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# VARSlTY

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The Independent Student Newspaper since 1947

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## Peterhouse Blues

» JCR will hold referendum on CUSU disaffiliation in two weeks

**Gemma Oke**  
Senior Reporter

The Peterhouse JCR will hold an open meeting and referendum on November 4th on a motion to disaffiliate from the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU).

JCR President Joe Ruiz told *Varsity*, "Within Peterhouse the debate about affiliation began last year when the JCR, for reasons now resolved, didn't have enough funds to pay the affiliation fees. We have now paid those fees but it is a good idea for democracy in College to still have a vote on the issue."

A draft agenda for the meeting is due to be released shortly.

"The JCR Committee ... will explain the CUSU services that we do currently make use of. The aim is to let people know what we get for our affiliation fees each year and let them decide whether it is a good use of our funds."

*Varsity* understands that there have been tensions between Peterhouse and CUSU dating from before the summer, instigated by the Peterhouse JCR's initial difficulties in paying the £1,500-per-year CUSU affiliation fee and ongoing indecision as to the fee's value for money.

According to the online version of the "Guide to CUSU", last updated in 2007, the CUSU affiliation fee funds services such as "specific training for Presidents,

External Officers, Welfare Officers, Academic Affairs Officers, Women's Officers, Ents Officers and Treasurers." According to the Guide, the President of CUSU also arranges fortnightly meetings for Presidents and External Officers.

A speech made by CUSU President Tom Chigbo at the Peterhouse Freshers' Squash outlined what CUSU does and encouraged students to see CUSU as a useful and relevant body for students. However, *Varsity* understands that JCR officials, keen to keep the Squash a 'College' event, were initially reluctant to allow Chigbo to speak, and subsequently frustrated when the CUSU President's speech substantially overran its allotted five minutes.

*Varsity* believes Joe Ruiz initially refused to allow Chigbo to speak on the grounds that the CUSU President would be invited to make his case for the College's continued CUSU affiliation at the open meeting on November 4th, to be followed by a JCR vote. Chigbo then sought approval for his appearance at the Freshers' Squash from other members of the JCR Committee, who also refused. Finally, Chigbo approached the JCR Freshers' Rep, who agreed that the CUSU President could speak. Perhaps understandably, the roundabout way in which Chigbo organised his appearance at the Squash seems to have annoyed some members of the JCR committee.

A Peterhouse student, who

wished to remain anonymous, told *Varsity*, "Tom Chigbo came to the Freshers' Squash to publicise what CUSU do for students, but I think it backfired. People at the back ... were just looking at their watches."

Joe Ruiz told *Varsity*, "I don't think realistically that there is a great danger that Peterhouse will disaffiliate." He confirmed that the stance of the JCR itself is "neutral" – neither in support or opposition of a move to disaffiliate.

"Any decision taken will be the result of an open meeting of the JCR on the November 4th where all undergraduates can discuss and vote on the issue. A major issue such as this would always be put to an open meeting."

Tom Chigbo said, "We are always happy to speak to Peterhouse students about how CUSU will help them and their JCR this year."

The last JCR disaffiliation dispute occurred in March 2006, when Trinity College Student Union (TCSU) voted by a margin of only six votes to disaffiliate itself from the Students' Union. The vote came on the same day as the CUSU General Election at which Mark Ferguson was elected CUSU President. That election saw a memorably low voting turnout of 16 per cent.

TCSU reaffiliated with CUSU on January 28th 2007, after a referendum based on only 20 votes.

Emmanuel, Jesus, and St John's also held referenda on CUSU disaffiliation in 2006, but none of them ultimately chose to disaffiliate.



GEOFF ROBINSON

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# In Brief

## Churchill’s daughter plants 50th anniversary tree

On Saturday, Lady Soames, youngest and only surviving daughter of Sir Winston and Lady Clementine Churchill, visited Churchill College in celebration of the College’s 50th anniversary. Lady Soames, 87, planted a weeping mulberry tree in the College grounds. The tree-planting ceremony occurred 50 years to the day after a similar ceremony in which Sir Winston planted a tree in Churchill to mark its foundation. Churchill College is the national monument to the former Prime Minister, whose papers are kept on the premises in the Churchill Archives Centre. Watch video of the 1959 tree-planting ceremony at [www.vimeo.com/7079248](http://www.vimeo.com/7079248).

## Cancer Research UK hosts charity run

Sunday saw Cancer Research UK’s first ‘Run 10k’ event in Cambridge. The charity is organising 41 similar runs throughout the country this season. Over 1,600 runners, aided by 65 volunteer marshals, raised as much as £70,000 for cancer research. Cambridge’s Sarah Juggins, 41, was first to cross the finish line, finishing the 10km run in 36 minutes. Running lanes were marked off throughout the city, including in central areas such as Trinity Street.

## New club to open on Jesus Lane

An alternative student drinking experience can now be found on Jesus Lane after the opening of a new club, Hidden Rooms, last week. The club enjoyed a hugely successful first student night, outselling other student venues with specific acts playing. Student drinks deals will now be in place every other Thursday at the 200-capacity venue, which has a smart dress code of no hoods or trainers. The venue is open during the afternoon as a shisha cafe before serving as a bar until midnight.



Members of Cambridge University Amnesty International (CUAI) campaigned last weekend for the release of Burmese political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi. Members of CUAI, some sporting paper masks with Suu Kyi’s face, occupied a wooden cage on King’s College’s front lawn continuously from 6pm on Friday 16 until 6pm on Sunday 18th.

# Cyclists riding without lights this week will face £30 fines

Jennie Baker  
Reporter

In the week approaching Cambridgeshire police’s annual road safety campaign, a survey has revealed staggering results on the number of cyclists riding without lights in the city. For the week beginning Monday 26th, all cyclists riding without bike lights will be fined £30.

Andrew Bower and City Cllr Chris Howell of the Conservative Action Team conducted a survey on the number of cyclists using their lights on a recent Sunday and Monday night from 11pm on Mill Road bridge. From their sample of 89 cyclists, 50 per cent were found to have both their front and back lights on, however 43 per cent were using no lights at all.

According to Cambridgeshire County Council figures, 11 cyclists who were not using bike lights, whether at night or in conditions of poor visibility, were involved in accidents over the course of 2007

and 2008.

Cllr Howell told *Varsity*, “I try to stick up for the cyclists – but it is a lot easier if the anti-bike lobby don’t have such obvious open goals as seeing the law on bike lights being widely flouted.”

Although the data was collected in one location, Cllr Howell claims that his results reflect a broader

BEATRICE RAMSAY



disregard for bike lights by Cambridge cyclists.

Police have welcomed the Conservative Action Team’s study, claiming that combating dangerous cycling was currently a priority. However, Cllr Howell claims: “The police need to tackle this problem year round, not in a once a year crackdown, and only after some good publicity.”

Cambridgeshire police will launch their week-long campaign on Monday 26. The operation will take enforcement action against those failing to use lights, and also educate cyclists and motorists on the importance of having a working set for their own and others’ safety.

Cambridge City Council is working in partnership with the Cambridge Constabulary to offer a free set of bike lights to every cyclist who receives a ticket during the week. Anti-social cyclists committing offences like riding on the pavement will also be fined £30, but will be offered a free lesson by the Bikeability scheme, a national cycle training project hosted in Cambridge by the Road Safety Team at the County

Council, as part of the campaign.

Sergeant Gordon Morgenthaler of Cambridgeshire police said: “This is not a reward for doing something wrong, but a real step forward, offering some of the most vulnerable road users expert help to improve their cycling skills and reduce the risk of accidents.”

During the 2008 campaign, police issued over 200 tickets to cyclists, and around 170 sets of lights were fitted to bikes. Shortly after this, a independent study found that Cambridge cyclists topped national tables, with 80 per cent of the cyclists using lights.

Paul Griffin, Cambridge City Council’s Community Safety Strategy officer said: “Last year’s campaign was very well received and made a big contribution to raising awareness of safe cycling in Cambridge, even those receiving a fine appreciated the importance of the project, and were happy they were provided with lights! This year we will be running a similar innovative campaign which again will be focussed on keeping people safe.”

## Get involved

If you would like to find out how to write for Varsity, come to one of our weekly meetings at the Maypole Pub (20A Portugal Place).

News: Monday 4pm

Magazine: Wednesday 5.30pm

Alternatively, email the relevant section editor (right) with your ideas.

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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# City pub brought to court over hygiene infractions

» Owners of The Eagle face charges over incidents in May 2008

**Helen Mackreath**  
Senior Reporter

Brewery giant Greene King, owner of The Eagle pub on Bene't Street, was fined yesterday in a pre-trial hearing called to investigate claims of lapses in food hygiene standards in the pub's kitchens.

Greene King faced 15 separate charges relating to The Eagle's unsatisfactory hygiene arrangements. The charges were incurred following two separate routine inspections by Cambridge Council in May 2008.

Charges revolve around a lack of "due diligence" provided by the company and include reports of failure to provide soap for cleaning hands, failure to fit the windows with insect-proof screens, and failure to store raw meat in appropriate conditions to stop its harmful deterioration.

Other charges also allege that cooked sausages and lasagnes were left uncovered at room temperature at least two hours after close of serving, and that Greene King failed to ensure all equipment coming into contact with food was effectively cleaned or disinfected.

In the course of the May 2008 inspections, accusations of food poisoning caused by the pub's food were investigated, with samples

being taken to Addenbrooke's hospital for salmonella and E. Coli testing. The results of all tests were negative.

In court, the prosecution highlighted that "public health was put at risk in a well known public house in a city centre". They paid particular attention to the double occurrence of hygiene lapses, on May 15th and 27th of last year, and pointed out that this is not the first prosecution that Greene King has faced. They also described the faults found within the pub's kitchens as "serious", with descriptions of "rancid" rotting meat.

The defendants in the case expressed their regret and emphasized that this is an "isolated" case which falls below their "ordinarily high standards". They pointed out that an unannounced inspection in March 2008 (two months before the unsatisfactory findings) found "general compliance" in the hygiene system, with temperature issues, preparation, and cooking all being examined. Therefore, they claimed, yesterday's charges related to only a "short period of time" in which the system had broken down.

Greene King pleaded guilty to the charges, and were fined a total of £10,000, including individual fines for rotting meat in the fridge, food left unprotected from contamination, filthy refrigerators and microwaves, and a damaged seal on the fridge.

This marked a change from their previous 'not guilty' plea, made in an earlier hearing of the case on April 30th 2009. This change in plea was taken into consideration in the verdict.

Greene King has been in operation since 1799, and The Eagle is part of a nation-wide chain of 800 Greene King establishments. The pub has a system in place for training staff on matters of food and hygiene. All staff members receive a certificate of basic food and hygiene training, with staff in the kitchens receiving a Greene King Certificate Two, and all Chefs, the Deputy Manager and Head Manager a Greene King Certificate Three. Greene King were keen to point out that The Eagle's lapse in standard is a localized failure and does not represent a systematic failure of the company.

The Eagle is the most iconic pub in Cambridge, popular with students and tourists alike. Famous as the location where Watson and Crick announced they had discovered the double helix structure of DNA in 1953, and with the names of British and US air force servicemen scorched onto the ceiling during the Second World War, the pub regularly attracts large tourist groups. The Eagle was named Bargain Food Pub of the Year in 1999 by the Good Pub Guide. Greene King's IPA brand was recently named shirt sponsor of Cambridge United.



## Plans for Cambridge's new mosque unveiled

**Concetta Scozzaro**  
Reporter

Despite being home to over 4,000 Muslims, Cambridge has never been able to boast a purpose-built mosque. However, designs have now been revealed for a brand new £13 million mosque which will be able to accommodate over 1,000 Muslim men and women.



The design captures elements of both the modern and the traditional, with the contemporary interior being based upon "tree-like" columns supporting high ceilings which will create a sense of space and relaxation. However, the exterior brick-work will be carefully chosen to match the surrounding traditional Victorian terraced houses, in order to be in architectural unity with the

rest of the area.

Award-winning London architectural company Marks Barfield, designers of the London Eye, are due to submit planning schemes in 2010.

