpe's novels. In his latest, *The Groves*, the teenage Esmond is drugged, abducted and coerced into marriage by his aunt Belinda, the last in a line of termagant, matriarchal aristocrats. Meanwhile, his father, Horace, dies in a blissful post-coital, postprandial fug in a hotel in Spain. In *The Great Pursuit*, Sharpe's gleeful satire on venal publishers and tortuous press junkets, unpublished author Peter Piper finds happiness in the synthetic bosom of an ageing plastic surgery devotee from Los Angeles. She wants nothing more than to encourage his dubious literary genius, he never wants to leave the bedroom.

Sharpe remembers suffering from the opposite problem. Of his first wife he recalls: "She wanted sex all the time and I wanted to write. My evenings were ruined. Finally I got sick and tired of this. So I sold my car, sent her off with half the money, and bought myself a motorbike."



Grumpy Old Man? Sharpe seems to think so.

He is very interested to hear that I went to a mixed school. "That must have been..." he begins. "Some of the girls I knew..." he raises his eyebrows significantly. "Some of the attempts that were made by the boys to seduce..." Anxious that he might have offended he reassures me that I am "Very civilised. Not tarty in any way."

Sharpe suffered his own *Porterhouse Blue* on Madrid Television a couple of years ago while being interviewed by a "very good looking woman. Very nice. Charming." The presence of an attractive woman seems to have been coincidental rather than causal, but it's

“Cambridge has lost all of its magic. All of it”

a plot line straight out of a Sharpe novel. The doctors, Sharpe informs me with medical authority, have prescribed whiskey. He insists that he doesn't like the stuff, but confesses to having had "a heavy night last night."

Sharpe claims he writes to keep himself in cigars but when pressed he admits that "I actually write for my wife. And I like money, of course." There is much more to Sharpe's prose than mercantile motives. He becomes almost sentimental when talking about the English language and defends his decision not to learn Spanish despite living for years in northern Spain. "I speak English. I am English. I write in English. English means so much to me."

Asked to nominate his literary heroes Sharpe elects "William.

Do you know who that is?" I try Shakespeare. Sharpe scoffs. He means *Just William*, Richmal Crompton's muddy-kneed school-boy. He adores P. G. Wodehouse both as a stylist and a friend, "I knew him. I liked him. A delightful man. He really was." Evelyn Waugh and *Brideshead* come in for criticism, but Sharpe concedes that *Decline and Fall* was "the best thing Waugh ever wrote."

Sharpe is self-deprecating about his own efforts as a novelist. He tells me that he's "not too sure about plots. I'm not very clever you know. I know nothing about the literary world." Then there's that "silly books" quip. I'm still not convinced. Yes, Sharpe likes a good pantomime, multiple mistaken identities and an *in flagrante* couple but he has a serious streak. He was deported from South Africa in 1961 for taking "a lot of photos of conditions under apartheid. The way that blacks lived and how they were treated. How they were shot and killed. The policemen were foul bastards." He remembers seeing a woman and her sixteen-year-old son shot by the police and the living conditions of black South Africans suffering from tuberculosis: "shacks. Real, bad, nasty, shanty shacks." Sharpe's first two novels *Riotous Assembly* and *Indecent Exposure* were written in the spirit of "taking the mickey out of apartheid."

For all Sharpe's huffing and puffing in the role of bad-tempered octogenarian (he calls his grandchild "that damn baby" and says of the cat "I hate it. I'm longing for it to get run over") what he really hates are bullies and bigots, whether hypocritical Cambridge dons, lying publishers or South African policemen. In the right hands, anger is the sharpest of comic weapons.

PALOMARES



Tokyo or not Tokyo?

All the world's his stage, but no country has taken Shakespeare to heart quite like the Japanese. **Kitty Walsh** examines Japan's fascination with the Bard and wonders whether something might have got lost in translation

I'm standing in a car park by a main road, trying to explain over a microphone the point of the mechanicals' play in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I don't really need the microphone. Nobody can understand me. Their attention is focused on my translator, a diminutive woman called Kate, who pours out tiny clipped syllables in a high, clear voice, at a rate that I could never hope to understand. The crowd murmurs; they have understood.

Backed by the Pembroke Players and justified by our authentic British status, we are touring Japan with a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Today we are in Sendai, the capital city of the Miyagi prefecture and the unlikely home of The Shakespeare Company Japan, who describe themselves as "a group of people who share a dream to build a replica of the world famous Globe Theatre in the Tohoku region of Japan." It might seem implausible that there should be a professional company dedicated entirely to the Bard in this out of the way corner of an island (almost six thousand miles from Stratford-Upon-Avon), but these guys are the real deal; Kazumi Shimodate, their director, even knows Peter Brook – he tells me so several times.

They are not alone. Over fifty productions of Shakespeare are

staged each year in Japan. These range from amateur productions like our own to those by internationally renowned directors, such as Yukio Ninagawa who directs Shakespeare's plays in both Japanese and English and has collaborated with the Royal Shakespeare Company. There may not yet be a replica of the Globe in the Tohoku region but there has been one in Tokyo since 1988, and the capital is the only Asian city to have hosted the World Shakespeare Conference. The Japanese take Shakespeare-san seriously.

‘Rosalind’s identity was revealed on a Japanese game show by a man in a rainbow wig’

But how did a glover's son from Avon make it big in Japan? Shakespeare arrived in Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the country opened its doors to the West for the first time in over two hundred years. Until the fall of the Tokugawa dynasty in 1868, Japan had practised a policy of seclusion, and trade with Western

nations had been prohibited (with the exception of the Portuguese, who were subsequently thrown out for trying to convert everyone, and then the Dutch, who had to restrict their activity to a small island off the port of Nagasaki).

The new Meiji government wanted Japan to maintain traditional values but also to embrace modernization, which in their eyes meant the West. While Japanese imports were influencing everyone from Van Gogh to Gilbert and Sullivan in Paris and London, the newly renamed Tokyo was teeming with European fads, from men's hairstyles to drinking milk. The Japanese government invited hundreds of Europeans to the country as consultants: experts on railroads, education, and of course, Western culture. It was in this flurry of excitement that Shakespeare entered stage left, first mentioned in print in the translation of an obscure British book of etiquette that became a popular benchmark of Western mores.

Theatre was a well established part of Japanese life when Shakespeare arrived, with a diverse range of traditions ranging from the formal symbolism of masked Noh plays to the high-energy, dance based Kabuki form. The earliest performances of Shakespeare in Japan were either adapted to these local traditions, a practice that continues

to this day, or performed in English by the fast growing *gaijin*, or foreign population, in a more Westernised style. Translations of Shakespeare's plays have resulted in some inadvertently revealing titles: *It's A World Where Money Counts For Everything* (*The Merchant of Venice*) and, rather cuttingly, *The Same Old Story* (*Romeo and Juliet*).

Despite the established popularity of these Japanese styles of theatre and the importance the new Meiji government placed on Western culture, it wasn't until the post-war period that Shakespeare became truly high profile in Japan. Film played a significant role. Akira Kurosawa, Japan's most influential director, based several of his films on Shakespeare's works. *Throne of Blood*, his 1957 adaptation of *Macbeth* is often cited as the greatest cinematic treatment of the play. Kurosawa retains very little of Shakespeare's language, instead transferring the drama to feudal Japan and taking certain liberties with the plot. The drama of the original is matched at every turn by stunning visuals: atmospheric, mist-soaked pine forests provide a stunning silent backdrop against which violence erupts in sudden crescendos. These constant shifts in tempo owe much to Noh theatre, as does Isuzu Yamada's performance of Lady Macbeth, who berates her husband in a hushed voice, her face a frozen mask behind her traditional make-up. Despite the complaints of many critics that the film was too Western in style, it was a box office success, and did much to raise the profile of Shakespeare's works in Japan.

Other Japanese adaptations of the Bard seem to veer even further from what we might expect from Shakespeare, perhaps because of the licence afforded in translation. The idea of a *Rock Opera*

Hamlet performed in Elizabethan English may seem absurd, but this Japanese musical with a lead better known for fronting a heavy metal group than for treading the boards managed to become a commercial if not critical success. Even less gimmicky productions, such as The Shakespeare Company Japan's *As You Like It*, which we saw on our own theatre tour, aren't exactly traditional. Here Arden is re-imagined as a rather twee spa town, a move that created new tensions in Shakespeare's much used gender reversals as Rosalind, naked, struggles to conceal her identity in a traditional communal bath. Less comprehensible was the bizarre transformation scene, where Rosalind's identity was revealed on a Japanese game show by a man in a rainbow wig. Translation and cultural differences can only excuse so much.

Still, I'm sure that The Shakespeare Company Japan would be mortified by the suggestion that they were abusing the Bard; their performance ended with a speech about his life and a standing ovation aimed at his portrait. For them the essence of the work endures and it is difficult to dispute when our own ideas about Shakespeare are so closely connected to his language, an element that will always be diluted in translation. Throughout our own tour it was the language, so important to an English-speaking audience, that was gradually pushed into the background, as it became obvious that the meaning of Shakespeare's works could be conveyed in other ways. The Japanese receive Shakespeare untainted by the predictability and over-exposure that we experience in Britain, and use his works in whatever way they see fit. The result is fresh and often intriguing, if a little weird. Just as they like it.

GANGSTER'S PARADISE



Cottia wears: Black Cotton Dinner Suit, www.suit-shop.com; Check Shirt, Gap; Handkerchief, New and Lingwood; White Vest, Topman; Black Sunglasses, Ralph Lauren Purple Label; Pendant and Earrings, Model's Own.

Eve wears: Felt Fedora, Hornet's; Trench Coat, Burberry; White Shirt, Tie, both by Emmett Shirts; Blue Suit, H & M; Grey Leotard, Vintage; Red Braces, Model's Own



Week 0: Greed

Seven Deadly Sins of Cambridge

Autumn has arrived in our quaint university town, and the streets are once again full of wayward young things. They stride around innocently with newly loan-full bank accounts, sparkling kitchenware and CUSU issued condoms nestled hopefully in their wallets.

But, first years, just because no one here knows what your nickname was at school, doesn't mean you can relax. You need sternly worded wisdom to steer you from the debauchery that you so keenly seek. If it weren't for you, this sin cycle would start with Lust. Lust: the grubbiest but most alluring of the sins, both to indulge in, and to write about. However, anecdotal knowledge on that subject will be saved for later in term, because, little ones, if you do much more than smile politely at your fellow classmates for the first week or so, you are just an irredeemable tramp and no guidance can save you. At least wait until freshers' flu and your first load of laundry are out of the way before you allow yourself to penetrate, or be penetrated by, whichever undergrad first asks you back to see their *Garden State* poster.

No, what you must fear most is Greed. The most visible form of Greed in your first week will be Friend Greed, when everyone scrambles to pal up with everyone else. Names and telephone numbers are exchanged with fear and urgency, and bops are a hunting ground for acceptance (not love, acceptance. Remember that. No touching until week two). The best thing about Friend Greed is that it's contagious. For at least five days, everyone really is friends with everyone else, because no one has been able to have enough of a conversation to realise they dislike Fergie medleys, and each other. You like everyone on your staircase, you are bezzie mates with everyone doing your subject, and you are devoted for life to that boy who



bought you a friendship sealing sambuca when you were both dressed as schoolchildren.

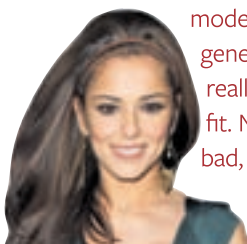
Sadly, there is an attendant Greed that stymies Friend Greed's social promiscuity at every turn, doing its best to derail your chum making efforts: Booze Greed. I'm sure that many university arrivals are hardened alkies who have their stomachs regularly pumped and take Smirnoff with their Froot Loops, but it's an accepted fact that the vast majority will be eager lambs who've done no worse than throw up a WKD or two on a friend's patio. But now they are turned loose into a dystopian week where neon Aftershocks are gulped back and social anxiety, sleep deprivation and 2-4-1 cocktails combine to disastrous effect. Within days, certain unfortunates will win dubious celebrity for hilarious drunken escapades, which they can barely remember but will be

forever reminded of (read: pissing themselves).

But enough gloom. After all, in the words of Gordon Gekko, my personal hero: 'The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that greed, for lack of a better word, is good.' Much to the distaste of my more discerning, world-weary friends, I still think that, however desperate and tacky freshers' week was, it was also brilliant. I have a distinct memory of lying on a friend's bed at six in the morning with Peaches' 'Fuck the Pain Away' blaring in the background, and a supervision at ten. All I'd eaten for two days was party rings and my veins zinged with Malibu, but I was happy. Starting university is one of the few times in your life when you have absolutely no idea who you will be spending the next day, or even hour, with, and every new conversation lends you the possibility of finding a soulmate or communicable disease. All the mistakes (and there shall be many); the wrong boyfriend, the wrong choice of extracurriculars (hearty team sports in any form) and the essay crises are all still ahead of you, and you are dizzyingly free. So eat only in the early hours, drink to excess, and be merry, for tomorrow you must read Chaucer. VICTORIA BEALE

FRESHERS Young and impressionable - get them before swine flu does.