It is intended that the mosque will be a centre for the community. For example, the mosque will include a café, teachings areas and meetings rooms which will cater equally for Muslims and non-Muslims. Significantly, this sense of unity could prove useful as a tool of integration and education for non-Muslims regarding the nature and practises of Islam.

Dr Tim Winter, chairman of the Muslim Academic Trust said: "The new mosque will be a real neighbourhood as well as a spiritual centre, easily accessible...with facilities for formal and informal community group meetings as well as a leisure destination."

Dr Winter added that the mosque is to be "respectful of the neighbourhood". Indeed, it is due to be highly environmentally conscious, with plans to use only efficient and locally generated energy from ground heat pumps and it to be lit naturally throughout the year.

Currently, worshippers use a converted supermarket warehouse on Mawson Road, which can hold just 500 people, a mere one-eighth of all the Muslims in Cambridge.

## Trinity Street Post Office to close in December

**Lucy Hunter Johnston**  
Reporter

The iconic Trinity Street Post Office has announced plans to close down this December due to unsustainably high rental rates charged by Trinity College.

Despite an upturn in trade this year, the Post Office, leased by James McNaughton (also owner of Scudamores punting company), claims that the £20,000 per year rent set by Trinity is simply too high and is forcing them out of business.

Jack Zalewski, manager of the much-loved store, claims, "they want the money and we don't have the money. It's as simple as that."

However, Rory Landman, Senior Bursar at Trinity, notes "with disappointment that the Trinity Street Post Office has decided to close, not least because we make extensive use of it ourselves. The decision was a surprise to the College as we had not been approached to discuss the terms of their lease renewal when it expires in December."

The closure of the Post Office will be a blow to Cambridge students and residents alike. Alex Winterbotham, a student at Trinity, claims to be "utterly devastated" by the closure, stating that "Cambridge's finest selection of postcards, merchandise



and confectionary will be a thing of the past."

The loss of the Trinity Street Post Office will be felt all the more keenly by Cambridge residents in the wake of the forced closure last year of nearly two dozen Post Offices in the Cambridge area, including three in the city centre. These closures are illustrative of the nationwide crisis facing local Post Offices, with over 625 already shut down this year, and plans for hundreds more to follow.

Since 1997 the number of Post Offices nationwide has fallen from nearly 19,000 to just 12,000, and by the end of the year this figure is expected to drop as low as 11,500.

The closures in Cambridge have already caused a dramatic increase in queuing time in the few Post Offices remaining open, which can

only be expected to rise when the Trinity Street Post Office is forced to close on December 11th, with the store finally shutting its doors for good on Christmas Eve.

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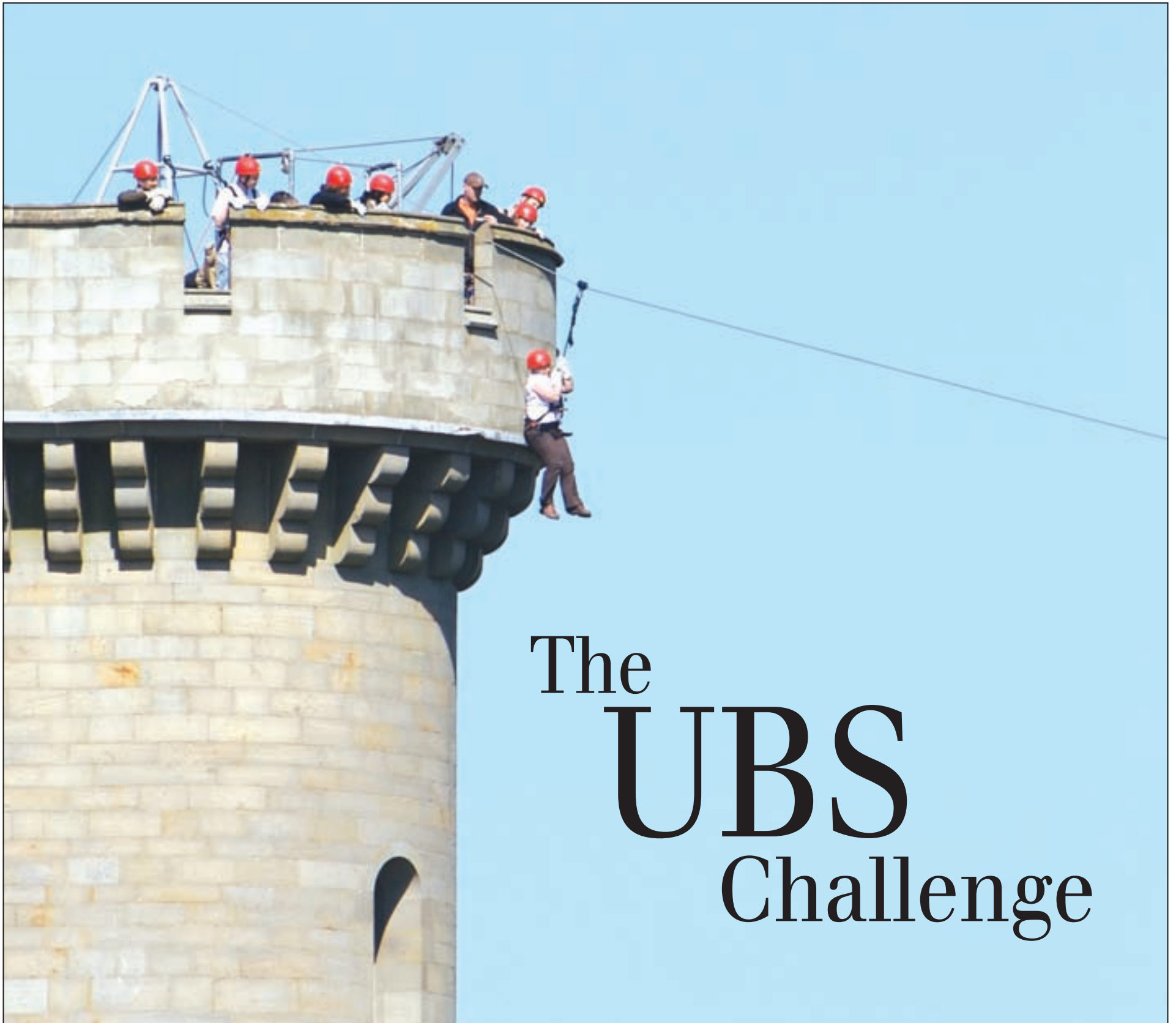
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# Boaties and hacks trounce boozers in Tripos

» Varsity survey reveals correlation between extra-curricular activities and academic performance

**Beth Staton**  
News Editor

Academic success will be found neither in the toilets of Cindies nor a bottle of VK, a Varsity survey can reveal.

A review of 2009 exam successes saw students in drinking societies struggling academically compared to Boaties and student journalists, who tended to excel in Tripos.

Inspired by the *Independent's* annual academic review, *Varsity's* survey is based on the same principles as the Tompkins table, but ranks the academic achievements of actors, rowers, choristers, hacks and drinking societies.

Student journalists narrowly topped the table, beating rowers by 0.4 per cent, whilst drinking society 'apocalads' fulfilled their epithets less appealingly by finishing last in the rankings. Actors were the third most successful group, achieving scores close to the top five Colleges in the real Tompkins, whilst choristers were the society equivalent of 10th place Corpus Christi.

Though demonstrating a correlation between grades and extra-curricular choices, the results

COLLEGE TOMPKINS 2009			
Ranking	College	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%

dispute the idea that that other commitments will have a negative impact on work. Though falling short of Trinity's winning percentage, rowers and journalists scored significantly better than every other College.

"The results aren't necessarily causative," one third year historian and student journalist commented. "However, student journalism does teach you how to be succinct, clear-thinking, and argumentative."

4th year rower Donald Evans was similarly unsurprised by the results. "A lot of rowers are really hard workers" he said. "Rowing gives you a lot of structure during the day, and when your time is taken up with rowing in the morning and evening you're more likely to be disciplined about what you're doing at different times."

Though they topped the table, journalists achieved a lower proportion of firsts than actors and the boaties who, though a close second overall, achieved a 30.77 per cent rate of firsts. It might be speculated that subject choice plays a part in this, however: 14 per cent of the boaties surveyed sat Arts or Social Science subjects, compared to an overwhelming majority of 95 per cent amongst those writing for student newspapers.

Drinking societies contained a higher density of Land Economy students than other groups, but generally included a mixture of individuals from all subjects, redeeming, perhaps, a few social prejudices against Natsecs. Strikingly, girls'

SOCIETY TOMPKINS 2009			
Rank	Society	Score	% Firsts
1	Journalists	68.63%	22.72%
2	Boaties	68.21%	30.77%
3	Actors	66.40%	24.00%
4	Choristers	64.85%	21.21%
5	Female Drinking Society	63.43%	15.62%
6	Male Drinking Society	61.15%	15.38%

The table logged the classmarks of Tripos examinees in the choirs, drinking societies and first boats of 4 colleges: Sidney, John's, Caius and Trinity. Student journalists were represented by last year's TCS and Varsity editorial teams, and actors by a selection of Cambridge's 25 top undergraduate actors. Five points are allocated for a First, three for a II.i, two for a II.ii and one for a third. The scores are then expressed as a percentage of the average quantity of points available.

societies seemed more able to hold their drink than boys; scoring closer to the fourth place Choristers than to their male counterparts, female societies easily matched the real Tompkins score in some colleges, whilst the men scored almost eight per cent lower.

Not all drinking society students experienced the much-maligned 'Cindies effect', however. One drinking society president gained a full blue in football and a double first in law, whilst another managed to publish her third novel and achieve and

first class grade in English.

"There are so many factors that contribute to the degree that an individual achieves that it would be unfair to attribute it to one commitment" said one drinking society member. In my society last year's graduates achieved an average mark of a high 2.1, higher than the University average. I'm sure no-one would attribute their success to the drinking society, so it's a bit unfair to attribute their failure to it in the same way."



## Michael Green to replace Stephen Hawking as Lucasian Professor

**Rob Mindell**  
Reporter

The name of Professor Stephen Hawking's successor as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics was announced on Tuesday. The post will be taken up by Professor Michael Green, who is currently John Humphrey Plummer Professor of Theoretical Physics. Green will take up his new role officially on November 1st 2009.

Green, 63, is best known for his extensive work relating to string-theory. Green was a pioneer in the theory's early days in the 1970s, and has continued working on the subject until today, when it stands as a widely known, but little understood, model of theoretical physics which aims to explain space and time through ten dimensions of vibrating 'strings' of energy.

Among other things, Green is also known for his work with John Schwarz of the California Institute of Technology. Together, the two discovered 'anomaly cancellation' in 1984. It was from this that other scientists took an interest in string theory and developed the concept with extensive research.

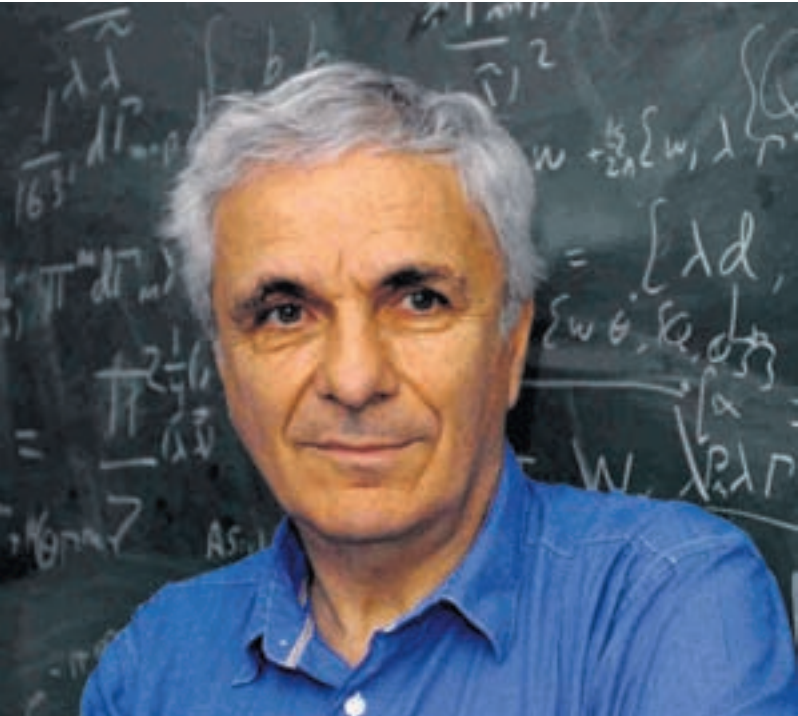
Peter Haynes, head of the Cambridge Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, commented, "Michael Green has played a leading role in theoretical physics research in the Department since 1993. He is internationally known as a pioneer in string theory which over the last 20 years has become one of the most important and active areas of theoretical physics."

In reference to Green's current work, Haynes stated, "In DAMTP [the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics] Michael Green continues to make important advances in this topic

and at the same time to support and inspire young researchers. His appointment as Lucasian Professor continues the very distinguished tradition of that post."

Hawking, 67, stepped down from the post on September 30th, after holding the title for 30 years. University statutes dictate 67 as the age of retirement across all Departments. Hawking will now work as a director of research in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics.

The Lucasian Professorship of Mathematics, established in 1663, is one of the world's most prestigious academic posts. The first Lucasian Professor was Isaac Barrow, who discovered the fundamental theorem of calculus. Other past Professors include Sir Isaac Newton (1669-1702), Charles Babbage (1828-1839), Paul Dirac (1932-1969), and Sir Michael James Lighthill (1969-1979).





## Politico



### Round-up: CUSU Council Meeting Monday 19th October

The first meeting of term began with a killing, shooting down the motion “Youth Fight for Jobs” which tried to promote a specific demonstration and rally support for workers’ unions. Usually council toys with its left-of-centre delegation before coming to an ineffectual compromise but on this occasion it dismissed the motion without even bringing it to discussion. A powerful sign for the year ahead or false hope for debate and policy actually relevant to student needs?

Among the manicuring of the constitution and procedural filler, you will be delighted to hear that the council is now a ‘safe space’, with no nasty aggression or disrespectfulness allowed in arguments. Surprisingly, there was even space for a motion designed to help students. “Hypocrisy on student loans and fees” passed with little fuss and called on CUSU to write to the government in complaint of its inconsistent handling of our student debt, choosing RPI figures that suited its own needs. Sadly this will have little effect, as NUS president Wes Streeting has publically accepted the government’s decision.

The last motion, with its clear political overtones, was the most divisive. In broad terms, the council was asked to rally around striking postal workers, warn students about the dangers of strikebreaking (scabbing) and ban the Royal Mail advertising temporary jobs to Cambridge students. Despite only giving tenuous reasons why this was relevant to students, the proposers argued passionately and the vote was close. Ultimately, the council decided supporting striking postal workers should not be a CUSU policy.

The president is denied a vote or even an obvious role at the council, CUSU being far too democratic to allow direct leadership. Nonetheless Chigbo had a clear hand in discussion from the sidelines.

The next council will be on Monday November 2nd in the Small Exams Hall, New Museums Site. Visit the CUSU website for further details on how to have your say. Don’t all rush at once. OLIMCFARLANE

# Varsity Profile: Helen Stephens

The University of Cambridge’s first female Head Porter in 800 years

Helen Stephens (right) is no stranger to media attention. She was appointed Head Porter at Selwyn College in September but has appeared in newspapers since March 2005, when Jesus College made her the first ever woman gate porter. Stephens, 48, then became Deputy Head Porter at Trinity College, before applying successfully for what she calls an “absolutely fantastic” job as Selwyn’s Head Porter.

Stephens is the latest woman to claim a piece of the ancient wall built to preserve the University of Cambridge as a male-dominated institution. Cracks began to show with the appointment of the first female professor, Dorothy Garrod, in 1939. But the wall only started crumbling as recently as the 1960s, when all-male colleges began to open their doors to women. Stephens herself finds it “surprising” that her appointment has made such big news, with the University’s student gender ratio at 52 per cent male to 48 per cent female.

However, women still tend not to hold many of the senior positions at Cambridge. “I went through something similar when I joined at Jesus”, Stephens tells *Varsity*. “I think it’s a moment in history, it’s a break in the mould and making history all at the same time.” Stephens finds the suggestion that women are less suited to the traditionally-masculine job of porter inconceivable. “It is a very appropriate job for a woman. When I applied to the College of Jesus, I had no idea that women weren’t doing these sorts of jobs. There’s no rhyme or reason why women shouldn’t be in the Porters’ Lodge.

Things change, but there might be a Doubting Thomas or two out there I suppose.” I get the impression that Stephens is referring to her time at Trinity College, which she mentions was “challenging”. Although keen to stress that the College’s emphasis on tradition is a good thing - “nobody wants a College of Cambridge University to change” - she tells me that “getting used to the tradition was quite tricky. Selwyn is less ceremonial, much more relaxed and it doesn’t have the historical complexities that Trinity has.”

Indeed, Stephens feels that a female influence, far from disrupting College life, “enhances the Porter’s Lodge”. The Head Porter is responsible for the security of staff, students and visitors and is expected to offer a welcoming service to everyone who enters the College gates. Stephens notes: “It was the case when I was at Jesus, that I had a lot of female students asking me for my advice on certain issues.” Whether this is to do with Stephens’ natural warmth or her gender is debatable but the suggestion that porters offer more to students in terms of welfare is a pertinent one. Crucially, she cites “the people, the students” as the best part of the job.

It is clear that Stephens has a genuine passion for her role. She has experience in areas as diverse as account managing and massage. After working for the NHS she trained as a massage therapist, practising at the exclusive Wentworth Golf Club and Spa in Surrey. “That’s got to be one of my favourite jobs”, she enthuses. “I’d never worked with my hands before, so it was a lovely time for me to be hands-on. And I



met lots of celebrities!”

When asked what drew her to a career as a porter, she pauses. “It was actually circumstantial more than anything. My long-term partner and I went our separate ways and I found that, because I’d followed him around progressing his career, I didn’t actually have any career of my own. I didn’t really want to stay in corporate life, I didn’t really want to stay working with the NHS and our split made it obvious that I could decide to do something different. I had to come back to Cambridge to find my feet again and I got a job working at Jesus as a gate porter. I didn’t even know what a gate porter was and I was lucky enough to get the job. Then the floodgates opened, as it were.”

“Something good came out of

something very, very awful in my life and I’ll always be grateful to Jesus College. They were just brilliant, and if I have anybody to thank it’s the Head Porter at Jesus. They are fabulous people and they just lit the fire, and started all my interests. It’s because of them that I’m where I am today.”

Stephens is originally from Llanelli, a town on the west coast of Wales, but now lives in Huntingdon. Her close family live nearby, and are “immensely proud”. Ultimately, this feels like a personal as well as a professional accomplishment for Selwyn’s Head Porter. “I think for the first time in my life I’ve actually found somewhere that I believe I belong. Professionally I think this is it really. I wouldn’t want to be in any other job!” CLAIRE GATZEN

## Hi! Society: Assassins’ Guild

*The Cambridge University Assassins’ Guild: Life’s not a stage. It’s a battlefield.*



“Have you ever tried to kill someone using nothing but stealth and a fluffy kitten?” Your answer to this question is probably no - unless you’re a member of Cambridge University Assassins’ Guild that is. With the Michaelmas 2009 Game already in motion as of 5.00am, Wednesday October 21st (and here we all thought rowers had an early start), *Varsity* decided to take a look at this vibrant society, going strong since Lent term 1993.

The Assassins’ Guild revolves around a game resembling live-action role play. Players are given three targets and set out to hunt down said targets and (mock) assassinate them, all the while avoiding being assassinated themselves. Whenever

an assassin makes a successful ‘kill’ they’re sent a new target - a process which continues until only the winner is left.

Bearing witness to the finesse involved in assassination, the Guild has a complex set of rules concerning issues from conduct to permissible weapons. Such rules include the prohibition of impersonating people of authority like porters and the use of empty bottles labelled ‘fake bomb’. Exceptional players are rewarded with titles such as MA (‘Master Assassin’) and PhD (‘Paranoia Hardened Death-master’) and prizes are given for specific achievements, such as the ‘Kenny Award’ (for dying far too many times) and the ‘Girton Award’ (for the kill furthest from Cambridge).

Although it does tend to be dominated by male scientists, the Guild is slowly gaining popularity across a wide range of people. Coryan Wilson-Shah, the Assassins’ communication officer, tells that “over half of our best regular players are studying arts subjects.” There has also been an ongoing rise in the number of female players in recent years. A quarter of the players in Mayweek 2009 were female and “around half of our top assassins are female”.

As a novel activity wedged somewhere in between theatre and sport, it’s no wonder the Guild had over 1,000 people sign up at the Freshers Fair. Alongside challenge of fearing for your life on a moment-by-moment basis (apart from

in lectures, computer rooms and other out-of-bounds areas), one of the main attractions of the game is the potential for wacky weaponry. Wilson-Shah mentions some of the most memorable examples, like “a giant polystyrene ball labelled as a fifty-six trillion kilogram planet” and “a handy vac labelled ‘soul sucker’”.

Alexander Scott, who participated in a game last year, told *Varsity* that being an assassin is “time consuming but worth it”. Although the sign-up for Michaelmas 2009 has closed, there’s always the Lent and Mayweek games for those interested. In any case, if ever you spot someone standing outside your lecture hall holding a banana labelled ‘gun’, you now know the reason why. HEIDI AHO



## Churchill

A bronze sculpture by Dame Barbara Hepworth, located in prize position at Churchill College, has been returned to its spot between the college Buttery and North Court. ‘Four Square (Walk-Through)’ (1966), on loan to Churchill from the Fitzwilliam Museum, was taken down on August 20th this year for repair and restoration work lasting six weeks, led by experts at the Fitzwilliam Museum and funded by Churchill College as well as the Hepworth

JOEL MASSEY



estate. The 14 foot high piece was reassembled in parts this week, back just in time for the 50th anniversary celebrations at the College where students are permitted to use it for work and play. Other works by Hepworth at the University include ‘Ascending Form (Gloria)’ in the New Hall Art Collection and ‘Two Forms (Divided Circle)’ at Clare College.

# College Watch



## Lucy Cavendish

“A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction”, wrote Virginia Woolf. The manuscript of *A Room of One’s Own* is currently being exhibited at Lucy Cavendish with other documents from the college archives. The exhibit starts by addressing Margaret Cavendish’s desire to create a women’s college at Cambridge and the subject is the dream of female education, including those that opposed it and who wished to create a working place for women at Cambridge. Until October 31st, from noon till 5pm, the exhibit will be open.

## Girton

The central heating in the main building at Girton college was turned on for the first time this Michaelmas on Tuesday. As part of an energy-saving initiative, the college had kept the heating off and gave £300 to charity for every day they saved on heating bills. The college bursar said: “The College Council will donate money to charity for every day since the 5th of October that the heating has been off in Girton. This is to try to demonstrate that the policy is not simply about saving money in the short term. Although that is



ROB PEAL

important, saving carbon is more important and more urgent and we need to try to change expectations and behaviour in the longer term. The JCR and MCR Presidents have supported this policy.” The heating was only turned on as the likelihood of any more warm weather this season was deemed unlikely and students had started to complain of the cold on College premises.

# Cambridge Spies



## Cocks Buzz

Continuing this term’s fine tradition of BBC presenters finding love in Cambridge, one tousle-haired charmer with an acerbic wit and skinny jeans caused a storm last week in Kamar. As the evening drew to an end, he was sent into a spin by a nubile young Johnian and took him back to his hotel room. Unfortunately, the amorous twosome were accompanied by a sharp-witted lady, whose visual artistry led her to perceive a third wheel was necessary to prevent any untoward happenings. Accordingly, all that did pass was staying up and watching Toy Story, until our hero leant over to our heroine and asked, “When will you leave? I want to seduce your friend.”