HOT



CHERYL COLE Lights up Saturday evenings on *X Factor*. The perfect role model for our generation. And really, really, really fit. New single's not bad, either.

TWITTER Your prayers have been answered: Varsity joins. Twitter.com/varsityuk

PEEP SHOW Everyone's favourite losers are back for their sixth season: "Great temperature in here, can I check it?" "Sure" "23. Nice."

SPOTIFY ON IPHONE Technology is magic!



KANYE WEST VS. TAYLOR SWIFT

"Yo Varsity, I'mma let you finish, but Kanye West had one of THE best celeb outbursts of all time".

LONDON TAXI DRIVERS Tried to obliterate half the Varsity team on their bicycles

this summer. Muppets.

PETER MANDELSON Admitted to The Times that he'd accept a job under the Tories. There's a five letter word for that - it starts with a 'J'. Now *The Sun* loves him. Standard.

NOT



Shadow Puppet Guide



Week 0: The Donkey



Saturday

I bloody love pre-season training. All of the best stuff about Cambridge: beers, babes and physical exertion with the lads, and none of the shit stuff like lectures and geeks. After a morning of putting in the tackles, I headed to

Sainsbury's to load up on carbs. Ate a chip buttie, noodle sandwich and pasta pie for lunch. Back at training Tommy, a top bloke and inside centre, was tackling like a queer so I called him a faggot and speared him into the ground. Very nearly broke his neck. What a poof! That evening went out for a quiet one with the lads. Not! A casual twelve pints later I was tearing up the dance floor at Fez when three total babes from Cambridge town walked in. I made a beeline for them and regaled them with my three best injury anecdotes before offering them a blow by blow account of what I had

been drinking that evening. For some bizarre reason they weren't impressed... must have been lesbians.

Sunday

Spent the afternoon in the gym. Benchpressed three times my body weight (no seriously) and was sweating like cheddar left in the sun. Headed for a shower with the lads. Later that night I got a text from top bloke and blindside flanker Phil which read 'Good night sweet cheeks x x x x'. 'Fuck,' I thought to myself, 'we were in the shower together today!' I was bloody terrified, and stayed up half the night chewing my scrum-cap. I had always retained a suspicion that Phil and I had a chemistry that could not be explained by mere friendship... but no! I am an absolute sirloin steak of a man: thick, meaty and rare. Straight

as the day is long. I drifted into a restless sleep.

Monday

Woke up to another text from Phil. My heart raced as I opened it - was it terror or nervous anticipation? 'Thank bloody God,' I thought as I read 'Sorry mate, text was meant for the babe. Hope you didn't think I was queer!' What a top bloke, massive relief. Reassured of my masculinity I did 100 reps with my dumbbells followed by two hours in front of the mirror practising how to yell 'down it fresher!' in a terrifying yet alluring way. I cannot wait for a new batch of tidy freshers to arrive - endless young babes impressed by my biceps but not yet aware of my dysfunctional personality and preposterously small penis.

Sunday

Had to organise the end of week piss up for the lads. Spent the morning agonising over how to precisely create a seemingly spontaneous and banterous tone in my email. I decided that 'drink and be merry' sounded too gay, but 'pissed up and pissing on stuff' was a bit too much. So I sided with 'The Apocolash Cometh' for the subject, addressed it 'Dear lash-hounds' and signed off with 'The Apocolad'. Very nice. Then it took another half an hour of agonising to decide whether to finish with a couple of kisses. To use them could seem gay, but not to use them could indicate that I am not comfortable with my massive heterosexuality. I decided to play it safe and avoid any possible confusion. Lads must be consistent.

* As told to Albert Rope

My week by Dan Mann, College Rugby hero*

Come Together



Boys who are girls who like boys to be girls who do girls like they're boys who do boys like they're girls... Let Varsity's first ever male sex columnist show you how he does it.

First week back at primary school and everybody had to sit down and write the generic paragraph on My Summer Holiday. Time to resurrect it. My mother's annual garden party, 3pm, a band of acquaintances gathered around. An aunt asks, "So, have you got yourself a girlfriend?" "Um, actually... It's sort of like percentages. It fluctuates all the time. Just the smallest thing can tip it to one gender's favour... I just want you to know, for the future –" big smile, "special friend might be a more fitting name."

That, Mrs Marshall, was the highlight of my summer: a spontaneous coming-out monologue on my bisexuality. The ice cubes in my mother's glass quivered.

"I don't understand why you can't just be gay," she said, weeks later, barbecuing in a rental near

Carcassonne. Gay: nice and uncomplicated. At her book club, a gay child was the new liberal accessory, up there with rice milk and Rica Lewis jeans. "Percentages," she said. "It sounds like something you learnt at university."

"Sounds like twice the people to fuck, if you ask me," my father said, prodding the barbecue.

That week we were 60:40 in female favour. The young couple occupying the villa next door had spent the previous week holidaying in Paris. She was beautiful and loud. He looked bored already. They spent their days in the pool hovering between copulation and speculation, and I lay listening, headphones in, *sauf* music. "Fancy holidaying with your parents," she said. "The tedium..."

Pretty much. Eeny, meeny,

miny, mo.

It's easier with girls. He had gone to look at castles for the day. I dived into the pool all neat and nonchalant, and emerged right beside her. "So," I said. "Tell me about Paris."


But there's nothing like bad head to swing those percentages back around. Bad head and banal conversation. We lay in their bed together and as she spoke I thought of her husband, golden and sweating beneath some medieval ruin –

"So you're at university. Which one?"

"Cambridge."

"And you must get up to plenty of trouble there."


Sometimes it takes saying a place's name to miss it. "Not really," I said. A pause. "Well, maybe just a little."



Our Tube

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'Mad Skillz' condenses five series of consummate HBO drama *The Wire* into a five minute rap. Runs through all the most memorable B-more moments.

BOXED IN

The weekly guide to staying in and switching on

Tru Blood is HBO's latest hit, a vampire drama riding on the coat-tails of *Twilight*-mania. But make no mistake: there is no teenage angst or abstinence to be found in the fictional Southern town of Bon Temps, where people who have sex with vampires are deemed 'fangbangers' and the local churches display signs declaring 'God Hates Fangs'. Based on the series *The Southern Vampire* by Charlaine Harris, *True Blood* posits a world where vampires have 'come out of the coffin' with the invention of Tru Blood, a synthetic blood substitute, and seek acceptance and integration into normal (or at least, nocturnal) society. More specifically, it revolves around the relationship of telepathic waitress Sookie Stackhouse (Anna Paquin) and broody vampire Bill Compton (Stephen Moyer), and the small-town prejudice and supernatural beings they encounter.

Season One is only just being shown on English television on digital channel F/X, although Season Two has just ended in America. And what an ending

it was. While the first season served primarily as an introduction to the characters, Season Two began with hearts being ripped out and bullish monsters appearing in back-alley roads. The season culminated in the complete destruction of Bon Temps, multiple orgies featuring everyone from the town drunk to the local sheriff, and in one truly memorable scene, Sookie's dumb-as-a-plank brother (Ryan Kwanten) impersonating Dionysus in front of an angry mob with nothing but his wits, chiselled abs and the classic line: "I am the God who comes!"

Writer Alan Ball has produced hits before, most notably the feted family drama *Six Feet Under*, but he's never written anything this entertaining or unashamedly populist, with crowd-pleasing nudity and gore galore. Ball sometimes isn't in full control of his material – the pacing in episodes occasionally lags and story arcs are sometimes stretched out for far longer than they should. But when *True Blood* is good, it's great, and Ball isn't afraid to toss in tongue-in-cheek political commentary with the B-grade goodness: one of the storylines follows the 'Fellowship of the Sun', an anti-vampire church, as they wage their own jihad against the toothy ones and all who associate with them.

Deeply weird, silly, and unashamedly, graphically violent and sexual, *True Blood* is like nothing else on TV – and God bless its campy, Southern Gothic heart for it. ZING TSJENG

Food and Drink

Tanya Iqbal seeks out a good Cambridge breakfast, and offers a fool-proof recipe for one of your own.



There is something wholly satisfying about sitting down to enjoy breakfast. For most students, breakfast in Cambridge is a hurried affair-wolfing down a burnt piece of toast that got stuck in the toaster, gulping the last grains of cereal or even daring to finish the already-opened can of baked beans in an attempt to suppress the pangs of morning hunger. It seems somewhat ironic, then, that in Cambridge there is a lot on offer in terms of a leisurely breakfast.

Cambridge staple Fitzbillies is better known for its cakes and Chelsea buns, but it also offers a substantial breakfast menu that transcends the sweet-savoury boundary of breakfast foods, offering pancakes with banana as well as many savoury delights. The décor is minimal but homely; there are wooden chairs and mustard yellow walls in a small but not cramped setting.

The service here is pretty dismal – there seems to be one waitress and it's a full house. I wait for my food to arrive. I continue to wait for my food to arrive. Eventually, it arrives. And it is quite literally a brunch 'stack' – there is a base of mashed potato seasoned with chives, a slice of lightly toasted breakfast muffin, two large slices of mushroom, a grilled tomato, another slice of English muffin, in that order, all perfectly balanced, with a little poached egg wobbling slightly on top.

The brunch stack requires careful disassembling in order to avoid any unbecoming breakfast explosions. The unusual mashed potato-poached egg combo proves a pleasing marriage of textures and flavours. The tomato is juicy and lightly grilled, while the poached egg reveals a golden yolk which, when it coats the soft English muffin, is quite delicious. By the end of my meal, I feel full but not weighed down.

I would like to have washed this pleasing cooked breakfast down with a beverage, but the four requests I made for tap water throughout my meal were to absolutely no avail. Frustratingly,

satisfying food but poor service seems to be a theme of Fitzbillies. This is a limiting factor on how much one can enjoy the overall Fitzbillies experience. At £6.95 for a meal that takes longer than it is perhaps worth, maybe it's not just the lack of tap water that leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Recipe: White Chocolate & Raspberry Muffins



If you fancy making your own breakfast, try this recipe:

Ingredients:

- 2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
- 75g/3oz caster sugar
- 250ml/9fl oz full-fat milk
- 110g/4oz unsalted butter, melted
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 300g/11oz plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 250g/9oz raspberries
- 200g pieces of white chocolate

1. Preheat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper muffin cases.
2. In a mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, sugar, milk, melted butter and vanilla extract until you reach a fluffy consistency.
3. Sift the flour and baking powder into the bowl, then carefully fold it into the mixture until well combined.
4. Fold the raspberries and white chocolate into the mixture.
5. Divide the batter mixture equally among the 12 prepared muffin cases and bake for 20-25 minutes. TANYA IQBAL



PAUL SMITH



PAUL SMITH

Best of Summer

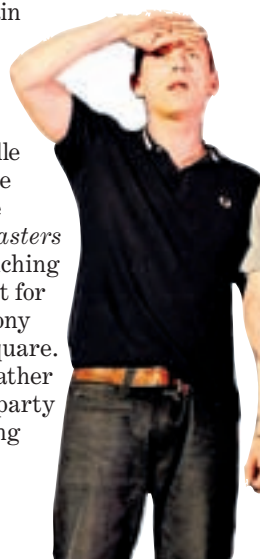
Are the gloomy days of autumn getting you down? Relive the highs of the warmest days of the year with Varsity.

DESIGNED & COMPILED BY ZING TSJENG

Best Exhibition

The Discovery of Spain, National Gallery of Scotland

It was an uninspiring summer for arts in London: Waterhouse at the Royal Academy (drippy nymphettes and their drippier swains) and Jeff Koons at the Serpentine (inflatable turtles and Popeye). Richer pickings were on offer north of the border and south of Pamplona. *The Discovery of Spain* at the National Gallery of Scotland was a glorious and intelligent survey of the British fascination with Spain and Spanish artists. In the days before the package tour colonised the Costa del Sol, the Brit holidaying in Spain was an aesthetic creature: a Baedeker-wielding connoisseur who arrived in Seville clutching his easel. It's the bookends to the exhibition that impress themselves on the imagination, though: Goya's chilling *Disasters of War* etchings and Picasso's gut-wrenching response to the Guernica bombings. But for sheer spectacle, the crown goes to Antony Gormley's *One & Other* in Trafalgar Square. 2,400 volunteers braved the British weather to strip, navel-gaze, and perform their party pieces for the benefit of an ever-changing audience of tourists. LAURA FREEMAN



Best Festival

Glastonbury

Not even news of MJ's death could put a dampener on the biggest party of the summer. Despite a frenzy of marketers producing commemorative t-shirts at extortionate prices, or excruciating covers of 'Heal The World', the strong celebratory atmosphere refused to disappear. Neil Young, Bruce Springsteen and in particular, Blur, made for delightfully satisfying headliners. A wonderful trinity of Yeah Yeah Yeahs (top left), Bat For Lashes and Bon Iver following each other on Sunday's Other stage was momentous, especially Karen O's technicolour Indian head-dress. Florence & the Machine (second from left) literally rose to greater heights when she spontaneously scaled the scaffolding of the John Peel Tent, and Animal Collective also dazzled on the Park Stage.