## Lap of Honour

On their first curry of term, the Sidney rugby club invited a clutch of enthusiastic young freshers. One of them, bad at controlling his drink and even worse at controlling his opinions, unleashed a polemic against the hallowed Sidney institution of The Porcupines. Many members of said society were present, and informed the suggestible young fresher that the only way of redeeming such a faux pas was to run around the bar naked. To their astonishment, he complied, and completed a lap of the bar wearing nothing but his tie. So far, so embarrassing, not to mention the fact that his naked body was interrupting JCR Hustings.

## Cantab Gone Mad

Having bagged himself a cushy job with Her Majesty’s Government, one huggable rogue just couldn’t stay away from Cambridge. Few knew he had returned until he was found by police, in characteristic tweed suit, paraletic on the steps of a well-known bookseller. Monday morning was only to get more exciting, however, as our noble savage took a longship to Addenbrooke’s and, on waking, sprayed himself and the walls with true Viking blood.

## Sheffield Hallam University

Student Philip Laing (pictured right) was arrested and charged with outraging public decency after a photograph of him urinating over a war memorial was posted on *The Daily Mail* website. The incident took place during a pub crawl which contributed to the Carnage UK event on October 11th. John Ievers, grandson of a First World War veteran, described Laing in *The Daily Mail* as a “drunken idiot”. Laing issued an apology saying: “I am deeply ashamed of this photograph and I am sincerely sorry...I have no recollection of the events in the photograph, although I recognise that this does not excuse my actions.” Laing will appear at Sheffield Magistrates Court on October 22nd.

## Bath University

The Student Union plans to hold a ‘fruit and veg’ fashion catwalk in aim of promoting healthy living. The Student Union has asked students to make and model costumes resembling a fruit or vegetable. The event is being supported by the BBC, who have offered to provide funding for materials to create the outfits. As well as the catwalk the Student Union promises cooking demonstrations by chef Gizzi Erskine, presenter of Channel 4’s ‘Cook Yourself Thin’, showing how to cook healthy food. A fruit and vegetable giveaway will also take place.

# University Watch



## Oxford University

Academic Dr Deer has accused university professors of hacking into her Balliol College email account, in association with her filing a case for sex discrimination against her ex-supervisor Prof. Walford. She claims that Prof. Walford provided information on a sex discrimination questionnaire that he could not have obtained elsewhere. The case was made following Prof. Walford’s refusal to provide her a job reference. Dr Deer argues that his refusal was a response of persecution for a previous sexual discrimination claim she made against the university, concerning her exclusion from the women’s football team. She claims that comments made in the department following this case are wrongfully being used to inhibit her career. Judge Louise Chudleigh has said that she think Dr Deer’s case has little chance of success.

## Morehouse College

The male-only university in Atlanta has introduced a new “Appropriate Attire Policy” banning clothes usually worn by women. Students who do not comply risk suspension. It is part of a larger policy which includes the prohibition of caps, sunglasses and jeans. However, the clause banning cross-dressing has attracted international attention. Dr William Bynum, vice president for Student Services, told CNN that the policy targets “about five students who are living a gay lifestyle that is leading them to dress a way we do not expect in Morehouse men”. Some students have come forward applauding the attempts of the college. However, Daniel Edwards, co-president of the campus Gay-Straight Alliance, says the new policy is discriminatory.

## University of Toulon

France’s education minister has suspended university president Laroussi Oueslati and two other administrators following an investigation of the university concerning bribes accepted from individuals trying to ensure admission of Chinese students. After accusations of irregularities in the use of the rules regarding admissions of foreign students in September, a report to the ministry on October 19th accused the three in question of trying to block the enquiry with intimidation and threats. Oueslati denies the allegations and calls the ministry’s decision unjust. JOSIE FILMER



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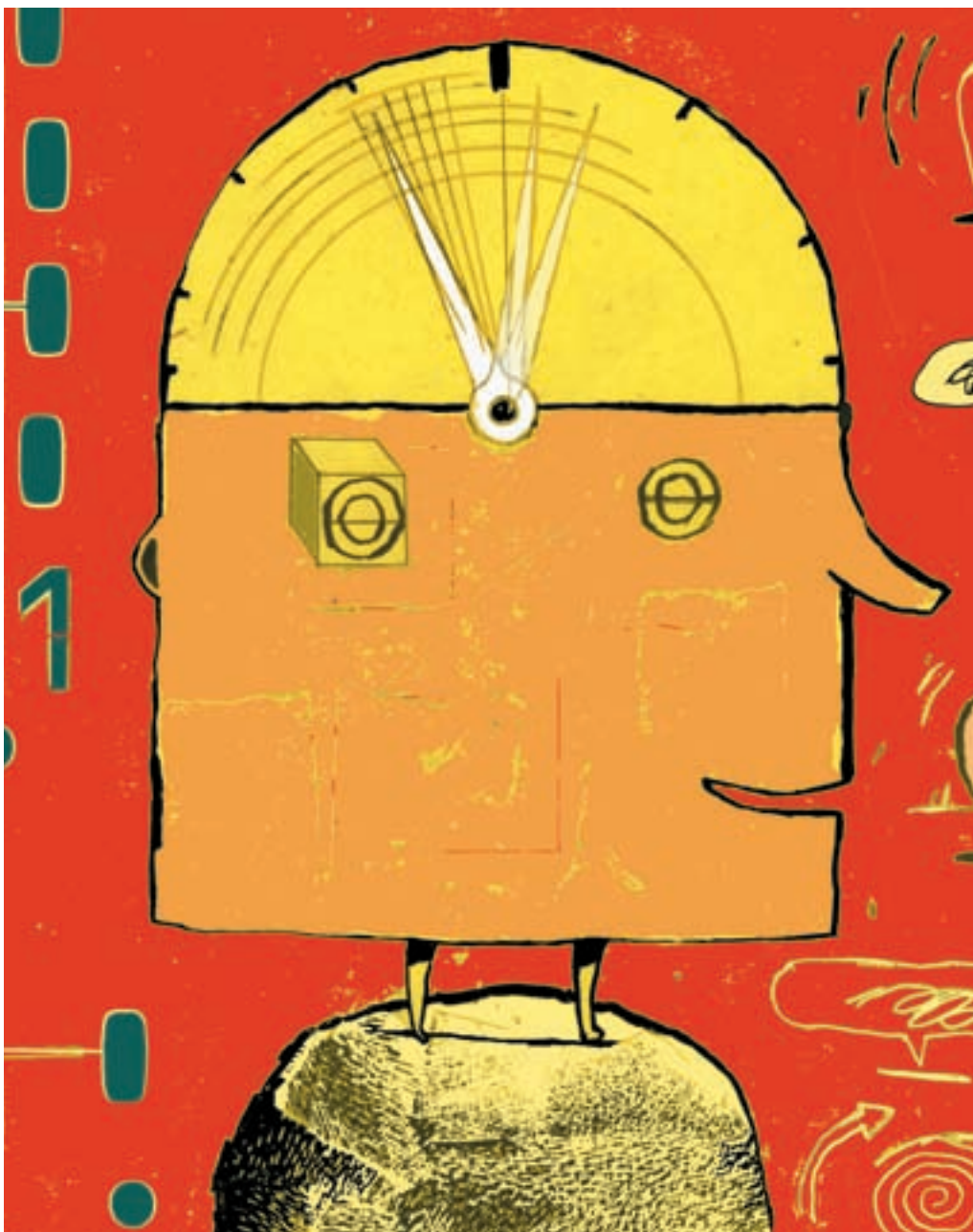
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## THE ESSAY: Not Noble, Not Savage

The philosopher VANESSA NEUMANN says that Latin America's recent history should worry us: Hugo Chávez's rhetoric of liberation taps into an old Eurocentric myth, and might prepare the ground for tyranny

A film review is not your typical opener for a UN General Assembly speech, but then Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez is not your typical speaker and this is not your usual film. Chávez was praising his joint effort with Oliver Stone in producing *South of the Border*, Stone's documentary that glorifies the Chávez-led Bolivarian Revolution of the past decade. But then media presentation is Chávez's speciality. Chávez's one-minute television speech in February 1992 to call down his troops from his attempted coup made him a cult revolutionary hero, when he expressed regret that his quest had failed *por ahora* ('for now'), a slogan he still uses.

What is most remarkable about Chávez's manipulation of the media is the extent to which he has successfully recast his populist power grab as a Bolivarian Revolution, so named to cash in on the image of the beloved liberator Simón Bolívar, who freed modern-day Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú and Panamá from Spanish rule. In other words, Chávez and his sympathetic heads of state (Castro in Cuba, Zelaya in Honduras, Ortega in Nicaragua, Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador) are purporting to be Bolívar's ideological heirs: fellow revolutionaries liberating the marginalized indigenous population against a foreign ravager or an oppressive white oligarchy.

However, there are two problems with this Bolivarian formulation. First, it misconstrues historical reality in the region. Second, it relies on the cynical manipulation of a myth originating with the white European conquistadores, which is why contemporary Anglo-Europeans are taken in by the story and why it is so dangerous for South Americans to believe it.

Like Mark Twain's demise, stories of oppression by a white oligarchy have been greatly exaggerated. Almost all Latinos are some shade of mestizo: a brown-skinned mixture of white, black and indigenous Indian. Perhaps for this reason South America has never suffered South African-style apartheid or even American-style racism. Now Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Honduras



are all violently divided along socioeconomic fault lines, in ways they were not before the Bolivarian propaganda.

While it is true that Latin America has always had an enormous class divide and a lot of corruption, a decade of the Bolivarian Revolution has not only failed to resolve these, but exacerbated them. In Venezuela the Gini Coefficient of income inequality has actually risen under Chávez and food is scarce and expensive, since even staples like milk (once widely available) now have to be imported. So much for the socialist agrarian revolution.

The most widely-accepted lie of the Bolivarian Revolution is that it has redressed the injustices of a thieving and oppressive 'oligarchy' that has absconded with the profits from natural resources and returned power to the people. Venezuela's formidable oil reserves are a prime example: since Royal Dutch Shell drilled Venezuela's very first oil well in 1914, foreigners lived like kings off Venezuelan oil in sprawling Caracas mansions, until the Venezuelan government completely nationalized the oil in 1976. So whatever thieving

oligarchs there may have been had to be government bureaucrats or Brits, Americans or Dutch: the same people who are now getting their history wrong and promoting the Bolivarian Revolution that has brought such division and violence.

People have wanted to believe in the Bolivarian Revolution because it fits nicely into another regional paradigm of the 'good revolutionary' that has been sanctified by its ideological inheritance dating back to the Conquest: the convenient idealizations of the Europeans on the one hand and the anger of the conquered on the other.

Pope Sixtus IV's 1481 papal bull *Aeterni Regis* argued that pagan natives' right to self-rule was overridden by papal responsibility for their souls. Bringing these 'noble savages' into Christendom would purify both the homeland (patria) and the conquerors, who effectively became 'holy warriors'. So it's no surprise that the discovery of the New World (Nueva Granada) was so wildly mythologized that when Columbus landed in Venezuela he wrote in his diaries that he had found the Garden of Eden. The myth of the noble savage has persisted and become

transmuted over time to a more modern persona: the savior of Latin American culture. This mythic figure is disseminated through the public media, and is highly susceptible to misuse by political elites. These myths set up a type or persona, which the average person who wants to be a good patriot or citizen will do his best to resemble.

What I find alarming and objectionable is that more than half a millennium later Latin Americans should turn this conquest ideology on themselves, in an act of ultimate self-loathing. Rather than accepting mestizo culture as the prime example of cultural assimilation, they have based their liberation rhetoric on this past shared trauma, whose ability to cross generational lines would be doubtful, had it not been so mythologized to serve political ends. Chávez and his Bolivarian cronies have successfully tapped into both this anger and this perversely Eurocentric mythology to turn their nations in on themselves in a near civil-war to stage a conquest from within.

In 1992, when Chávez shot to fame as an ambitious young putschist, the world reveled in condemning the quincentenary of Columbus's

discovery of the Americas, claiming he unleashed the greatest genocide ever seen and drawing a direct line between the Conquest of the Americas and the Holocaust, trivializing and obfuscating both events. Rage against the foreign imperialist was on every Latin American's mind, and Chávez was clever enough to exploit it by positioning himself as the good native revolutionary hero out to liberate (and purify) the natives.

Since the checks and balances that would constrain the politicians are themselves subject to revision by those in power (as we have seen in various re-written constitutions and the new 'media crimes' law allowing the imprisonment of any critical journalist), the struggle for political power is a struggle for control over the rules of the political game: a struggle for absolute power.

To manipulate emotions is to manipulate what we value, to change our individual identity and ideas of the good life, in turn shaping our national identity and our common public culture, both of which are informative (if not constitutive) of individual identity. So it is important for a demagogue to manipulate the emotions of his people, for emotions shape values.

It is crucial that as informed and rational citizens we are able to identify these politically-motivated mythologies, lest we lapse into a demagogic populism that slides down the slippery slope of tyranny. The trend is worrying not because Latin America has a history of liberal democracies of a Rawlsian or Habermasian stripe before the recent demagogues, but rather because the current movement points in the direction of one possible future amongst several: a future with a fractured society and little liberal democracy. The special problem with politically-motivated myths is that they get their power by appealing to and motivating that part of us that is base and non-rational. In that respect, they degrade us.

*Dr Vanessa Neumann is a Venezuelan-born political philosopher, currently Editor-at-Large of Diplomat and Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies at the Hudson Institute.*

## Overrated

### Week 3: Princess Diana



When Jody Williams won the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the international

campaign to ban landmines, she remained in the wasteland of anonymity where non-celebrities exist – yet is there anyone who doesn't know that Diana, Princess of Wales, once spent a few days on a PR exercise in Bosnia and Angola? Indeed, where were you when you heard the ghastly news of her death? Wait – don't answer that question, I don't care. It has been 12 years since the first chapter of *Diana: The Hagiography* was opened and the time has arrived to explode the myth.

The greatest contribution this

faddish fairytale Princess has made to our culture is the advent of the prefix 'celebrity' – and the way in which it vicariously leads other people's lives. Diana is thought of as a saint because she dealt so tenderly with HIV sufferers and those who had been the victim of landmines, and because she did a great deal for charity. But consider her position. If you were a multi-millionaire with nothing to do all day except perhaps contemplate extra-marital affairs you may also have thought: 'Sod it, I'll touch a leper.' Remember, there is nothing

saintly about being the consort (you may prefer concubine) to the son of a rather dubious, conspiracy-obsessed grocer, nor is there any moral lesson to be derived from posing on holiday for paparazzi, whose presence you are surely aware of, whilst being groped by a portly playboy – though perhaps a degree of hypocrisy.

What about her death? After a divorce settlement that would have been breathtaking even in Beverly Hills, dear Diana left precisely nothing to charity. The Soviet-like megaphone press

coverage of public anguish was all in terms of 'we'. Who exactly was this 'we'? It's safe to assume it wasn't the royal 'we' – the Queen seemed much more distressed when HMS Britannia was sunk months later. Since when has it been acceptable for the media to dictate how and when you may mourn? At least the *Express* has made its 20 pieces of silver out of Diana and her obsequious fanbase; the rest of us now languish in the post-Diana cultural wasteland of sentimentality, celebrity and mediocrity. RHYS JONES



# VARSITY

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Issue No 703

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## Degrees of Separation

This week's *Varsity* survey shows that involvement in time-consuming extra-curricular activities is not likely to affect your Tripos mark. We embarked upon this survey in the hope of providing some sort of evidence to wave in the face of your DoS next time they cajole you into aborting your passion for the sake of results.

A monastic lifestyle of diligent study for sixteen hours a day, seven days a week with only short breaks for sustenance is far more likely to drive you mad than drive you to succeed. Yet Cambridge staff still mutter disapprovingly in termly meetings whenever you let slip that you are planning to spend time somewhere apart from library.

Describing the subjects we read as 'disciplines' creates a very alarming idea of how we should treat them, implying we should abstain ourselves from all other worldly pleasures in a feat of self control. This attitude flies in the face of any common sense about how to lead a fulfilling student life. Nobody, no matter how passionate about their subject they are, should dedicate every waking hour to it.

Aside from its academic reputation, the most striking aspect of Cambridge must be the range and involvement in extra-curricular activities. For the most part, we have the collegiate system to thank for this, as for every couple of hundred undergraduates you're likely to find a drama society, a college paper and a clutch of sports teams. Cambridge offers amazing opportunities to continue hobbies, find new skills or play out future careers in miniature. Here, the saddest decision one can make is to give it all up in pursuit of that elusive first under the mistaken impression that time spent working is the sole determinant of attainment.

## Disaffiliation Blues

Being part of a team is arguably the greatest aspect of Cambridge life, and the University works best when its Colleges do the same. CUSU loves the team ethos, and would probably like to think it epitomises this collaborative effort. Unsurprisingly, CUSU feels gutted when a member leaves its team. So the captain tries to rally the troops and give a motivating talk. How dispiriting, then, when that falls on deaf ears.

The problem has been moaned time and time again, and the current CUSU team are trying to change it, but the fact remains that we know very little about what that £1,500 CUSU fee goes into. We see the occasional banner, we see minutes (that seem like hours) of drawn out bureaucracy. We're sure they do good deeds, but wouldn't it be great if it was made clearer what they were? As it stands, CUSU is like a closed door. No College is an island, we can all benefit from working together in a team, and CUSU is a well-placed institution to ensure that collaboration. It would just be nicer if they were a little clearer about what that collaboration entails.



Jessica King

At some point in the near future, provided we find a job at all, we are going to have to face the unfortunate reality of what adults call the 'income tax'. What is particularly unfair is that, despite being too young to have had anything to do with the current financial crisis, it is our generation who are going to have to pay for the government's use of public money to bail out the banks largely responsible for causing it.

As of October 2008, the government owns 70% of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS). Nationalisation should have given the government an unprecedented level of control over RBS investments. Why, then, have RBS since loaned an estimated £10 billion to coal, oil and gas companies? These include Cairn Energy, an oil company operating in previously pristine parts of Greenland's Arctic; E.ON, a coal company with controversial new Europe-wide plans for expansion; and finally Tullow Oil, who operate in the conflict zone on the border between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, where they should be boycotting commercial involvement in the region. The conclusion we draw is that the Treasury gave approval to a number of highly unethical investment policies inconsistent with the government's professed commitment to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions. And, furthermore, that they used public money to do it.

Three popular campaign groups – World Development Movement (WDM), Platform, and People and Planet – have decided the Treasury has breached its responsibility to the electorate, and in June attempted to take them to court. Since then, the government has hurried to carry out a 'green book' assessment of its environmental and human rights

## When taxpayers' money is supporting environmental disaster, it's time to protest

obligations in RBS, but concluded that its primary responsibility was to manage it in a 'commercial' way. The campaigners insisted that taxpayers' funds be spent only on projects that fund a 'sustainable and ethical future', through a formal review of RBS's portfolio. The court date has been set for this month. In the lead-up to the crucial global climate talks in Copenhagen in December, this issue promises to be an embarrassing one for the Treasury.

The irony is that the British government professes to be a leader in world action on environmental issues: the Department of Energy and Climate Change has recently produced two plans to tackle them, an energy efficiency scheme and the new aim set out in the budget of cutting emission levels by 34% by 2020. Also by 2020 they aim to have more than 1.2 million people in 'green' jobs, and around 40% of electricity from low-carbon sources, from renewables, nuclear and 'clean' coal. Though laudable, these aims seem highly in conflict with the Treasury's management of RBS.

The case may be a difficult one to prove, but it sets a landmark precedent. Legal experts are speculating as to whether existing human rights legislation could be used by communities and nations impacted by climate change to take action against large polluters. Surely it is worth making the attempt? It is not just our money but our very future that is at stake, and as (prospective) effective shareholders in RBS, and as

fully participatory members of this democracy, we should have a voice. Sign the petition at [www.peopleand-planet.org](http://www.peopleand-planet.org).

This is also a Cambridge issue. Trinity's investments in the arms trade are well documented, though they have been reduced in reaction to a student petition and demonstration in Lent 2007. The University as a whole has also produced a manifesto in support of 'ethical' investment, but without committing it to an active policy. Information on its areas of investment is still refused on the grounds of commercial interest.

CUSU's Socially Responsible Investment Policy for the University would prohibit investment in companies which fail to uphold basic human rights within their sphere of influence, and proposes the formation of a council to hold the University to account. This proposal is not without precedent: both St Andrew's and Oxford University have SRIs as, of course, does the Church of England, whose exemplary policy has also proved to be extremely profitable. If you want to get involved, a number of cards are circulating on which students can register their complaints about Cambridge's investment policy, which will be sent to the appropriate authority; the CUSU SRI website will soon enable you to bombard them with protest emails. Pester your fellow students; petition your college bursar.

As a heartening example of what student pressure can achieve, look to Edinburgh University. Last year, the Edinburgh Students' Association passed a motion for the university to use its £9.2 million investments in – you guessed it – RBS, to pressure the bank to stop funding fossil fuel extraction. If RBS has failed to withdraw its funds by the 2009 AGM, the university is expected to sell its shares. RBS is starting to pay the price for its abuse of the public trust. Don't let it stop here.



## Letters to the Editor

James Sharpe ought to look abroad (Comment, 16th October). Other



countries have simply adopted mixed-member proportional representation to combine locality and accurate representation. A citizen has two votes: one for a constituency representative and one for a party, so that if the local MP lets citizens down he loses the constituency vote and is replaced.

Constituency MPs still campaign and are judged on local issues: in fact Germany is one of the most federal countries in the world.

My vote will have no influence in my Conservative constituency. So it will also have none nationally, where Cameron looks likely to win a majority. But then, I will have a 'strong government' to vigorously enact a programme a minority of the country voted for. And, as an absolute bottom line, at least politics won't be getting stale and docile in a system where at four of the last five general elections, fewer than one in ten parliamentary

constituencies changed hands; where the same two parties have ruled almost continuously since World War Two; and where splinter or challenger movements could arise at any time to shake things up with a piece of energetic electoral suicide. At least I'm not totally disenfranchised – am I?

**Tim Waters**  
**Emmanuel**

James Sharpe's piece on proportional representation was spot-on. In both Liverpool and Cambridge, where I have lived, I have voted Liberal Democrat, not out of any particular support for that party but because I thought their candidate was the best for the constituency. Another reason to prefer the present system

is that under PR the British National Party would have a much better chance of getting into Parliament.

**Rachel Deimerrigen**  
**Trinity**

It is a dangerous precedent that a man with a clean criminal record is banned from entering a country, just because of his opinions (Editorial, 16th October). The same kind of arguments about 'sowing discord in the community' were used in my homeland in socialist times to silence political opponents.