Michael Eavis's Somerset shindig was filled with moments of intense hilarity. When N.E.R.D's set ran half an hour behind time, Pharell Williams's look of sheer indignation when his microphone was switched off mid-song made for comic gold, as did Lady Gaga's surreal musings between songs ("I used to go to festivals, get naked and take acid").

Glastonbury's gargantuan scale and sprawling line-up is both its blessing and curse. Frustratingly, you leave with the feeling of having missed too many highlights, but that's all the more reason to return next year. PAUL SMITH

Best Band

Blur

Like getting your head checked by a jumbo jet, reforming one of the defining bands of the nineties isn't easy. It's dangerous. Blur's jubilant headliners (left) at Glastonbury and Hyde Park could well have resulted in career-tainting travesty. Despite a six year hiatus encompassing side projects as diverse as cartoon bands to organic cheese making, the lads still managed to pull off a blinder. While Damon Albarn remains a magnetic front man, it was Graham Coxon who emerged as an unsung hero. His guitar playing was equally as emotive on the Pyramid Stage as it was when he played his solo folk material in Cambridge's tiny Soul Tree club one month earlier. Detached from the giddy but shallow heights of Britpop, the strength of Blur's hits shone in their multitude. 'Parklife', ferociously sped up, gained a new punk sensibility while 'Tender' has matured over the years into an even more glorious concoction. For once, it was a vacation about musically looking backwards rather than forwards, and without nauseating nostalgia. In the same months that Oasis finally did music a favour and split a decade after their expiry date, who could have imagined Blur reigning victorious as the best 'new' band of the summer? Woohooo indeed. PAUL SMITH

Best Album

xx - The xx

Perhaps a soundtrack to the murky backstreets of London in the pre-dawn hours doesn't bring to mind the sun and the sea, but best summer album dues should go to The xx for their bleakly beautiful eponymous LP, which provides just that. The quartet of twenty year-olds from the capital's 'real life school of rock' Elliot School recorded the album at night in the basement of their record company. It shows: their reverb-drenched combination of soulful vocal harmonies and sparse, echoed guitar lines, fused with skeletal, jittery electronic beats is spacious and intimate all at the same time.

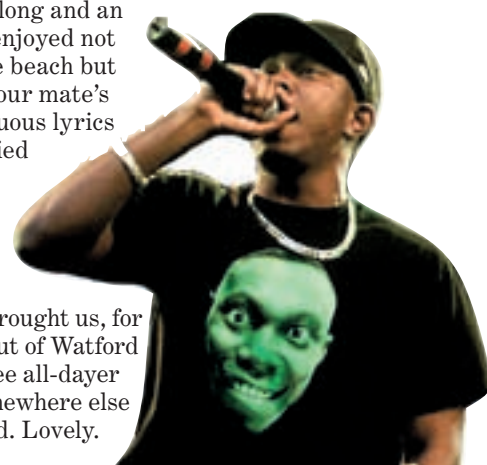
Sitting at number six in the NME's recent Future 50 list, they've already been a calm in the eye of the Reading and Leeds Festival's stormy cavalcade, and their ethereal indie-pop is currently opening for Florence and the Machine on her UK tour. True, *The Essential Michael Jackson* could just as easily have filled this slot, but after months of radio stations playing 'Man In The Mirror' on loop, it may be time to turn our ears to this black-clad fourpiece and their dark and decidedly un-summery sound of the summer. LAURIE TUFFREY

Best Song

Holiday - Dizzee Rascal

Success has changed Dylan Mills. Where juddering grime once tracked tales of police raids at dawn, he now contemplates the choice between partying in Ibiza or Milan to a soundtrack only suitable for Balearic pool parties. The sell-out isn't just good news for Dizzee's label (his own, incidentally, after a split with the majors regarding 'musical direction'). *Holiday* was inescapable because it demands cheesy, arms-aloft bopping, deeply uncool rapping along and an enormous grin, enjoyed not on a bright white beach but a rainy field or your mate's living room. Vacuous lyrics perfectly embodied the hedonism of summer, and a closing stretch of brilliant one-dimensional synth euphoria brought us, for thirty seconds, out of Watford and to a 35-degree all-dayer at Pascha, or somewhere else we couldn't afford. Lovely.

BETH STATON





Best Celebrity Gossip Katie & Peter

Katie Price and Peter Andre's split, followed by divorce and a fallout of nuclear proportions, has dominated summer tabloid headlines. The glamour model and singer have provided the nation with unfettered access to every moment of their four-year marriage since falling for each other on *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!* On September 9th, the couple were granted a 'quickie divorce' in under a minute after months of alleged infidelity on both sides. This came as no surprise to viewers of reality show *Katie and Peter*, which charted the escalating tension in the pair's relationship. The nation was divided into Team Katie and Team Peter as the distraught Jordan was photographed partying hard in Ibiza with a series of men, whilst Peter remained at home with the couple's two children, Tiaamii, 2, and Junior, 4. Andre maintains his claims of Jordan's affair with her married riding instructor, and accuses her of uncontrollable behaviour fuelled by alcohol binges. Price insists that Peter had a 'secret girlfriend' during their marriage and recently revealed that she had been the victim of rape. Is anyone surprised that red-top mudslinging remains the sole avenue of communication between the couple? CLAIRE GATZEN



Best Summer Blockbuster Star Trek

With *Star Trek* (top left), J.J. Abrams does the impossible: he reboots an entire film franchise while staying true to the spirit of the original, and in doing so breathes rude life into a series that has long since become irrelevant to an entire generation. Abrams assembles an outstanding cast composed mainly of unknowns and flings them into breathless action as young cadets aboard the USS Enterprise. Cameras careen and twist around thrilling fight scenes, with lens flares popping every few seconds as if to capture the heat of battle. But it's not all mindless action – *Star Trek* works as a futuristic coming-of-age story, with out-of-place cadets finding themselves on the Enterprise – Kirk is re-imagined, for example, as a rebellious, boozy drifter. No wonder it raked in over \$300 million at the box office and almost unilateral praise. *Star Trek* is a stirring example of that rare and splendid thing: an action film with a soul. PANDORA BATTLE

Best Indie Film (500) Days Of Summer

Boy meets girl, boy falls in love, girl tells boy that she's not looking for anything serious and could they please just be friends instead? It's not your typical love story, but *(500) Days of Summer* works by truthfully capturing the first rush of love and the inevitable pain of heartbreak. Pleasingly, the movie doesn't stint on any of the awkward conversations, sideways glances or thwarted desires that accompany any relationship, which lends it more emotional resonance than your average romcom. Its biggest cinematic conceit is telling the story non-chronologically – we see Tom and Summer's break-up first, and then the film jumps back and forth between love, heartbreak and reconciliation, allowing us to see how little statements and gestures balloon in retrospective significance. The film isn't perfect, and its pat ending may irritate some, but it's a breath of fresh air in an otherwise stale genre populated by tired sexist stereotypes and Katherine Heigl clones. MARTIN BRUCE

Best TV Show Desperate Romantics

Now, don't get us wrong – BBC2's Pre-Raphaelite drama was a turd of epic proportions. The characterisation was one-dimensional, the sex scenes cartoonish, the dialogue tackier than a bulletin board. You half expect the *Benny Hill* theme to start playing at any given moment. Yet, much like *Snakes on a Plane* and William Shatner's spoken word career, the programme's very direness is its greatest strength. *Desperate Romantics* (above left) entertains no illusions about what it is; it wears its silliness on its sleeve and knows it's not a history lecture. With its oom-pah-pah, Neil-Hannon-with-a-lobotomy score and such fantastic lines as "I'm Dante Gabriel Rossetti – artist, poet, half-Italian, half-mad!" and "Are you saying that everything I did before this was shit?", this priapic romp was just what it said on the tin; as Keith Barrett would say, it's a bit of fun. DANIEL JANES



Best New Craze Vampires

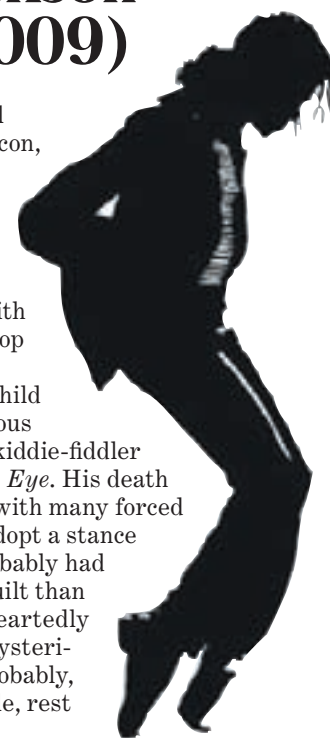
What is it about vampires that still gets our blood pumping? Six years after the celebrated TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* wrapped up, vampires are enjoying a resurgence of popularity. Aided by the cheekbones of actor Robert Pattinson and the hormonal angst of a million teenage girls, the high-school vampire romance *Twilight* (top right) has introduced a whole new generation to the delights of desiring the undead. On television screens, HBO series *True Blood* has been thrilling ever-increasing numbers with its graphic take on vampires in the Deep South (see Varsity's *Boxed In* review), while American network CW has produced *The Vampire Diaries*, which ups the ante by introducing two sulky, handsome vampires for the delectation of its teenage protagonist. Meanwhile, horror film director Guillermo del Toro has produced *The Strain*, a book in which vampires overrun Manhattan, and soon-to-released action films like *Blood: The Last Vampire* and *Daybreakers* look set to pick up where *Twilight* left off. Overkill? In a vampire's world, there's no such thing. BRYAN FORK

Best Fashion Trend Cut-Outs

This summer wasn't about what you were wearing; it was about what you weren't. Cut-out dresses, from Preen's peep-holes (left) to Mark Fast's crochet, have hit the catwalks hard and filtered rapidly down to the high-street. From dresses with sheer mesh inserts to heavily ripped and distressed leggings and jeans, an unexpected glimpse of skin has never been so hot. Crop tops, that old 80s throw-back, flash a daring inch of flesh - but keep your navel covered up to avoid that fatal Britney Spears look. For the more timid, crops and cut-outs can be layered over sheer slips, graphic print leggings or longer tank-tops to add colour and coverage. This summer, less was definitely more. PHILIPPA DUNJAY

End Note Michael Jackson (1958 – 2009)

Where to begin? Michael Jackson, beloved pop icon, died at the age of 50, less than three weeks before the start of his comeback tour *Is This It*. Officially the world's best-selling male solo pop artist and credited with changing the face of modern pop music, Jackson had fallen into disrepute with allegations of child sexual abuse and has the dubious distinction of spawning more kiddie-fiddler jokes than an episode of *Brass Eye*. His death came as a shock to the world, with many forced to do a quick about-face and adopt a stance of fashionable grief, which probably had more to do with retroactive guilt than actual mourning. Now wholeheartedly embraced by the screaming, hysterical multitudes, Michael can probably, for the first time in a long while, rest in peace. ZING TSJENG



Bird flies the nest

The Inbetweeners sees **Simon Bird** head from Cambridge back to school. He talks to **Laurie Tuffrey** about Footlights, class clowns and awards show antics

“It’s like American Pie, but with cynicism and self-awareness and irony, and with an overwhelming sense of failure,” offers Simon Bird as a description of The Inbetweeners, the Channel 4 sitcom about teenage life at a comprehensive school and all-round 4od favourite, in which he plays well-intentioned but supercilious Will McKenzie.

The Queens’ graduate and former Footlights president is returning to Cambridge this month, with his experimental game show playing two nights at The Junction, though he is more than happy to talk about his role as the geeky adolescent. “I think definitely that I was like Will when I was younger,” he affirms of his empathy with Will, “I think that’s why people think it’s accessible, the characters are all recognisable types.”

Will’s adventures with friends Jay, Neil and Simon, played by fellow Footlights alumni Joe Thomas, remain firmly on the glass half-empty side of male adolescence, featuring heart-break, rubbish house parties and an unending pursuit for success with girls, but all played out with an endearing sense of optimism and expletive-filled camaraderie. An accurate impression of sixth-form years? “I think of teenage life in general, it definitely is,” Bird considers, “and that’s probably why it appeals to teenagers”. Having graduated from Cambridge in 2006, Bird, now 25, is considerably older than Will’s seventeen years, though this wasn’t difficult to overcome: “I’m not sure if people can tell unless they know. I’m a couple of shades of grey, and I’m short - I think I pull it off, just... in my head I’m still basically seventeen anyway!”

Bird’s time at the University was formative for his comic ambitions. He explains that his degree, English, shared much of the same techniques as those needed for comic writing: “I think studying English at Cambridge encourages you to think outside the box and be creative,” he says, both skills “that tap directly into writing and coming up with jokes.” His thoughts of his time at the University remain fond: “I love Cambridge, I had a great time there. My most abiding memory is probably getting ready for the Footlights Smokers, and all the sort of ritual involved in that. That was my Cambridge experience really, Footlights rather than my degree”. Did his academic work suffer as a result of all his extra-curricular projects? “I don’t want to give the impression that I didn’t enjoy my degree. I had a great time at Queens and my Director of Studies was brilliant, but

Footlights was my passion, and I think in the end my degree was an excuse to do that.”

While he doesn’t cite himself as a former class clown - “that phrase always gives the impression of some twat up at the front doing a silly dance, who pulls down the teacher’s trousers” - it was at school that early glimpses of his future could be seen, “I liked it when people laughed at my jokes, all that malarkey”. When I ask if he agrees with what David Mitchell, another ex-Cambridge and Footlights man, said recently, that it was in his first term at the University that he decided he wanted to become a comedian,

what I think makes it original.”

And both the public and the critics would seem to agree. With positive reviews and E4’s highest viewing figures for this year so far, the BAFTA-nominated sitcom won the British Comedy Award for “Best New British Television Comedy”, with Bird also winning the “Best Male Comedy Newcomer” honours. Their success wasn’t the only event to catch attention at the awards show though, with the comedian Kevin Bishop’s heckling, which included throwing a bottle of pomegranate juice at the programme’s cast and crew (a video of Bishop’s antics has garnered over 200,000 hits on

“I don’t think people can tell that I’m older than Will... in my head I’m still basically seventeen anyway!”

Bird’s response is immediate: “I think that is probably true. When I got to Cambridge, I took part in the virgin smoker, and that went well and the people [Footlights members], I really liked. And that was something that made me think I really wanted to do it.”

While his stand-up has something of the biting self-deprecation of Ricky Gervais about it, it was in fact the student comics immediately around him that provided inspiration. “More of an influence on me and Joe [Thomas] were the Footlights lot who were just leaving when we got to Cambridge,” he explains, picking out Tom Basden, and “those in the summer tour [Non-Sexual Kissing]. They were great and probably had more of an influence on me than David Mitchell and the older generation of Footlights comedians.”

It was through Footlights that both Bird and Thomas landed their roles in The Inbetweeners. Having seen them in Niceties in Edinburgh, the sitcom’s writers Iain Morris and Damon Beesley, whose other credits include Flight Of The Conchords, met up with the pair, who then began writing sketches for them. While not initially allowed to audition for The Inbetweeners as they were “too old”, this was all to change in a case of experience over youth, when the writers “got a bit desperate and it was a week before filming, they gave us a phone call and gave us the parts.” The Inbetweeners may appeal to fans of American Pie and Superbad, movies that deal with similar issues, which both Morris and Beesley are fans of. Bird: “what I really like about The Inbetweeners is that I think it’s a British take on those American teen films... that’s

YouTube), also causing a stir. Bird laughs when recalling the event, “I think it’s just, at awards shows you’re plied with free alcohol and encouraged to be a bit anarchic! I don’t think there was any malice or ill feeling.” An in-joke (the writers and Bishop know each other)? “If it was, we certainly weren’t in on it - I don’t think he’s as much of a twat as those credits make him seem!”

Awards show jokes aside, Bird confirms that the show will return for a third series, while a film is “in the works”. Other British sitcoms that have tried to make the leap to the silver screen have suffered, see The League of Gentlemen, something which Bird readily admits: “it’s difficult for me as it’s just totally up to what the script is like. I’ve just got to trust the writers and they’ve done a pretty good job so far, so let’s just hope that they manage to avoid some of the pitfalls the other shows have fallen into.”

On the subject of advice for aspirant comedians, Bird sees the University as a good training ground. “Just use your time in Cambridge to experiment, go crazy, I think Footlights is the best place to do your comedy apprenticeship.” And advice for freshers? Perhaps work hard, as Will might advise? Try to attend all your lectures? Keep a balanced diet? Actually, a bit of nightlife advice: “Cindies was the one everyone used to go to, it was rubbish! Fez was my favourite, that gets the Bird stamp of approval.” Fez it is, then. You heard it here first people.

‘Simon Bird Presents An Experimental Game Show’ is on twice at The Junction on 20th October. See www.junction.co.uk for details.



Bat For Lashes

SUNDAY OCTOBER 4TH, CORN EXCHANGE, 19:30. (£19 ADV.)

Pick of the week Music

The reason why Speech Debelle shouldn't have won the Mercury Prize returns to Cambridge to showcase tracks from her outstanding album *Two Suns*. Support from Yeasayer.



The Varsity Week



Freshers' Fayre

TUES OCTOBER 6TH & WEDS 7TH, KELSEY KERRIDGE SPORTS HALL, 10:00-18:00 (TUES)/10:00-16:00 (WEDS)

Sign up for hundreds of clubs (perhaps the Medieval Reenactment Society, left), and have your Hermes inbox filled with events that you will never go to. Apart from *Varsity*.

Pick of the week Events

Film

Toy Story: 3D

VUE CINEMAS, DAILY 12.00, 14.00, 16.00, 18.00, 20.00, 22.00.

To infinity and beyond, namely the Vue Cinema.

(500) Days of Summer

VUE CINEMAS, DAILY FRI-TUES: 14:50, 17:10, 19:20, 21:30, WEDS/THURS 19:40, WEDS ONLY 22:20.

Catch Varsity's indie film of the summer while you can. See page 21.

The Soloist

VUE CINEMAS, DAILY (12:10 NOT SUN/WEDS/THURS), FRI/SAT 23:45.

Robert Downey Jr and Jamie Foxx star in a heart-warming about a journalist who befriends a homeless violin prodigy.

Dorian Gray

VUE CINEMAS, FRI/SAT/WED 22.50.

Oliver Parker's big screen version of Oscar Wilde's only novel, featuring Colin Firth, Ben Barnes and St. Catz alumni Rebecca Hall.

District 9

VUE CINEMAS, DAILY 16:30, 19:00, 21:30. FRI/SAT/ WED LATE 00:00.

Director of Lord Of The Rings Peter Jackson brings us a sci-fi film about aliens being exploited in South Africa.

The Invention of Lying

VUE CINEMAS, SAT/SUN ONLY 11:30, DAILY 13:50, 16:20, 18:40, 21:00, FRI/SAT/WEDS LATE 23:20.

Ricky Gervais makes his directorial debut in a film where he plays a man who discovers the power of not telling the truth. No funny dances.



Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs

VUE CINEMAS, SAT/SUN ONLY 11:00, DAILY 13:10, 15:20, 17:30.

An invention goes wrong, causing food to rain out of the sky. Probably not an Oscar candidate.

Music & Nightlife

Friday 2nd October

Joan Baez

CORN EXCHANGE, 19:30. (£39.50 ADV.)

Sixties folk protest singer brings her impressive repertoire to Cambridge. See next week's Varsity for a review.



Sunday 4th October

Oasis @ Fez

FEZ, 10:00-03:00. (£3-4)

Cambridge's favourite club night is back.

Monday 5th October

Noah and The Whale

THE JUNCTION 1, 19:00. (£12 ADV.)

Pop folksters and favourites of bedroom acoustic pluckers, Noah and The Whale return to tour their new album *The First Days of Spring*. Expect checked shirts, perfect vocal harmonies and hopeful teens waiting for 'Five Years Time'.

Them Youth

THE PORTLAND ARMS, 20:00. (£5)

Another Green Minds presentation, the NME says that Them Youth make music to 'turn up on headphones when staring out of train windows'. Perhaps inadvisable if you're feeling homesick.

Wednesday 7th October

Alexisonfire & Anti-Flag

THE JUNCTION 1, 19:00. (£15 ADV.)

Screamy emos Alexisonfire and hardened political punks Anti-Flag headline the Eastpak Antidote Tour at The Junction.

Mike Westbrook's 'Off Abbey Road'

THE JUNCTION 2, 20:00. (£8-16)

Coinciding with the fortieth anniversary of The Beatles' album, Mike Westbrook re-creates the classic LP in modern jazz style. Ever fancied hearing 'Octopus's Garden' played with a tuba? Now's your chance.

Theatre

My Fair Lady

CAMBRIDGE ARTS THEATRE, FRI-SAT (10TH) 19:30, SAT 14:30. (£12.50-27.50)

Featuring a ravishing score, an abundance of some of the finest songs ever written for musical theatre and the cream of Cambridge's amateur performing talent, this is a 'loverley' night not to be missed.

Two Gentlemen of Verona

ADC THEATRE, TUES-FRI, 19.45 (£6-10)

Shakespeare's heart-warming and hilarious story about the universal experience of being young, confused and in love.



Captain Improv

ADC THEATRE, TUES, 23:00. (£4-5)

Fresh back from the Edinburgh Fringe ICE, the combined powers of imagination and improvisation, accompanied by fight scenes, stunts and songs - all made up on the spot, in front of your eyes - will turn the most bizarre of comic-book plots into the very best of comedy performances.

Cambridge Footlights in 'Wishful Thinking'

ADC THEATRE, WED-SAT, 23:00. (£4-6)

Back from another great year at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, enjoy the world famous Cambridge Footlights live onstage as they return home from their annual comic odyssey around Britain.

Arts

Ongoing Exhibitions

Fitzwilliam Museum (Free)

Lumière - Lithographs by Odilon Redon (until January 10th)
Special Display: Matthew Boulton and the Industrial Revolution (until March 21st)
Sculpture promenade (until January 31st)
Endless forms: Charles Darwin, Natural Science and the Visual Arts (until October 4th)

Peoples Portraits

GIRTON COLLEGE, UNTIL DECEMBER 1ST, (FREE)

Millenial Royal Society of Portrait Painters' collection on long-term loan to Girton, depicting ordinary people from all walks of life.

3 FOLIOS

CLARE HALL, UNTIL NOVEMBER 15TH, (FREE)

A collection of Julia Hedgecoe's photographs.

A Voyage Round The World

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, UNTIL DECEMBER 23RD, (FREE)

Manuscripts and natural history documents from the UL's huge Darwin archive.

Monday 5th October

The Way to the Stars: a History of College Astronomy

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

Exhibition of seven hundred years of astronomy at St John's including medieval manuscripts and astronomical instruments.

Wednesday 7th October

Endellion String Quartet

WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL, 19:30-21:30. (£10-20)

Part of the 800 celebrations, the renowned quartet play Haydyn, Weir, Holloway and Brahms in their first concert of the season.

Friday 9th October

Aranjuez Mon Amour

THE CONSERVATORY, 7 GRANGE ROAD, 19.00 (£20)

"The life and music of Joaquín Rodrigo in his own words." Seventy years after the composition of Joaquín Rodrigo's Aranjuez Guitar Concerto, his daughter Cecilia Rodrigo reads her father's moving account of his life's struggle, and guitarist Carlos Bonell plays the music.

Talks & Events

Friday 2nd October

Jesterlarf Comedy Club

THE JUNCTION 2, 20:30. (£11)

The Jesterlarf Comedy Club returns for its monthly residency presenting some of the finest comedians from the UK's prestigious comedy club circuit.



Saturday 3rd October

Ideas in the Community

ROSS STEET COMMUNITY CENTRE, 11.00-16.00 (FREE)

The Festival of Ideas travels into the local community to offer a range of talks taster sessions and workshops for all ages, which will provide a taste of the wider Festival taking place later this month. Covering a range of topics suggested by the community centres, including; 'Fun, Food and Fitness', 'Gardening - grow your own', and 'Crime scene investigation'.

Tuesday 6th October

Professor Chris Clark

GATSBY ROOM, WOLFSON COLLEGE, 17.45 (FREE)

Professor Chris Clark of St Catherine's College, winner of the 2006 Wolfson History Prize for his book *Iron Kingdom*, speaks about 'Serbia and the Outbreak of War in 1914' at the Wolfson College Humanities Society.

Wednesday 7th October

Cradle to Cradle design

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, 18:00-19:30 (FREE)

Bill McDonough speaks about his Cradle to Cradle philosophy and design practice. Cradle to Cradle design as opposed to 'cradle to grave' offers a new paradigm for human activity that creates a sustaining relationship with the natural world by emulating living systems.