**Daniel Manca**  
**Fitzwilliam**

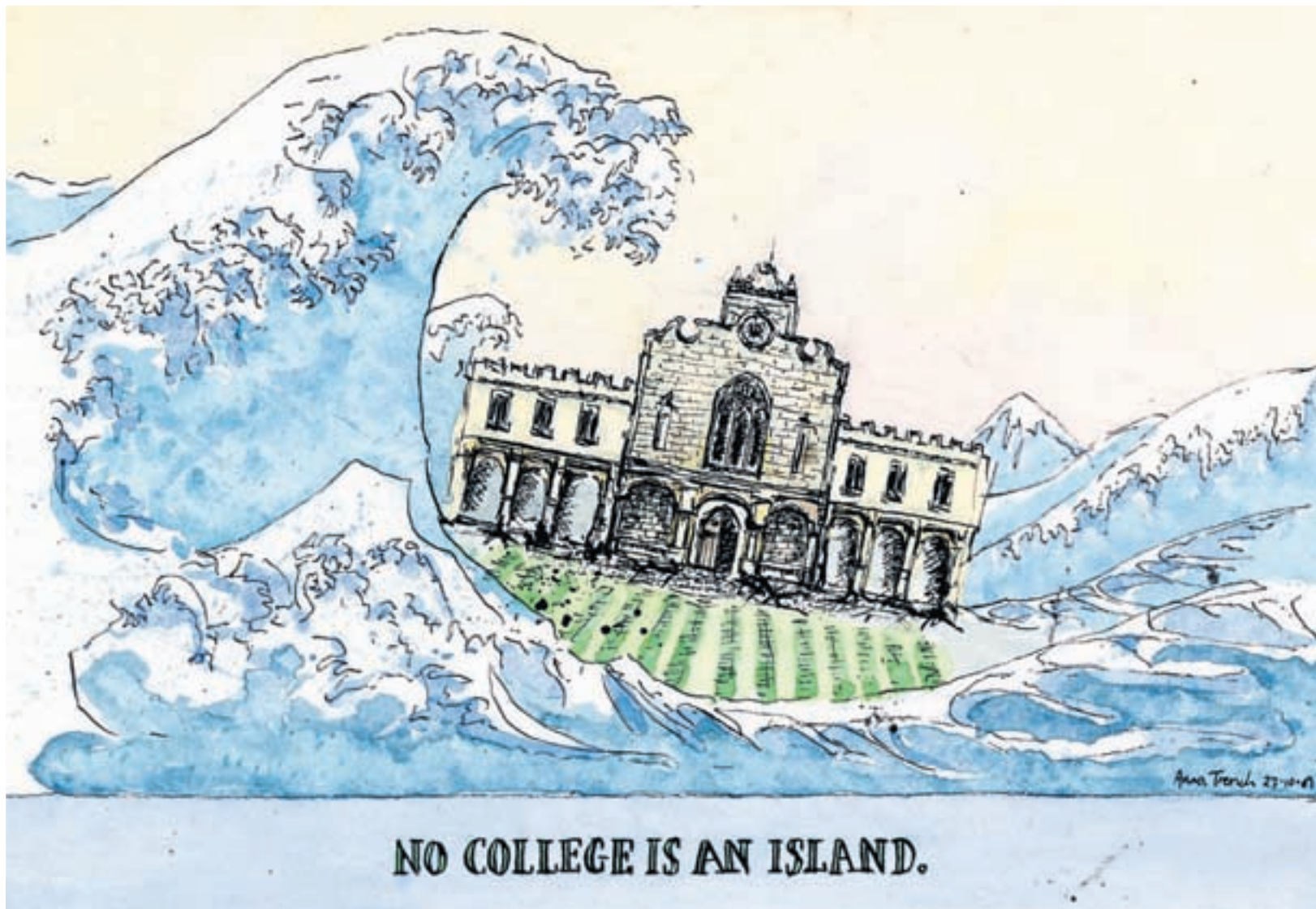
It is disheartening to note that the Faculty of Economics has had to cut its teaching; it is unacceptable not

to deliver on the promises made to its students. However, disgruntled economists might like to note that their situation is shared by others. For example, the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic does not offer supervisions to any Part II students: for some of us, all our teaching is done in groups of twelve or more. This approach has its advantages and disadvantages – one merely feels the need to point out that economics students are not uniquely downtrodden.

**Hugo Gye**  
**Trinity**

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





Robert Stagg

## Chummy David Cameron is a vacuous, facile politician. The voters had better keep the receipt

After a week of writing essays about Martha Nussbaum and the necessity of pity; a week of feeling great swells of compassion about unknown passers-by; a week in which politeness seemed the virtue according to which all should live, it was refreshing to turn on the television, see David Cameron, and feel my blood boil back to the surface. I felt like the man who filled in a BBC questionnaire with the words, “I do not want to see David Cameron on the television anymore.” I didn’t want to see him anywhere, anymore. And I didn’t have a questionnaire to agitate about it.

I watched Cameron’s conference speech with captive dismay. In the background was the Shadow Cabinet. George Osborne was at the front. His nervy soullessness seemed especially prominent. Philip Hammond, the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, who is already boasting about how he will be ‘Britain’s most hated man’, always looks blandly wicked. He kept up appearances, for appearances are all he has to keep up. To his left were Ken Clarke and William Hague, looking sane and humorous and totally out of

place. And to their right, appropriately enough, were the grinning young ones daydreaming about Mrs Thatcher. Silly clouds were pacing around the screen at the back of the hall and everything was white or blue. Boring music played. Cameron bounced on stage affectedly, gasping with energy. He was colourless and he reached the lectern. He spoke. The voice oozed out, slimed around the hall and blocked every exit.

I watched. I listened. My teeth grinded out an attritional dance. Then I started to gasp, astonished, and suck in air, vanquished. Then

**“How fitting that he gets kneaded like dough by public opinion and has a face like a pudding”**

salty tears began to fall. By the end, I was a broken man. The audience rose, hands communing noisily, while I slumped from my chair, a bit husky and very incredulous. Does David Cameron really believe that debt was the cause, not the outcome, of the recession? Does he seriously think

government was a hindrance, not an absence, in the banking sector? Does he actually intend to make his son’s death a test of character? It was too much. With tears of distress and mirth fretting channels in my cheeks, I decided to take it out on his face.

Physiognomy is back, for the next four hundred words. Like Freud, it has never been credible but it has always been useful. How appropriate, for instance, that Cameron gets kneaded like dough by ‘public opinion’ and ends up with a face like a pudding. There’s the fragile pastry nose hanging on to his wet puffy cheeks. There’s the yolky droop to his jowls, two broken eggs abseiling in unison away from the milky eyes. There’s the gingerbread-man smile, and there’s the hair flopped over like the crust on a chocolate mousse. Sickly, isn’t it? At least with Gordon Brown, one can see hard work pulling down on his features. Cameron looks ever sweeter and more facile the closer we get to an election.

Someone bake him, please. Cook out that treachery voice. He is not going to submit to high temperatures of his own accord. His instincts are room temperature instincts. He has never made a brave or unpopular decision, apart from those brave and unpopular decisions that have extensive public support, like ‘cutting

public spending’. He might as well add barrels to his name and call himself David-Cameron-by-Plebiscite. Although not quite: like every mood music politician, he will only offer referenda he knows he will win. He is not, to his credit, a real populist like Hitler or Mussolini. He will not turn the willing into executioners. He is, to his discredit, a small-fry vendor of slack language, slummy chumminess and generalised vacuity. I suspect he will sell his product; I know the public will have kept their receipts.

If they examined the product in the first place, the public might notice it is the same brand they moaned about two years ago – namely, the Tony Blair 1997 Things Can Only Get Better brand. A prescription for public amnesia: rather than politics getting more public, the public should get more political. This is an emancipating challenge, or it will be a challenge democracy keeps losing – eventually with fatalities. No powerful politician wants to tell the public this, since the mood music plays nicely for now. No public wants to hear this, since the mood music sounds easier than any democratic symphony. So we get change we can believe in, real change for real people, real help now, and David Cameron’s pliable face simpering for every camera. We have never had it so perilously average.

## Not-Sci



### Cheer up, it’s only the placebo effect

I hate to bang on at *The Times* every other week with the general demeanour of a Colin Farrell stalker, but they need to learn. After all, they are capable of producing informative and accurate pieces, like this week’s article which reported that “The Arctic will be ice-free in summer within 20 years, research says”. A reputable Cambridge professor who was present during the collection of data gave informative but sensible quotes and simple numbers to justify clear conclusions: “They drilled 1,500 holes and found that the average thickness of ice floes was 1.8m (5.9 ft). This was too thin to have survived the previous year’s summer melting.”

In the same week, they included a story headlined “Placebo effect starts in the spine – not just the mind”, about a part of the brain which releases endorphins without treatment in fifteen volunteers. It is not clear from the article how they have reached their conclusion, and they randomly quote questionable sources to back up the story: “The latest studies on antidepressants suggest that at least 75 percent of the benefit comes from the placebo effect.” There is no reference to these “latest studies”. Perhaps they mean the controversial study by psychologist Irving Kirsch which a Columbia University psychiatrist called “unrepresentative and inconsistent with a misleading effect size”. If you are going to quote numbers, quote all of them. And their source.

Also: “Science: If you want to stay slim and fit, choose your friends carefully”. What’s more, “happiness seems more contagious than despondency: it has a 9 per cent chance of being passed on, compared with 7 per cent for unhappiness.” And the “risk of becoming obese rose by a fifth if a friend of a friend became obese.” How does this emotional contagion work? Why are these unconvincing statistics used? Maybe because without them, the article is a continuous ramble of theories with no source about what it mysteriously alludes to as ‘fat people that hang out with other fat people.’ SITA DINANAUTH



# MAYS

Applications are invited to edit the 2010 Mays Anthology, the collection of the best student writing and artwork from Cambridge and Oxford. Interested candidates should email [president@varsity.co.uk](mailto:president@varsity.co.uk) by Sunday, November 1st.

The Mays, formerly the May Anthologies, are published annually by Varsity.

Each year, an editor or editors assemble a committee of students who invite submissions from universities in Cambridge and Oxford of fiction and non-fiction writing including prose, poetry, drama and non-fiction writing. Past anthologies have also published illustration or photography.

The committee also appoints a guest editor from the literary world who helps select the final selection for publication and who writes an introduction to the collection. Past guest editors have included Ted Hughes, Philip Pullman, Patti Smith, Andrew Motion and Colm Toibin.

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## Features p20-21

Strapped for cash? Feeling the pinch? Never fear, here's our guide to thrifty living especially for you.

VARSlTY

# Vulture

Arts, Features, Reviews



## Arts p22

Either it's brilliant or it's an annual waste of money, space and carcasses. Let's preview the Turner Prize!

DYLAN SPENCER-DAVIDSON



# The Eagle has landed

**Terry Eagleton** is one of the most prominent cultural critics of the last forty years, with his works on literary theory, ideology and Marxism being some of the most notable, and most controversial. **Elliot Ross** talks to the Trinity alumnus about Cambridge, the left and the need for realism.

“But why”, asked the cocksure undergraduate of the Catholic Marxist professor, “would you ever believe in something that doesn’t exist?” Terry Eagleton chuckled, and eyed the questioner with some amusement.

Did Eagleton search the face of his interrogator in the hope that there he might discover some traces of understanding about the critique he had just offered of Richard Dawkins’ aggressive brand of atheism? If so, it must have been in vain. He would have

been better off peering up into the Union’s draughty old rafters, whence much of his argument had just whizzed, high over the heads of many in his audience.

His point had been straightforward enough: that Dawkins’ obsession with counterposing the originary narratives of science and the Bible produces obvious conclusions and a tedious debate, and that such an old argument may only deal religious faith the most insipid of blows.

But once again, Eagleton found himself

arguing in Cambridge. And not for the first time, Cambridge was against him.

It is impossible to tell how many of the minds to have emerged from 800 years of Tripos have found the Cambridge of their time a thoroughly unwelcoming place. But Eagleton, who studied English at Trinity in the early 60s, is certainly one of these:

“It was an absolutely dreadful place,” he recalls. “Almost entirely male. All the men were well over six foot and sort of brayed rather than spoke and elbowed the

townspeople off the pavements. At Trinity almost everybody was a ‘Right Hon’, namely, of blue blood. I was from the northern working class – there was a tiny percentage of us – and we always seemed to be extremely stunted beside these huge, willowy characters. So it was a very class-ridden place in the early 60s, and a pretty uncomfortable place to be.”

*(continued overleaf)*



The undergraduate Eagleton shrunk from these bellowing giants, and set about the task of reading. He worked hard, wrote poetry for Granta and “hung around with literary types.” Like so many keen readers before and since, Eagleton admits to having been slightly unsure about the point of studying English, but was consoled by the fact that he enjoyed it and was good at it.

Now well-established as one of the UK’s most prominent thinkers, Eagleton considers himself more an intellectual than an academic. “Intellectuals,” he says, “are concerned with the bearing of ideas upon a whole culture. I began as a literary critic, but all the most interesting work that’s going on these days seems to me to be hard to

categorise in terms of traditional academic divisions. It falls in the cracks between them.”