MUSIC

LUCY JOHNSTON



“I’m not saying you’re not special, but you fall in a bell-curve”- Tim Minchin in ‘If I Didn’t Have You’, a tribute to his wife. His other songs included ‘Bears Don’t Dig On Dancing’ and the environmental-awareness rocker ‘Canvas Bags’

Tim Minchin

CORN EXCHANGE, 30TH SEPTEMBER
★★★★★

Musical comedy has been getting more popular of late, what with Flight Of The Conchords, David O’Doherty and the Mighty Boosh totting up their fans. Firmly positioned as one of the genre’s veterans is Tim Minchin, the wild-haired Australian piano-playing comedian, who played his second gig in two weeks at the Corn Exchange on Wednesday night.

The extra date was added due to popular demand, and it’s not hard to see why. Minchin is a consummate showman, looking like a red-headed Russell Brand in his elaborate shirt and black skinny jeans and thrashes out his songs with impressive musical chops. Almost as adept with just a mic as he is behind the piano, his between-song patter is a mixture of witty observation, offbeat statements – “I’ve always thought that life is

like a spiritual tupperware party, someone’s always trying to flog you see-through shit you don’t need” - and audience participation.

He covers a lot of topics, from the terrible prejudice suffered by that most oppressed minority, ginger people, to ‘The Good Book’, a foot-stomping ode to the wonders of The Bible. Religion is one topic that gets Minchin excited; at least a quarter of the show has something to do with how blinkered the comedian thinks it is. Mocking those who believe in prayer, he laughs at the idea of a football player hoping that God will help him score and leave off his “day job of slowly killing off African children”. Fan favourite ‘If I Didn’t Have You’, written to his wife and featuring the refrain “if I didn’t have you, someone else would do”, despite sounding like a Craig David pastiche, elicits a big cheer.

It isn’t all good, though. The second half, though, lacks the spark of the first, and Minchin gets close to losing it with a song penned to the journalist who gave

him a bad review on his first tour, with the lyrics lacking the necessary wit to stop it from sounding predictably bitter. However, he regains momentum with ‘Storm’, a nine-and-a-half-minute-long beat poem about a flaky hippie girl, whose views on homeopathy make Minchin feel “like a rabbit trapped in the headlights of vacuous crap”.

His encore presents perhaps the most surprising showcase of Minchin’s songwriting skill. After giving us a quick burst of fellow ivory-tickling ginger Elton John’s ‘Candle In The Wind’ and ‘Can You Feel The Love Tonight’, ‘Not Perfect’ sees the comedian satisfied with himself and his life, “fine” even if “they’re not perfect”, leaving the audience audibly sighing. He finishes the main set, though, with ‘Dark Side’, which gives Minchin the chance to live out his rock star ambitions, with fireworks (“pyrotechnics - yeah!”), smoke machines and a dash of knowing theatricality. What can you say? Perhaps comedy is the new rock n’ roll. LAURIE TUFFREY

Albums Every Right-Minded Person Should Own

I first became aware of My Bloody Valentine’s *Loveless* after it was featured in a magazine top five of loudest albums, something which is undoubtedly true - the band came to define the volume-friendly shoegazing genre, known for its swirling, layered rock, and were notorious for their live performances’ crushing waves of feedback and distortion.

Yet viewing My Bloody Valentine as nothing but loud is to miss the point. *Loveless* is so much more. Kevin Shields’s and Bilinda Butcher’s perfectly twinned vocals are beautifully delicate, buried deep in the mix beneath the ebb and flow of discordant, liquid



Loveless

MY BLOODY VALENTINE (1991)

guitars. The earth-shaking sweep of ‘Only Shallow’ is matched to the perfect pop of ‘When You Sleep’, ‘Sometimes’ is an effervescent ballad, embellished by an underlying grind of guitars and ‘To Here

Knows When’ is sublime.

Much of the ephemera surrounding the album, that it reputedly put their label Creation into near-bankruptcy and rumours of Shields’s arch-perfectionism almost leading to the album being scrapped after he heard a sonic glitch on press-release cassettes, pale to nothing in comparison to the album itself.

Shields remastered the album last year, but remained dissatisfied with the results, leading to a series of pushed-back release dates. Although this new edition was due to be released later this month, it is now marked to hit the shelves in January 2010.

Standing in a packed tent at Ireland’s Electric Picnic festival last year, ready with the earplugs, I was lucky enough to see the recently reformed MBV take to the stage and regain their brilliance, a perfect noise. LAURIE TUFFREY

New Releases

Vaughan Williams

FOLK SONGS OF THE FOUR SEASONS

★★★★★



As with many of Vaughan Williams’ compositions, *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* was written for a specific occasion and performers, in this case the inaugural Women’s Institute Singing Festival.

This work is no neglected masterpiece, but the settings are almost without exception delightful: touching, simple but not simplistic. The pure and unaffected singing by the women of Clare College Choir, bolstered by four members of the English Voices, is exemplary.

The other item, ‘In Windsor Forest’ is an excerpt from the marvellous opera *St John in Love*. The undoubted highlight of the whole CD is the extraordinary ‘Wedding Chorus’, one of the most beautiful moments of the opera, here most impressively sung and with sumptuous support from David Willcocks and the Dmitri Ensemble.

This is Vaughan Williams at his finest - ravishing modal harmony with pliant choral-writing mixing into the beautiful orchestral colours. GUIDO MARTIN-BRANDIS

Tyondai Braxton

CENTRAL MARKET

★★★★★



In contrast to the offerings of his band Battles, Tyondai Braxton’s *Central Market*, almost asks to be reviewed within the classical section of Reviews. Indeed, this album seems an attempt to reinvent the neo-classical style for the digital age.

First track, ‘Opening Bell’ sounds more like Philip Glass than Dizzee Rascal, though any suggestions of pastiche are successfully undermined by a sprinkling of contemporary sampling and heavy bass lines. Similarly, ‘Platinum Rows’ presents the listeners with Stravinsky-esque passages, but remains firmly in 2009. More classic rock than classical, ‘J. City’ is the album’s worst offender, unfortunately making Braxton’s links to the draining raga-like tones of Battles all the more obvious.

What seemed at first an exercise in technology’s more musical side actually highlights its shortcomings, with Braxton more talented at conjuring atmospherics than genuine songs. THOMAS KEANE

Basement Jaxx

SCARS

★★★★★



Scars rejects *Crazy Itch Radio*’s frenetic collage of brass bands, symphony orchestras and gypsy rave-ups in favour of more sophisticated songs with new emotional depths.

Despite that, the ska-infused ‘Saga’ and the eurodance closer ‘Gimme Somethin’ True’ prove that *Scars* is still a Basement Jaxx party album. An impish sense of humour emerges in the junk shop trombone riff in ‘What’s a Girl Gotta Do’ and the gloriously naff sample of ‘Maniac’ by Gary Hobbs and the Hot Sauce Band in ‘Twerk’.

It is on numbers like ‘Raindrops’ where they astonish with its vocal, an electronic, androgynous falsetto, giving the euphoric chorus a frisson of otherworldly sexuality. Within the perfect proportions of ‘Feelings Gone’, Sam Sparro sings with a silky vulnerability over a heady disco accompaniment. These tracks rank among their best, representing a departure from their cluttered last two albums to something more composed and mature. EDWARD HENDERSON

Fuck Buttons

TAROT SPORT

★★★★★



If Fuck Buttons’ debut LP *Street Horrrsing* played tough and angry, their new album *Tarot Sport* is the sound of raw, breathless excitement. Andrew Hung and Benjamin John Power go after a more melodic, expansive sound than before, yet they remain a noise group at heart.

Their masterful layering of distortion and scuzz with smoother synths lends the album an exquisite tension. Yet the new emphasis on percussion and the pulse of an electro drumbeat sees a fresh momentum and energy. The whole album rushes from the opening sonic sparkle and wash of ‘Surf Solar’ to the closing, massive anthemic ‘Flight of the Feathered Serpent’, feeling like a single, hour-long song.

While almost entirely instrumental, there is so much going on that the vocals aren’t missed. It is the mix of their trademark discord with a newfound momentum that ultimately gives a distinctive aesthetic and truly brilliant new sound. PETER MORELLI

FILM AND ARTS

Cambridge Film Festival

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, 17TH-27TH
SEPTEMBER

★★★★★

It's easier to review a film than a film festival. There is so much variety; and so little time to see and experience it all that it's near impossible to give any

real insight into the dozens of films you've watched. For a regional film festival, Cambridge is one of the best you will find, and the Arts Picturehouse is the perfect venue for it.

For those who love British spy flicks there was a treasure trove of revivals. Alongside classics like *The Ipcress Files* and *The Third Man* (pictured), ran the complete

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy television series on the big screen. Two of Alan Bennett's television films, *An Englishman Abroad* and *A Question of Attribution*, from 1983 and 1992 respectively, were also on show.

Festivals are often at their best, however, when you discover delights you weren't expecting. Buried within a series of slightly oblique short films, there was a wonderful piece of archive footage from the University of Cambridge Freshers' Fair in the early 1960s in *Cambridge on Camera*. The interviewer talks politics with CUCA, CULC, the Liberals, and (rather amusingly) the Communist Party – 'I have visited the Soviet Union and great strides have been made there.' Clipped accents, forthright views and utter obnoxiousness.

Local film-making talent was shown off with the work from Screen East. Unfortunately their signature piece, Emma Sullivan's *After Tomorrow*, nominated for the Short Film Palme d'Or, could not be shown due to festival contractual agreements, but the remaining five films showed real promise. In particular, *Shadows and Dust* was visually stunning if conceptually dull; and all the others were a re-write away from perfect. The one exception was *Jacob*. Concerning a child obsessed with comic books, this juvenile work looked as though it had been made by a four year old on a Mac.

Of the rest, *A Bad Day to Go Fishing* was a rare glimpse of Uruguayan cinema, and it did not disappoint. Perhaps less of a satire than it wanted to be, this study of the contradictory relationship between Prince, a wrestling manager, and his champ, Jacob van Oppen, was compelling. Almost better than *Midnight Cowboy*, discovering this hauntingly painful portrait was a highlight of the festival. JAMES SHARPE



"In Switzerland they had brotherly love - they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock." Harry Lime to Holly Martins in *The Third Man* (1949)

Cambridge Literary Review

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE PRESS, £8.00

★★★★★



Out of the swirling vortex of profit coming from the University's 800th Anniversary celebrations, comes the *Cambridge Literary Review*, a rather recondite volume of Cambridge's new poetry, prose and criticism. Established this autumn, the Review comes after

the "realisation that this town is awash with great writers but sorely lacking in creative fora".

Thus, this intimidatingly generous 250 page publication, which does indeed accommodate a plethora of writing if under a somewhat particularised definition of greatness. An emphasis upon formal innovation and what many would be tempted to label 'difficulty' underlies much of the verse collected in the opening 70 pages, resulting in a reading experience which moves us perhaps cerebrally before emotionally. With the exception of an excerpt from John Wilkinson's 'The Swing', we wait some ten pages for the emergence of a first person pronoun, and when one appears it is within the rather apt question 'Did you know I wrote an honors thesis / at Ohio State on Isherwood?' And yet the perceived academese of the material is never self-satisfied and often yields up moments of humour and of poignancy. Ian Patterson's poem

'60 Windows' presents a perfect case in point, compressing 'phrases taken from page sixty of sixty novels' into a sequence of tercets that contains a similar intertextuality of emotion and perspective.

Equally welcome are the 'Feature: On Cambridge Poetry and Essays' section, where wider, more contextual discussions are offset by exercises in Cambridge's trademark practical criticism which provide lucid, accessible readings of the kind of complex poetry endorsed by the *Cambridge Literary Review*.

Should these explanatory sections actually precede the prose and poetry, we might be better prepared to meet it on its own demanding terms. Though the general quality and precision of its content is difficult to dispute, whether the *Cambridge Literary Review* will (or even aims to) effect more than an interested minority seems like another question entirely. ELIOT D'SILVA

Arts Comment

Trinity - the best access programme that Cambridge could hope for

Hugo Gye



There are two Cambridges.

One is a world of essay deadlines, Wednesdays at Cindies, awkward fresher fumbles and sleepless nights in the UL. It is a world ruled by bureaucrats and health 'n' safety rules, a world where the greatest excitement comes when they serve steak in Hall. This is the world into which hundreds of bright-eyed freshers will emerge this week, buzzing with expectation.

The other Cambridge is rather different. It is a world of intrigue and mystery, where no-one does any work, murder plots and global conspiracies are constantly afoot, and everyone is having sex everywhere, all of the time. This – thinly disguised as 'Trinity College, Bridgeford' – is the world of *Trinity*, ITV2's cracking new Oxbridge-based drama.