It’s from these cracks that Eagleton now discusses politics, culture and religion. He speaks always from “the Left”, and willingly claims for himself the voice of that entire segment of the political spectrum. I ask him what he thinks, and the Left gives him an answer like some monolithic muse whispering into his ear.

What impresses me is how Marxism has become for Eagleton not just a position but a discipline of the mind. The events of the day and the current cast of political players float lightly, almost inconsequentially, above a much deeper conception of historically constructed systems and trends. This makes

## “Capitalism is a crisis-ridden phenomenon anyway”

his intellectual temperament unusually difficult to excite and provoke, and much more robust.

Several times he mentions Margaret Thatcher, seeming to blame her for conditioning the parlous state of the Left in Britain today, and for encouraging the “acquisitive culture” which he insists has proved ruinous to the university experiences of careerist undergraduates – “in a sense the university career never really happens to them”. Does he see Thatcher, then, as the great villain of his time?

No. He just doesn’t think of people in these terms: “There was a massive crisis in the 1970s, things had to change and she oversaw the transition from classical industrial capitalism to a sort of consumerist, post-industrial capitalism. But that happened everywhere in the world, really.”

No villains, then, but no heroes either. He is no more enthused by Obama today than he was by Blair in 1997.

“As Thomas Hardy might have said, don’t be illusioned and you won’t be disillusioned. I think the Left has made many mistakes, but not usually that one. It hasn’t usually underestimated the formidable power of what it’s up against. Despair and disillusion tend to come when you think it’s going to be easy and it turns out not to be.

“But I don’t think optimism and pessimism are really the right terms with which to discuss this. What’s important is realism, and realism is very hard to achieve. Actually, to try to see a situation as it really is requires a lot of labour, but if you can do that, then your political actions tend to follow from that. So I think that’s the goal – not optimism or pessimism.”

His philosophical and cultural convictions are tough and settled, and his patience extends even to those issues which loom most urgently today.

Asked if the financial crisis has been a squandered chance to challenge capitalist orthodoxy, he admits that a stronger labour movement might have brought about more lasting change.

But, he insists: “The Left never overestimated this crisis. Of course, it was a massive crisis of capitalism which has pushed it to the edge, but then capitalism is a crisis-ridden phenomenon anyway so to a certain extent one accepts that. One thing it reveals is the lie of a so-called free-market. The state had to massively intervene in order to pull the situation round.

“But I don’t think anyone on the Left was crowing about this. When crises like these come around they hurt ordinary people very much, and the Left isn’t cheered by that prospect. But it does show the fragility and precariousness of the system to people who didn’t previously realise that. When a system is in crisis, one effect is to denaturalise it,

make it look less obvious and necessary.”

And one senses that, however caught up Eagleton now is in grappling with Richard Dawkins about God, he might put his famously lucid discursive style to better use on more earthly subjects.

Addressing the Union, and without provok-

**“As Thomas Hardy might have said, don’t be illusioned and you won’t be disillusioned. I think the left has made many mistakes, but not usually that one”**

ing so much as a sniff in dissent, he called Gaza a “vast concentration camp”, a glaring symptom of the degradation endured by Arabs at the hands of the West, without which, he said, the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 might never have happened.

“It wasn’t just some random and gratuitous act of madmen. However wicked it was – and I think it was a moral obscenity – one has to try and understand it in its political context and if you don’t do that then you won’t defeat your enemy. If you caricature your enemy as some kind of lunatic or psychopath then, as with the battle against the IRA, you won’t understand what they’re in business for and you won’t be able to come to any terms with them, or beat them. To explain and to excuse are totally different activities, but people don’t tend to understand that.”

Perhaps it’s because Eagleton has spent his whole life trying to understand his own opponents that his remains a voice well worth listening to.

### Terry Eagleton: An Introduction

**1943** Born in Salford

**1961** Studies at Trinity College

**1983** *Literary Theory: An Introduction*

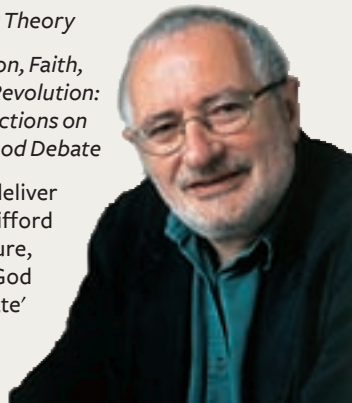
**1990** *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*

**1992** Thomas Warton Professor of English Literature at Oxford

**2003** *After Theory*

**2009** *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate*

**2010** Will deliver his Gifford Lecture, ‘The God Debate’



Terry Eagleton’s prolific output for five decades, writing over forty books and innumerable articles, shows no signs of abating as we enter the sixth. Although perhaps not England’s most respected literary critic, Eagleton is certainly the most notorious: even Prince Charles once remarked on “that dreadful Terry Eagleton”. This notoriety has seen a marked increase since his decision to wade out from cultural and literary criticism to social and religious debate, taking on Kingsley Amis (“a racist, anti-Semitic boor”), Martin Amis (“has clearly learnt more from [his father] than how to turn a shapely phrase”) and Richard Dawkins, whose views on theology he likened to “someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*”.

Eagleton was not always so controversial, although it was a short-lived anonymity. His early criticism of canonical authors in *Exiles and Émigrés* (1970) and *Myths of Power* (1975) were highly theorised, but not yet theoretical. The fictional text was still ‘expressive’, even if what it expressed was class consciousness, not historical events.

It would be 1983’s *Literary Theory: An Introduction* that would catapult Eagleton to public fame. Eagleton frames his introduction to the book, which has since become a touchstone for English Literature students making their first foray into literary theory, with the question, ‘what is literature?’ But answering that is less straightforward than it would first appear, and in a lucid and entertaining evaluation of the numerous theories on literature, from Russian formalism to Freudian analysis, Eagleton demonstrates the impossibility of approaching a text neutrally and

## Terry Eagleton: An Introduction

Kai Zeng and Lucinda Higgie take a retrospective look at Eagleton’s writings



Three major texts from Eagleton’s forty-plus works: literary theory, post-literary theory and ideology.

the ultimately hopeless nature of any attempt to narrowly classify the study of literature. Marxism pervades the work, yet Eagleton’s discussion is not limited by it and in his conclusion he warns that “any reader who has been expectantly waiting for a Marxist theory has obviously not been reading this book with due attention”. Perhaps further demonstrating the struggle a reader encounters in attempting to read a text without bringing their own baggage to it, in his 1996 edition of the book, Eagleton adds an afterword, describing the context of the time in which he had been writing as “the watershed

between two very different decades”.

However, *Literary Theory* had come at the high-water mark of theoretical criticism and the 1990s saw Eagleton struggling, with rather inert publications like *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. The new millennium, however, seemed to galvanise him publishing the grandiosely titled *After Theory* (2003), which sought to push Theory into new and more interesting territory.

However, Eagleton’s visit to the Cambridge Union is prompted less by his role as a prominent literary theorist and more by virtue of his recent entrance into the

intense and ongoing debate currently at fever pitch between theism and atheism, a debate which often seems to resemble a particularly aggressive game of ping-pong more than anything else. His shift in emphasis, from the literary to the social, was first signalled by 2007’s surprisingly sentimental *The Meaning of Life*. His review of Dawkins’ *The God Delusion* in the London Review of Books was a publication in itself, culminating in his most recent *Reason, Faith, and Revolution*.

Here, Eagleton searches for a more nuanced position than has previously been put forward, making an attempt to undermine what he views as the shallowness of both Richard Dawkins’ and Christopher Hitchens’ conceptions of Christianity, by creating a fictitious conglomeration of the two named ‘Ditchkins’ on which he bounces propositions, thus demonstrating the supposed superficiality of both of their stances. This does, though, raise the question of whether Eagleton is in fact guilty of trying to destruct a straw-man by framing his work around a non-existent opponent. Eagleton questions why, after decades of apparent retirement, the ‘God Debate’ has returned with such renewed vigour. Locating the origin in 9/11 and the West’s new challenge of Radical Islamic Fundamentalism, Dawkins sees this ‘New Atheism’ as an anachronistic hearken-ing back to 19th century ideals of rational progress, led by the well-educated, metropolitan literati. The book’s other main focus is on the radical political ramifications of the Christian gospel; Eagleton argued in an interview with Nathan Schneider that, in America, the truly shocking nature of the Christian gospel has been replaced with “a very comfortable ideology for a dollar-worshipping culture”.



# Boy Meets Girl

Over the summer, *Varsity* set two intrepid readers a literary challenge: to find out whether the worst culprits of chick and bloke lit had cross-over appeal. **Alisdair Pal** got intimate with diets, shopping and vampire heart-throbs, while **Sarah Evans** learnt what exactly it takes to be a bloke lit heroine.

The librarian shoots me a look of pity over the top of her glasses. I stare at the Popular Fiction rack as in a twist of irony, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* – the book at the top of my real summer reading list – sits, rather incongruously next to *Bridget Jones' Diary*. "Wouldn't have enjoyed it anyway", I sniff, heading for the counter with my girly haul. Surely there must be something for the discerning *Nuts* reader to enjoy, beyond the saccharine-pink covers and vague praise from *Grazia*? Surely swathes of the nation's females aren't completely gullible? Surely I couldn't... actually enjoy any of this stuff?

I may not have believed it on that fateful afternoon in the library, but Helen Fielding's magnum opus is – whisper it – really rather good. Of course, it's full of bumf about thigh measurement and capitalised nicknames for men. But hack beyond the diary format, full of abbreviation and clipped prose, there does lie an element of universal truth – overbearing mothers, miserable husbands, the relative merits of Italian and Indian takeaway. And besides, anyone who can mint the line: "Darling, do shag Mark Darcy over the Turkey Curry Buffet, won't you? He's very rich" has my utmost respect.

The same cannot be said for the excruciating *Secret Dreamworld of a Shopaholic*, a novel as empty as its protagonist. *Dreamworld* follows the life of a financial journalist, and is written by a former financial journalist. And, in an exciting twist she is, wait for it, no good with money. Har har. Without Fielding's wit, badinage about the Whistles sale – a shop which at around page seven, I have come to loathe – means that by the time any semblance of a plot arrives, my mind is away down Oxford Street, window shopping and

lunching at Pret.

Freya North's *Pillow Talk*, and Karen Joy Fowler's *The Jane Austen Book Club*, suffer from similar defects: shallow characters, and plots with flimsy premises, all thrown together in the most arbitrary way. Will Petra and Arlo ever cure their insomnia, and be together at last? I don't know. *Pillow Talk* was so terrible that I couldn't bear to finish it. But I get the feeling that what women of a certain age are looking for in a novel is a hundred-odd page description of the heroine's wardrobe, interspersed with references to a mysterious man – 'him'.

And the blood-red cherry atop the dismal chick lit cake? Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight*. Where to start? Everything about Edward Cullen is beautiful including, hilariously, his breath and driving skills. Picking out horrific usage of the English language would be easy, cruel and counter-productive. If I had to though: "He lay perfectly still in the grass, his shirt open over his sculpted, incandescent chest, his scintillating arms bare" would definitely be a candidate. At least, on a more positive note, is does put to rest a popular misconception – vampires don't melt in sunlight, they glitter. Urgh.

Before I come to a rather inevitable conclusion, and the Women's Union bays for my head on a spike, let me make a few concessions. Putting up Helen Fielding against this bunch of hacks is akin to slipping Dickens into the bloke-lit pile. Chick lit is a staggeringly broad generalisation, perpetuated by marketing teams and one which is probably best avoided in literary criticism. Saying that, I'd still take the whole lot, lip-gloss and all, over the Shakespearean wit of Jeremy Clarkson.