All those who have watched *Trinity* will doubtless appreciate its sparkling dialogue, watertight plotting and thoughtful characterisation. This programme is, however, more than just entertainment: it is also the best advertisement Cambridge could possibly have. Granted, it features discrimination, privilege – the college is run by the charmingly yellow-clad, yet insatiably vicious Dandelion Club – and even racism; but the pace of life never slows, no-one is ever bored, and even the Boy From Lewisham is happy as long as he's in the arms of the Incestuous Blonde.

Most access schemes do their best to present Cambridge as a fundamentally normal place, no different to anywhere else. The idea, of course, is to stop people being put off applying – but why would anyone want to apply to somewhere which is apparently so boring? If there's nothing different about Cambridge, then why should it be considered special?

Trinity takes a different approach. Its version of Oxbridge

life is thoroughly unique, and correspondingly spectacular. Ultimately, therefore, any potential applicants with even the slightest sense of fun cannot help being attracted by the baroque absurdity of it all: why would you not want to join a world with such zinging one-liners, such glorious eccentricities?

Besides, Trinity College, Bridgeford is not all bad. It's a very diverse place: alongside the strutting King Of The Dandelions, we are presented with the Mad Welsh Girl, the Pretty Christian, the Sex-Starved Stoners, the Turncoat Northerner and even the Genetically-Engineered Rower – all in all, a veritable melting pot.

Moreover, *Trinity*'s principles of self-government are truly admirable. The real Cambridge may have been taken over by an army of administrators, by the shady underworld of departmental secretaries and junior bursars, but its fictional counterpart remains admirably free, as all decisions seem to be taken by the Sinister Dean and the Well-Meaning Warden. Bridgeford appears to have stayed the overbearing hand of outside influence in a way that Cambridge has been unable to.

So instead of lamenting the damage done to Cambridge's reputation by this eminently silly programme, we should celebrate that *Trinity* has shown us a new way forward in attracting applicants. We must forget about playing up the mundanity of our lives, and start celebrating those things which make Oxbridge unique. From now on, access tours must always include a showing of *Trinity*, the best possible way to draw in those impressionable youngsters and let them know that, if they are willing to enter into the realm of illegal parties, ghostly visitations and LOTS of sex, there is a way forward. We owe ITV a big favour.



"Down it, Fresher!" The lads and ladettes of the fictional spires get ready for a night on the lash and a rough and tumble in the turrets.

View From the Groundlings



Cambridge Theatre

It's back! Grab your script, dust off your dancing shoes, and leave your library alone - this term Cambridge theatre is calling your name. Festival goers will have noted the many varied talents on the rain-splattered cobbled streets of Edinburgh this summer. Read up on what our reviewers thought of the Cambridge shows in this week and next week's *Varsity*. Saw it and think you can do better? Great! The freshers' fair opens this week and the actors list is up and running. There is no excuse, a plethora of stage fright and back patting awaits you.

The world-famous Footlights return this week from touring with *Wishful Thinking*. You can read what our reviewer thought of them in Edinburgh; but, even better, see them for yourselves at the ADC. With a script that has been crafted over many months of heckling, you don't want to miss out on the laughter. Book now to avoid disappointment.

Also be sure to check out the homerun of CAST's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, one of Shakespeare's earliest and rarely performed comedies. One of two of plays of Shakespeare to tour internationally this summer - CAST to America and PPJT to Japan - this week's ADC mainshow is a great opportunity to see a well-honed production on home turf. Last year's CAST homerun broke *Varsity* records, winning six stars. Let's see if this year's demands a similar madness.

Cambridge theatre has had a cracking summer, but now as the clouds loom and webmail incessantly pings with email after email from an unrelenting DoS, we must face the new academic year with our heads held high, the lights on, and the curtains open. If you find yourself involved in a Cambridge production this term and want it reviewed, or simply desperate to comment on something you saw, then drop me an email at theatre@varsity.co.uk, and relish the applause. LAUREN COONEY

The Wind in the Willows

GILDED BALLOON, EDINBURGH

★★★★★

Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* represents all that is best about the English Summer: unlit-tered hedgerows, riverbanks and mallards, row boats and picnics, the open road and the dusty highway, the heath and the rolling downs, poop-poop! It was the summer promised by the Met Office; the summer of barbecues and staycations that never materialised. Caroline and James Moran's adaptation of the children's classic is a rapturous, sun-drenched celebration of the idyllic English Summer. Birds tweet, ducks quack, and the parachute-silk river laps languidly across the stage. Only the presence of the dastardly Weasels and Toad's roaring motor cars stand in the way of a glorious summer.

James Walker, in green grease paint and tweeds, is an irrepressible Toad. His prison lament and his feigned illness while under house arrest at Toad Hall are masterclasses in hammy brilliance. Talking of which, the Weasels are reimagined as flappers with cut-glass accents, lead by Cat Cahill, whose life's aim is to carry out 'operation break into Toad Hall and steal the ham.' Cahill delivers her lines with Violet Elizabeth Bott aplomb, conceiving her 'pwans' with the help of

her 'mwassive bwain.' Her Weasel cohorts are deputies of Baldrickian ineptitude.

The four leads, Toad, Ratty (Tom Ovens), Moley (Ed Rowett) and Badger (Ben Ashenden) each assume their character's physical traits with understated conviction. Toad adopts a splayed-leg springiness, all knees and bobbing head, while Ratty is a self-contained figure who enters every scene nose first. Rowett is a short-sighted shrinking Mole, poking his head out of Toad's caravan as though emerging from a winter's hibernation, while Ashenden's Badger is a slow, shambling creature. Clever writing has transformed the Mole/Badger relationship, with Badger labouring under the belief that cowed, put-upon Mole is something of a renegade in need of constant suppression. Our hearts break for Moley who is left to sit on a 'little low stool' while Ratty occupies the comfortable rocking chair. Ashenden's Churchillian rhetoric as he leads his comrades into battle against the Weasels (Badger armed with a blunderbuss, the rest with baguettes and a ham and pickle grenade) is sublime, as is his firm 'no' when the snow in the Wild Woods threatens to soak him.

Toad's prolonged and farcical chase scene pursued by country coppers is perhaps the only weak point in an otherwise charming production. The swashbuckling Battle of the Ham is magnificently choreographed, our heroes triumph and the Weasels are left to eat 'Nigella's mud gateau.' LAURA FREEMAN

Cardenio

C CUBED, EDINBURGH

★★★★★

The fact that a play is probably by Shakespeare is not an automatic reason to put it on. Especially not on the Edinburgh Fringe, where thousands of performers fight to convince you why they need to be there and you need to see them. TACT didn't seem to feel much urgency in exploring this strange tale of betrayal and perversity, unless to please tourists by dishing up a Shakespearean secret.

The production was bemusing and frustrating, because if they'd ditched the complicated Elizabethan costumes and half-eaten cart, and relied on pure storytelling skills, this really could have been good. The story is dark and simple, centring around the machinations of Henriquez, who charms and seduces Violante before raping and abandoning her for his best friend's girl, Leonora. It's nasty like *All's Well that Ends Well*. Ben Blyth was great as the cad, flirting with the audience, and complicating our sympathies. He and Toby Parker-Rees, as Leonora's father, proved that trapping an Edinburgh

audience in a theatrical world takes the same kind of energy as Shakespeare's company would have tapped to demand attention in the Globe. They made us forget the over-loud air-conditioning, to wonder whether the duel to the death between Julio and Henriquez might not take one of us with them.

These were exciting moments, when a character's concerns were tangled and untangled before our eyes and in our faces. The performances of Katie Alcock and Alashiya Gordes, as the two female leads, were intense and convincing, but did not engage us directly, belonging to television drama. This weird difference between male and female acting styles made me feel that the production was complicit in Henriquez' voyeurism...Why did the women avoid the audience's eyes? This company needed to feel some active curiosity about Cardenio's problems beyond the literary-historical (for me, the scene of Leonora's drugging immediately conjured up horror-stories of modern date-rape). This would have been a reason to jump-start the 'lost play'. TACT has great energy, but even if Cardenio probably is by Shakespeare, I'd rather see them devise their next show themselves. KATE O'CONNOR

THEATRE

REBECCA PITT



Wishful Thinking

PLEASANCE, OVER THE ROAD 2, EDINBURGH

★★★★★

With the gloom of the Pleasance Over The Road 2 rendering any note-taking unintelligible spaghetti, it's fortuitous that the show follows a familiar pattern: jam as many puns as possible into one minute. Applause. Edgy sketch involving social awkwardness and misunderstanding. Applause. Repeat.

Edinburgh finds their current comedy vehicle in better shape than the term-time production. In fairness, this year's cast is more than capable of genuine hilarity. Liam Williams and Daran Johnson excel in a beach-combing friendship gone bad ("So that's it? Comb-over?!"), as well as a rather bizarre love affair. Williams delivers his lines with such trademark aplomb that the immortal observation of the happy couple 'fucking like a broken metronome', goes down a treat with the forty-something audience.

The long game finds equal success. Alastair Roberts and Keith Akushie combine superbly for a case of mistaken identity at

the office; the finale brings Tom Evans and the rest of the cast together in a surreal witch hunt of Abi Tedder's newlywed. The arrival of a broomstick salesman at such an inopportune moment is oddly gripping, and an indication of a band of comics, honed by scores of Smokers, finally maturing.

But there still seems to be something missing. Like our little friend Angus, the show lacks polish. It bumbles around like a drunken uncle - albeit one with impeccable comic timing - with punch lines falling into the darkness. Direction is somewhat arbitrary, and whilst it may be floating above the cesspit of comedy that constitutes The Fringe, the planned national tour is another thing altogether.

So the verdict: don't fork out £100 on a train ticket just yet (well, at least until you secure a child-free carriage), but *Wishful Thinking* is still well worth a look. There's nothing startlingly new here, but then again, the Pussycat Dolls have seemingly been releasing the same song for five years without any problems. And you know you love the Footlights. Dontcha? ALISDAIR PAL

GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS: ★★★★★ Rat-infested Toad Hall ★★★★★ Caravan crash ★★★★★ Badger's lair ★★★★★ Nothing quite like messing around it boats ★★★★★ The Marvellous Mr. Toad

THEATRE

Metamorphosis

C VENUES, EDINBURGH
★★★★★

Max Barton's *Metamorphosis* was jam-packed with fabulously striking images and memorable choreography created by a lycra-clad chorus climbing and slinging around a scaffold. In fact, it was very much like a rich jam, with grotesque make-up, circus music and stark lighting making a slick and flavour-some hour's entertainment.

However, the dense stylish elements ended up overpowering the story and I was left comfortably cool, rather than troublesomely cold, as Kafka or Berkoff might have liked it. Sometimes this was due to fast pacing, presumably to pack the production into its slot. I felt the circus mood and interspersed numbers were unnecessary, and prevented me from thinking about, and being much disturbed by Gregor's repulsive insecti-morphosis. Set-pieces such as the 'Lodger' and 'Chief-clerk' scenes provided welcome slower moments, and involved fantastic cameos from all-hanging, all-goggly chorus members. The performances from Alex Lass, Eve Hedderwick-Turner and Jessie Wyld, as Gregor's

family, involved great characterisation; unfortunately the relentless pace of the production meant there was no space for them to develop much comic timing.

This production's stylish success was its undoing. It delivered very impressively on fruity fringe favourites in style of music, make-up and choreography, taking inventive steps beyond Berkoff's original adaptation. But this took it out of sight of Kafka's tale. Gregor's plight was told by a dedicated company enjoying themselves and pleasing the audience; there was no slow sense of rotting and stagnation. The cry "I know I'm repulsive and will

always be repulsive" did not seem to come from a desperate man whose endless cycle of work and domesticity makes him feel like a cockroach trapped under a jar, about to be squashed. This production turned Kafka's bitter vision into something too sweet. KATE O'CONNOR



SARAH WYLD

Baby

GEORGE SQUARE, EDINBURGH
★★★★★

With the Edinburgh Fringe festival getting bigger and more anarchic each year it's no wonder there are more and more unconventional venues sprouting up to house shows: elevators, hotel toilets, swimming pools, and inflatable farm animals, were just a few of this year's 'theatres'. *Baby* was performed in a Portakabin with the charm and atmosphere of a run down motorway café, and vulnerable to the persistent alcoholic murmur of the festival bubbling away and infecting the space. Yet as soon as the first number began, this shrunk into insignificance as Matthew Eberhardt's delightful production about three couples suddenly facing parenthood worked its magic.

The plot is admittedly a little thin – three couples find out they are pregnant and we follow their emotional journeys until a baby is born (only one, mind) - although Shire and Maltby Jr's songs are strong enough to cover for this, and the band, led by Joe Bunker, were excellent. Combined with

some excellent performances from the entire cast, every number was a delight. Oli Hunt (Alan) and Miri Gellert (Arlene) both gave particularly stellar performances, in spite of some slightly messy dance moves, but this can be forgiven for the amusement value of a routine based around working out. Georgina Hunt (Lizzy) and Daniel Garsin (Danny), both playing eager eyed college students performed with the necessary teenage sparkle their characters demanded, although their kisses felt rather lack-lustre and occasionally verged on the awkward. In fact on the whole there could have been a little more chemistry; the arc of Nick (Tom Cane) and Pam's (Fiona Mackay) story could have been made far more poignant if we really believed they were in love before things become strained when they have difficulties conceiving.

Episodes such as Arlene's miscarriage and Lizzy's labour fortunately did not fall into the clichéd, or cringeworthy thanks to Eberhardt's skilful direction, and in spite of a sprinkle of schmaltz here and there the production was engaging throughout. It was also effectively cut down to

squeeze into an hour long time slot so that the axed songs were not missed, and the racey pace kept momentum going. A simple set of a few boxes allowed swift changes and an escape from the criminally boring, flabby transitions prominent in so many student productions. Credit to the production team, cast and band of *Baby* for transforming a rather unremarkable musical into a thoroughly enjoyable hour; touching and funny in equal turns.

MARIEKE AUDSLEY



REBECCA PITT

Creative Writing Competition



Each week we set a different creative writing exercise. The people who submit the running-up and winning pieces have their work printed in the next week's *Varsity*, and the winner is rewarded with two free tickets to an ADC Theatre show.

Week 0: Some Imagist Poems

Winner: London
by Laura Kilbridge

(after reading F.S. Flint)

his bracken frond
i'd heard unfurl—

at once the city opened up
its leaves and eyes and books
straining to hear my connection.

against the dark: the streets
and on the road

apparents

interrupt the speech-mint
subject to crashes,
happily immortal.

in london, my beautiful
a small bird passes
territorial from

branch to branch.

Runner-up: Stoplights
by Patrick Garety

In time
the cars roll
through as
one
then slowed

stop til standstill

red taillights on wet
tarmac

rain tilts
to slight panes

swept by wipers
weeping

red to amber
glow

ready steady

Next week's competition: Quotation. We think of T.S. Eliot transcribing Ophelia's 'Good night sweet ladies' into 'The Waste Land'. You might attempt something similar, and remove a favourite quote(s) from its original context and manipulate it to add colour to prose or poetry, or as a starting point for your writing. Good luck! Send submissions to Eliot D'Silva at literary@varsity.co.uk no later than 9 am on Monday, October 5th for the chance to win two tickets to the following week's ADC main show, and see your work printed in our next issue.

Double Varsity victory for CULTC

- » Women reclaim title and men retain trophy at National Tennis Centre
- » The tension runs high for a full three days before Cambridge edge to victory



Varsity Sport

At the same time that the home of tennis was entertaining the world's finest players, a tournament of comparable tradition, prestige and excitement enlivened the grass-courts of the nearby National Tennis Centre in Roehampton. It could only be Varsity tennis.

Over three glorious days, Cambridge turned the grass light blue as the women avenged their painful 11-10 defeat in 2008 to prevail 12-9 and the men retained the Doherty Cup for the fourth year running.

Cambridge's top three women, Alice Barnes (Lucy Cavendish), fresher Laura Morrill (Murray Edwards) and Victoria Watson (Jesus) were all victorious on a first day which saw a torrential rainstorm saturate the scorched grass and oblige Barnes and Watson to play indoors.

The other three matches went the way of Oxford, leaving the scores level.

Consecutive victories for Barnes and Watson, first in the singles and then as a doubles pair, gave day two a promising start for Cambridge. However, Oxford showed their strength and depth, winning both of the other doubles encounters to set up a tense and exciting third day for all involved.

With an 8-7 lead at the start of play, the Cambridge team was boosted by singles victories for

their two freshers, Morrill, and number six player Corina Balaban of Homerton. As in 2008, it was all down to the final round of doubles.

After prevailing in a tie-break in the first set, the Cambridge first pair of Barnes and Watson went down 3-0 in the second just as the Cambridge third pair lost their match and the second pair lost the first set of theirs.

Facing the possibility of an unbearable defeat, the Light Blues remained calm and fought back to reach match point.

A match of such tension was never going to end routinely, however, and yet again the set found itself poised at 6-6. Joyous scenes followed as Cambridge confirmed victory with a winner which seemed to spur on Ashbridge and Morrill, who duly won their doubles match to prove

that the earlier anxiety was wholly unnecessary.

The men's match was a similarly epic encounter. Oxford started well, taking a 2-1 lead before the rain as both Cambridge's James Ashton (Emmanuel) and Rutger-Jan Lange (King's), narrowly lost. Kirill Zavodov (St Edmund's), however, got the Light Blues off the mark with a blistering performance.

As play moved indoors, Cambridge No 1, Rob Blythe (Emmanuel), brushed aside his first opponent 6-4 6-1, while Pavel Chichkanov (Queens') was defeated. Last on court was captain John Western (Selwyn) who made a comeback from 6-4 3-2 down to defeat the Oxford number four after the latter succumbed to cramp at 4-2 in the decider.

On day two, Oxford once again won two singles in the first round, but Chichkanov's emphatic backhand drive volley winner on match point put Cambridge back on track. In the doubles, Ashton/Chichkanov ably dispatched Oxford's first pair, but there was disappointment for Phillip

Compeau (Churchill)/Zavodov. Finally, Cambridge's first pair of Blythe/Western dramatically recovered from 6-3 5-4 down to win the match.

Digging deep to break back and win the set, they cruised to victory 6-3 in third to turn the tie in Cambridge's favour. Two further victories arrived through Ashton/Chichkanov and the big serves of Compeau/Zavodov, who edged a 7-6 7-6 thriller over the Oxford first pair.

With Cambridge leading 8-7 at the start of the final day, confidence ran high. Two victories from Lange and Zavodov left the light blues just one win from Varsity victory. Ashton duly delivered with a passing shot on match point that was too strong for the Oxford captain and the Cambridge players ran on to the court to celebrate another splendid victory, eventually finishing 12-9.

This result was just reward for all the hard work and dedication that both teams have put in over the last year, and sets them up nicely for the 2010 season to come.



Blues bash the Loughborough boys

- » The Blues start the season in the best possible way at Grange Road
- » It's a game of two halves as Cambridge stutter at the start then storm ahead



Frankie Brown Chief Sports Reporter

Cambridge overcame a scrappy start to carve out a convincing victory against a young Loughborough side on Tuesday Evening at Grange Road.

After some intense work at summer training camp, the team

were looking to make an impact in this early and traditionally tough fixture. And under new captain Dan Vickerman they didn't disappoint.

Despite the frenzied start to the game, Cambridge's physical dominance was immediately apparent, a factor that would tell increasingly as the match progressed. However, careless errors in both attack and defence for both teams left the early points down to the reliable boot of Ross Broadfoot and his opposite man. As a result, the score at half-time was a less than enthralling 6-3 to the Blues.

A doubtless frustrated Cambridge side emerged after half-time with

greater precision; with James Greenwood pouncing on an opposition mistake to canter home for the try, giving the blues a comfortable 13-3 lead.

Although Loughborough hit back immediately with a well-taken penalty, the Cambridge forwards were increasingly asserting their physical superiority. The sustained pressure exerted by the pack eventually resulted in an absolute howler from the under-pressure Loughborough hooker at the line-out, a mistake which Ed White gleefully took advantage of in the form of a try.

With twenty minutes or so remaining on the clock, there was no respite

for Loughborough, as a series of drives from the forwards eventually allowed Andy Daniels to touch down.

At 27-7, the dominance continued in the form of the powerful Cambridgescrum, eventually resulting in a penalty try as Loughborough buckled under the pressure.

Although a consolation try was scored by Loughborough in the 82nd minute, it did nothing to disguise a resounding victory for Cambridge.

The Blues will no doubt be looking to build upon this mixed performance when they take on Blackheath Rugby Club at home next week. As the team start to gel, things can only get better.

Looking Ahead

Football

"We have our strongest squad for four years: people staying on to play, people getting in touch before the start of the season. Not only do we expect to win everything this year but we also have a genuinely funny bunch of lads." MICHAEL JOHNSON, MEN'S CAPTAIN

"After a hugely successful year, winning the County Cup and reaching the final of the Regional League Cup, we are stronger than ever before. After a strong start to the new season we are looking forward to plenty of success." LEESA HAYDOCK, WOMEN'S CAPTAIN

Rowing

"We had a mixed season last year; whilst our Light Blue boat overcame an 8 year losing streak and won, our Blue Boat and our lightweights both lost out. Training is underway with a strong new squad and we are eager for revenge."

SARAH ALLEN, CUWBC PRESIDENT

Ice Hockey

"The Ice Hockey Club has had a few dark years recently, but over the last couple of years has picked up; last season the men finished 3rd in the Southern Division 1 and the women have won Varsity the last two years. We expect to be equally as strong this season."

RICHARD TRUEMAN, CLUB PRESIDENT

Rugby Union

"CURUFC are already training hard and anticipating the 2009 Varsity Rugby match at Twickenham. The squad has nine returning Blues, some notable new additions in Ben Maidment (Durham), Fred Shepherd (Durham), Jamie Hood (Loughborough) and Hadyn Henderson (NZ) together with a good number of last year's successful U21 Varsity squad. Pre-season training has been tough and already there have been two wins, but a strong fixture list beckons and as everybody knows the peak of the season must come at Twickenham."

IAN MINTO, GENERAL MANAGER

Absolutely nothing to do with Cambridge

In the second division of Colombian football, the mighty Real Santander drew with their local rivals, the feared Atlético Bucaramanga, in an exciting derby watched by a rowdy 2000-strong crowd who packed out the 35000-seater Estadio Alfonso López. Local newspaper *Vanguardia Liberal* enthused about the horrifying standard of football in its account. Neither team has any chance of gaining promotion.



Not light on Blues

Left to right: Ice-hockey on the Cam in the 1970s; controversy at the 1980 Boat Race; Derek Pringle, England international, in his student days; Chris Oti, England winger, in action for the Light Blues

Varsity Sport takes a sweeping look at the rich and colourful history of sport in Cambridge

Olly West & Will Caiger-Smith
Sport Editors

The University’s sporting history is full of unique characters, unique anecdotes and unique achievements. Although the rise of professionalism has diminished Cambridge’s influence at the top level, the stories of individual and team excellence and determination continue to be written. *Varsity* offers a taste of some of the best...

Kings, clergymen and cricket

Cambridge Blues with unusual



professions are too numerous to count (Nick Griffin, current BNP leader, won his in boxing after taking up the sport following a brawl with an anti-fascist party member). Meanwhile, Cambridge’s cricketing tradition is worth an article in itself, with Michael Atherton, Gubby Allen, Mike Brearley and Peter May just four in an interminable list of world-class cricketers who earlier plied their trade at Fenner’s.

Despite having his royal status

revoked for a quarter of a century during his lifetime, Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji was always a princely batsmen who after leaving Trinity went on to average 45 in 15 tests for England. By the time he was thirty-four, he was known as Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, famous for his role in improving the living conditions of his home state.

Converted to evangelical Christianity whilst at Trinity Hall, David Sheppard went on to become Bishop of Liverpool and an active social reform broadcaster and campaigner. However, this was not before breaking the record for total number of runs scored for the University, notching up over 2000 first-class runs in a season three times, and becoming the first ordained minister to play test cricket.

Black and Blues

In 1842, the Vice-Chancellor issued a decree stating: “If any person in statu pupillari be hereafter found resorting to, or having any communication whatever with, any such teacher of the art of boxing, or be found attending any prize fight, he shall be liable to the punishment of suspension, rustication or expulsion...” Cantabrigians were evidently undeterred, as in 1865, two Cambridge men, John Graham Chambers and the Marquess of

Queensberry, collaborated to draw up the Queensberry rules for competitive boxing, which are still used today.

The first official Varsity boxing match took place in the Corn Exchange on March 10th 1897, ending in a 2-2 draw.

Bugger, we’re good at rugby

Let no one say that sport in



Cambridge is not what it used to be. It is not the number of prime ministers that matter, but the number of Varsity rugby victories (59-54 in Cambridge’s favour, in case you were wondering). Indeed, current captain Dan Vickerman was so sure of this that he gave up an international rugby career with Australia to study Land Economy at Hughes Hall (he must really like rugby).

It must be said, Cambridge rugby’s contribution to its sport at a national and international level surpasses any other. There were

an incredible twelve Cambridge students on the first ever British Isles (later Lions) rugby union tour in 1891 which won twenty out of twenty games. From Carl Aarvold, Cambridge alumnus, 6 times England captain and Recorder of London who presided over the Kray twins case, to more recent stars Rob Andrew and Gavin Hastings, the tradition remains.

Getting wet

It was 1567 when Walter Haydon of King’s College drowned whilst bathing in the River Cam. A subsequent injunction banned all members of the University of Cambridge from swimming for many years. By 1705 the University reportedly had its own swimming pool, but this was seemingly abandoned or destroyed as when the swimming club was founded in 1855, training took place in the Cam.


It was also in the water that the female sport had one of its first outings in Cambridge, with an inter-year water polo match, played in “long, flowing white dresses” taking place in Girton since the beginning of the twentieth century, and the first Varsity swimming encounter in 1921.

As *Varsity* reported in Lent term, however, the University is still lacking its own swimming pool. This may be something to consider

next time they ask themselves why Cambridge students still cannot help themselves from enjoying the fluvial delights of the city as part of their post-exam celebrations on Suicide Sunday. In the name of Walter Haydon, here’s hoping it does not take another 800 years for proper facilities to be built.

Chariots of Fire

In 2007, Sam Dobin (pictured) became the third person to have completed the Trinity Court run, made famous by the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*, in which Gonville & Caius student Harold Abrahams is shown to accomplish the feat of running the perimeter of the court before the clock strikes midday. Although Abrahams never actually took part in the run (the record was first set by Lord Burghley in 1927) he did go on to win gold in the 100 metre sprint at Paris in 1924, taking his place in the history books as the first Jewish man to represent Britain in the Olympic Games.



The Sporting World

Week 0: Argentina

The floor is barely visible through the seething mass of blue and gold, and a thick haze of sweat and smoke rolls gently over the crowd. This is a true urban jungle: La Bombonera (‘The Candy Box’), home of Boca Juniors of Buenos Aires. We are here to watch Argentina’s most popular team take on their bitter rivals Independiente in a true Porteño derby.

We’ve been warned by everyone we know here to steer clear of the terraces, home of La doce, one of the most notorious barras (gang) of football hooligans in the world. Famed for the intense pressure that they put on the players on the pitch, their name stems from an article in which they were dubbed “Boca’s

twelfth player”. Looking around the stadium to try and get a glimpse of them, we suddenly realise that they’re standing all around us.

A young fan approaches us. Through his thick accent, we eventually realise that he is demanding to borrow my friend’s sunglasses. He won’t steal them, he promises us. Five minutes later we are still watching him using the pointed end of the frame to prise out a small object he has hidden in his shoe: a tight little packet of weed and cocaine. He lights a joint and snorts up an enormous pile of powder.

He’s not the only one gearing up for kick-off, and as the drummers and trumpeters make their way onto the stand, the place erupts like a festival tent. It becomes an

actual tent when Boca’s enormous bandera (flag), which covers three whole tiers of the stadium, is rolled out. Apprehensively, I slide my camera out of my pocket. The guy next to me sees it and smiles reassuringly, and I realise that maybe the hype is slightly exaggerated and that I might actually not get mugged, killed and possibly eaten here. And once I’ve learnt the words to the chants, I’m having the time of my life.

On this pitch, things are becoming similarly rowdy. One of Independiente’s strikers is sent off for a vicious challenge, leaving the pitch under police shields to protect him from a hail of bottles, stones and urine. Boca slide one home and the stand erupts, an avalanche of fans piling forward onto the fences below. Later on, a Boca player throttles the referee for an unfair booking, just as a fight breaks out behind us.

When the final whistle sounds, it seems to take some of the barra a few minutes to realise. Trapped in the terrace until the away fans have left, we expend our last energy and join in hurling insults at them, mostly about their sexual

orientation or their mothers’ genitals. Collapsing exhausted onto the floor, we realise that for most of these fans the party has only just begun. The band fires up once more as if the match were starting all over again... WILL CAIGER-SMITH



La doce in La Bombonera. Pretty scary.

Women give Oxford a cricketing lesson

» Cambridge restrict their rivals to a modest total and capture the 2009 Varsity crown with ease

From the Archives

A look to the last Golden Age of Cambridge cricket, when Downing student Mike Atherton was hitting centuries for Lancashire.

'Atherton Beats Rain', Varsity, Friday 14th October 1988



Once upon a time the England team may have been selected from the top of the averages, these days it

is difficult to find Englishmen in so lofty a position. To be the fourth such qualified batsman at only twenty years of age obviously leads to much acclaim and speculation.

Mike Atherton was not asked (officially) about his winter availability, but may suggest that he should have been. His performance was such that he passed one thousand runs for the second season in succession, even after spending a month in the Lancashire 2nd XI. The decision to leave out a player with an average of sixty angered some of the membership, and debates raged in the local paper.

Though counties may not put out a front line attack against the Universities that average was obtained while wickets tumbled at the other end. No one could fail to be impressed with how he handled the captaincy. He certainly wasn't worried.

"After playing for the university, you cannot expect to walk into the county first team. I was prepared to wait and bide my time, but the publicity did put a bit of extra pressure on when I did get a chance."

That came in the Roses match at Headingley, but the runs did not. Two games later, against Sussex

however, he hit 152 not out, his maiden championship century.

The Innings was similar to his earlier century at Fenner's against Middlesex. After Lancashire had collapsed to 135-5, Atherton's 5 ½ hour innings enable the red rose county to declare at 337-6, a match winning total.

Having achieved that milestone, Atherton secured his place in the side. Another century this time at Old Trafford set up a close finish with Derbyshire just hanging on.

Atherton, however, did not play a part in Lancashire's Refuge Assurance Cup win. "I do not mind playing the Sunday games because I think it is easy to get in to bad habits," he said. "But it was disappointing to miss out on the final." And a nice cash bonus to!

Interestingly, all Atherton's centuries this season were undefeated. His solid defence and fluent stroke play add a stability to the county side, and so he has won the hard earned respect of the county supporters.

A final word from the cricket correspondent of the Manchester Evening News: "His innings against Sussex was lovely. Not brilliant, not flashy, but lovely."

 OXFORD 156 ALL OUT

 CAMBRIDGE 157-0
CAMBRIDGE WIN BY 10 WICKETS

Ellie Fielding

After easing to victory by 154 runs in 2008, Cambridge arrived at Lord's off the back of a week of training eager to repeat such a dominant performance. Cambridge won the toss and elected to field first. Opening bowlers Clarkson and Lavender applied pressure early on, the slow left-arm spin of Lavender giving away only 18 runs in her 10 overs. Oxford battled hard, and three half-chances for catches went down, but Cambridge were rewarded for a tight, patient display with a wicket in the 19th over, a high catch taken by captain Little from the bowling of off-spinner Bellfield.

Before the match began, Cambridge were well aware of the reliance of Oxford on their opening bat and captain, LeMarchand. She looked in good form, scoring a breezy 37 before holding out in the deep off the spin bowling of Fielding, where a great catch was swallowed up by Bellfield on the square leg boundary. Cue delight

all round, Oxford's best batsman out and the score at 67 for 2.

Oxford refused to lie down, continuing to score runs on a ground with a fast outfield and short boundary. But, from then on, wickets fell at regular intervals, with two more apiece for the spinners Bellfield and Fielding, including a sharp stumping by keeper Ross, one for Thompson, and a good catch by Little at slip. Finally, an accurate spell from returning opener Clarkson gave Oxford a lesson in high class fast in-swing, as she cleaned up the tail with three quick wickets (3/22). Credit to the whole team for a solid fielding display and patient, accurate bowling, Oxford were all out for 156 in 46.4 overs. Cambridge were chasing 157 to win, a score well within reach.

After tea, out came openers Little and Horsnby, needing three runs per over. Oxford's bowling was at times wayward, and after a quiet start both players began to take advantage. Some delightful stroke-play from Hornsby was rewarded with fifty from only 65 deliveries, whilst Little pushed on to reach her fifty with a hefty slog from a full toss in the 28th over. In the end the target was reached comfortably in 31 overs, Oxford failing to take a single wicket.

Varsity and British Universities Champions, CULRC are delighted to announce a partnership with Powertraveller for the 2009-10 Season.

Powertraveller produce a range of portable chargers; from the powermonkey for mobile phones, right the way up to the mighty powergorilla for laptops. Whether you're skiing in the mountains or working on the train, you'll never run out of power again!

To mark the partnership, CULRC and Powertraveller are offering a 15% discount on all products for Cambridge students.

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CULRC

For information about the club and trialling for CULRC visit culrc.org



Cambridge raise both mens' and womens' trophies after a convincing display of dominance at Varsity in Reohampton. Full report inside.

Tennis p29

SPORT





The Sporting World:
A journey to the home
of Argentina's infamous
football oligarchs

Column p30

A historic year, a historic victory

» Cambridge cricketers end 19 years of hurt with emphatic defeat of Oxford

	OXFORD	152 & 226
	CAMBRIDGE	339 & 43-0
CAMBRIDGE WIN BY 10 WICKETS		

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Chief Sports Reporter

After a humiliating defeat at Lord's, Cambridge turned the tables on Oxford in spectacular style to crush the visitors by 10 wickets at Fenner's, winning the four-day Varsity for the first time since 1989.

Skittled by the Dark Blues for 126 in the one-dayer, this time it was the turn of the Cambridge bowlers to wreak havoc, as Ansari won the toss and inserted the opposition on an overcast morning. Brathwaite's searing pace and Probert's unrelenting accuracy combined to reduce the visitors to a perilous 40-4 before rain curtailed the first day's play. There was no let-up on day two, as Probert had the dangerous Kruger spectacularly caught and bowled, leaving the left-arm spin of Brown and the sustained hostility of Brathwaite to finish off the innings, each ending with 3 wickets. Probert meanwhile achieved extraordinary figures of 21 overs, 2 for 20, as Oxford were bowled out for a paltry 152.

The Cambridge innings got off to a lively start, as Ashok tucked into the opening bowlers with aplomb. Grammer received a fine delivery from the prolific Sharma and departed for 2, and Sen followed after some brief resistance. At 78-2, Ansari played solidly, in contrast to Ashok, who casually blazed the ball to all parts

of the ground. Despite one rush of blood to the head, which saw him dropped at mid-off, the pair remained unbeaten at the close of play, having already neared Oxford's total. Seeking to hammer home the advantage on day three, Ashok grew tense as he neared his century, and was dropped once more, but eventually found a gap in the field to take him to three figures. Although he departed shortly after, he and Ansari had set a perfect platform. Brown joined the captain, and the pair proceeded to accumulate runs steadily. Ansari's 50 was brought up, and as both the lead and their partnership neared 100, the despair was clearly visible in the Oxford side.

However, the second new ball's arrival saw the immediate departure of Brown on the stroke of lunch, and MacLennan came and went shortly after. Wickets continued to fall, and the middle order was blown away, leaving Cambridge only 120 runs in front and nine wickets down. Probert strode to the crease and showed a determination sadly lacking in his more excitable colleagues, allowing Ansari to dominate the strike and the bowling. He duly brought up his second Varsity century in a row, and proceeded to throw caution to the wind, hitting out in spectacular style. On 132 his luck ran out, but with a final total of 339, Cambridge had built an imposing lead over their opponents.

With Oxford facing a first-innings deficit of 177, the task for Cambridge was clear. Brathwaite, in his last game for the University, tore in from the pavilion end, uprooting the off-stump of Mckerchar in the first over. In the face of such hostility, the other opener didn't have a prayer, edging one behind to Sen and looking rather relieved to

be departing. At 1-2, Oxford's main men Kruger and Sharma set about repairing the damage. Both looked dangerous, and bowling changes were sought, but to no avail, as the score advanced steadily. In desperation Ansari turned to Brathwaite, who produced the goods once more, as a superb delivery beat the defensive prod of Sharma to remove the off stump. Captain Ball arrived with his usual swagger, only to depart shortly afterwards for 0, strangled down the leg-side off the swing bowling of Ashok. Play closed for the day with Oxford still 100 runs adrift, with only

6 wickets remaining.

The final morning dawned warm and sunny, and Cambridge set about the task of knocking over the final six Oxford batsmen. Kruger and Pascoe dug in, their dogged defiance frustrating Cambridge for over an hour, before the left-arm spin of Grammer finally found a way through, and Pascoe departed for a gritty 29. This blow perhaps affected Kruger, who in sight of the hundred he deserved but anxious at the lack of recognised batsmen to follow, aimed an ambitious sweep-shot at Grammer and missed. With

the main threat gone, Cambridge chipped away 2 more wickets before lunch, and could finally allow themselves to think about the possibility of victory. Eager to finish things off, Brathwaite charged in as he had all game, picking up both terrified tail-enders with his first two balls, leaving Ashok and Grammer the simple task of knocking off the 30 runs needed. After completing this in fine style, the team jubilantly left Fenner's in the knowledge that they had just secured Cambridge's first victory in the four-day match for 20 years.



Cambridge captain Ansari hits out on the way to his century



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