## Alisdair read:

**Bridget Jones' Diary**  
HELEN FIELDING

**Secret Dreamworld of a Shopaholic**  
SOPHIA KINSELLA

**Pillow Talk**  
FREYA NORTH

**The Jane Austen Book Club**  
KAREN JOY FOWLER

**Twilight**  
STEPHANIE MEYER

## Sarah read:

**The Partner**  
JOHN GRISHAM

**The Damned United**  
DAVID PEARCE

**The World According to Clarkson**  
JEREMY CLARKSON

**Zero Option**  
CHRIS RYAN

**Legend**  
DAVID GEMMELL

I have never previously ventured far into the quagmires and woody thickets of the bona fide bloke's novel. For my first foray into enemy territory I unearth a battered John Grisham paperback belonging to my dad. Less than three chapters into legal thriller *The Partner*, and we're already at the first torture scene. Lovely. Guessing that a stiff drink may be in order, and feeling that Pinot Grigio is not quite manly enough for this assignment, I pop out for some whiskey and duly forget all about Patrick S. Lanigan for the rest of the weekend. Not a good start.

*The Partner* turns out to be a competent, engaging thriller. Even the heroine, whose sole purpose is to Be Beautiful and Be Concerned, at least until The Twist, is better fleshed out than many of her male chick lit counterparts. Suitably invigorated, I pick up David Pearce's *The Damned United*, the chronicle of Brian Clough's 44 day stint as manager of Leeds United in 1974. The stream of consciousness style sweeps even this most lacklustre of football fans along with it, taking me convincingly into the head of the egomaniac himself.

The next book on my list is *The World According to Clarkson*. Borrowed from a friend who says she feels dirty for admitting to owning it, I am prepared for garrulous nonsense. What I get is a surprisingly funny set of essays, often engaging, always comically exaggerated and with an occasional glimpse of sense through the hyperbole. He certainly makes pertinent points about bank holiday boredom, acronyms and manliness which ready me for Chris Ryan's *Zero Option* with its testosterone addled blurb. This military thriller, based on Ryan's own experiences

in the SAS, is intermittently entertaining, although Ryan is far more at ease with the combat sequences than with characterisation.

I am, however, delighted to discover that Real Men Drink Tea. Every crisis which befalls these grim SAS types is solved, at least in the short term, by putting the kettle

on. 'Chestnut' hair also appears to be standard issue at Thriller Heroine finishing school, along with classes in Being Rescued and How Not To Recognise Impending Danger.

With the end in sight, and as a long time fan of *The Lord of the Rings*, David Gemmell's *Legend* should be an easy last read, right? Wrong. *Legend* boasts an Atlas-worth of clumsily made-up names (west Vagria?), a cod-Viking civilisation, and the least plausible romantic sub-plot since *Braveheart*. Fair enough, boys with a penchant of quasi-historical sci-fi don't read books like *Legend* for believable,

well-developed romance, but it still clangs awkwardly, particularly when coherent plotting has been sacrificed in favour of interminable descriptions of weapons and long discussions about honour, sacrifice and certain death in which characters repeat sentences back at each other.

Stories stand or fall on the strength of their character development, even genre-bound books of the type I've been reading. A strong and believable central character can cross the supposed gender divide in popular fiction, which is a marketing gimmick far more than an immutable law. These particular books are marketed largely at men because of the apparently 'manly' trappings – the football and fast cars, the quad bikes and guns, the swords and sorcery. The best among them could be enjoyed by anyone looking to escape for a couple of hours. I wouldn't rule out a return expedition to Blokeland. So long as West Vagria isn't on the itinerary.







*Shot in the library at the Hotel du Vin*

*All Dresses by Ark Vintage*

*Alex Wears: Suit by Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Tie by Christian Dior, White Shirt by Turnbull and Asser, Fassel Loafers by Trickers*

*Make up by Ricky Lee at Benefit, John Lewis*



# Seven Deadly Sins of Cambridge

## Week 3: Sloth

A good writer always shows rather than tells. 3am – I slope up to bed, after a two hour conversation with blinky housemates about our love lives, the future, and the viability of becoming white Rastafarian. I set my alarm for 8, when I will embark for the University Library, and a brighter tomorrow. 8am – Press Snooze button. 8:10am – Press Snooze button. 8:20am – Switch off alarm. 11am – Get out of bed for shower. Deliberate between Aussie’s Moisture Miracle and Herbal Essences Hello Hydration. 12pm – Arrive at UL. 12:30pm – Having found all of the books on my reading list, arrange them in stacks according to colour. 12:44pm – Go for lunch in UL tea room with a friend, a workshy avoiding the English Faculty. While emptying lots of packets of sugar onto the table, I talk loftily about the grand scale of my dissertation plans, although so far they have mostly involved writing ‘Literature?’ in the middle of a page, circling it and then putting arrows leading off to

thought bubbles yet to come. 1:30pm – Leave the UL to go to class. Listen to M People’s ‘Moving On Up’ on my Ipod as I go through Market Square. Feel empowered, so buy strawberry laces from market stall. 2:00pm – Arrive at class. Realise have forgotten to do half the reading, but contribute my tiny clutch of knowledge within the first two minutes. Spend the rest of the hour fantasising about my supervisor, who looks a lot like Buzz Light-year, but taller. 3:15pm – Go home, eat pink wafer biscuit. Lie on floor of friend’s room while he blu-tacks funky holographic prints to his wall and




LUCY NURNBERG

tells me about the perils of legal highs. 3:17pm – Eat pink wafer biscuit. 4:00pm – Watch ‘The Nightmare Before Christmas’ with other wastrel acquaintance living in the attic of our house. We discuss the decline of Tim Burton and the shame of our gothy adolescent years. I admit to owning an *Emily Strange* pencil case. He says he still thinks the *Nirvana Unplugged* version of ‘The Man Who Sold The World’ is better than the David Bowie original. I feel we are bonding. I offer him a pink wafer biscuit. He declines. 6:30pm – Eat light supper of a Danish pastry and pint glass of Ribena. Rest of the house variously drifts into the kitchen, making themselves carb heavy suppers and mocking each other’s

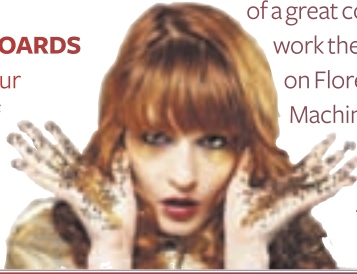
life hopes and dreams. Simon & Garfunkel’s ‘Feelin’ Groovy’ plays anachronistically in the background. 7:15pm – Start writing essay. Put title in bold and write ‘Tragic Irony??’ 7:30pm – Go to ADC to watch play. Feel inspired by the brilliance of the acting and the effort that has gone into the production. Decide I can do more with my life. 9:03pm – Have two G&Ts, one White Russian and a Kinder Egg in the bar. 11:46pm – Arrive home, watch *Peep Show* in someone’s room. Debate whether I would have been able to pull David Mitchell while he was at Cambridge. Agree it’s possible if he was feeling a bit down. 1:00am – Sit in the kitchen eating jelly beans while a gentle argument drags on about the ethics of keeping questionable fish in the fridge. 2:38 – Wake up after falling asleep in *The Dummies Guide to Greek Tragedy*. Curl up in bed. Set alarm for 8.

VICTORIA BEALE



**HOT**


**MICRO PIGS** They’re normal pigs, but, like, smaller. A potential source of bacon? Not really. An excellent, college room-compatible pet? Oh yes.



**SKATEBOARDS** Despite our legions of cyclists, recent weeks

have seen an explosion of skateboards. What can we say? Frickin’ sweet.

**THE XX REMIXING FLORENCE** A great cover of a great cover, The xx work their lo-fi wizardry on Florence & The Machine’s version of Candi Staton’s ‘You’ve Got The Love’.



**PEOPLE WEARING SUNGLASSES** It’s autumn, it’s chilly, there’s a profusion of scarves. So, why oh why, are people still acting like it’s the height of summer/we’re in a Matrix convention?

**BALLOON BOY** Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it’s a ridiculous media stunt by a man who was on the

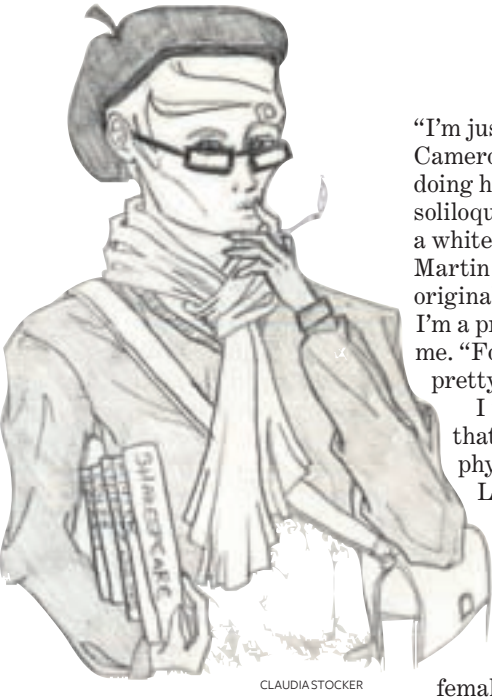
**STANDARDS** Struggling to find love? Tired of being alone? Solution: lower your standards. Sense of shame optional.

**NOT**

**Shadow Puppet Guide**



Week 3: The Micro Pig



CLAUDIA STOCKER

**Friday** Six hour rehearsal for my latest theatrical work. The producer seems less than sure about my re-interpretation of Macbeth as David Cameron, except Scottish.

## My week by Tristan Baird, ADC Director\*

“I’m just not sure Samantha Cameron-slash-Lady-Macbeth doing her ‘out, out, damned spot’ soliloquy in a shower while wearing a white dress is such a good idea,” Martin ‘I’m boring and have no original ideas, and that’s why I’m a producer’ Fitzpatrick tells me. “For one thing, that dress is pretty... sheer.”

I patiently explain to him that the shower scene is a physical manifestation of Lady Macbeth’s madness, which, along with her dress, is becoming increasingly transparent to the audience. Very meta. It combines my two favourite things: literary theory and female objectification.

The actress shivers onstage. “Could we maybe heat the water beforehand?” she asks. “Seriously, Byrony,” I tell her, “if you don’t suffer for your art now, you’ll never get into RADA.” Pathetic.

**Monday** I get a serious sense of déjà vu while watching Eddie Hall’s production of *Hamlet*, as if I’ve seen it before. Then I remember that I have – there were five *Hamlet* productions in the past term. All of them worth their own artistic merit, of course. Except Eddie’s *Hamlet* is terrible. The set is so A Level Drama, and the contemporary references (Hamlet wearing Converse? WTF?) shoehorned into the play feel as forced as LAMBDA admitting a chav from Manchester on its outreach programme.

I run into Eddie at the ADC bar later on. “Did you like it?” he asks. “I loved it!” I trill. “So fresh, so modern. I particularly liked the part where Hamlet did his soliloquy next to a poster of Obama!” Vom. Eddie still thinks Trevor Nunn (or Trevs, as I call him) is the height of theatre. And Eddie steals all my roll-ups. What a cretin. I’m

surrounded by peasants whose idea of art is an Al Murray DVD boxset.

**Tuesday** Final run before opening night. I’m not tense at all, just filled with the joyous light of knowing my work will soon be revealed to the world. In that way, I feel theatre is really about childbirth and the maternal instinct, and the dress rehearsal is really the product of my labour, straining against the uterus that we call life (I write this thought down in my Moleskine diary).

The lead comes up to me. “Hey, Tristan, some of the cast are really unhappy wi –” the stage manager trips over a light. “Sorry, give me a second,” I laugh.

“WHY THE FUCK ARE YOU WALKING ACROSS THE STAGE? WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU THINKING? NO, DON’T TALK. I’M TALKING NOW. BECAUSE I’M THE DIRECTOR AND YOU’RE A FUCKING

AMATEUR. GET OFF MY SET!” I turn back to the lead and smile. “Sorry, what were you saying?” “Um, nothing,” he says.

“You know,” I tell him, “I really appreciate the amount of professionalism you bring to your role.”

**Wednesday** As a well-noted theatre director, I liken an opening performance to the first time a mother sees her child, minus the afterbirth and all that other gross woman stuff. A solitary, masculine tear wells up in my eye as the cast assembles in the final tableau, set to *Canonball* by Damien Rice (I think the military connotations of the song’s title juxtaposed against the tenderness of the lyrics is very moving – such a Peter Hall artistic decision). I bump into Eddie at the bar later. “I loved it!” he enthuses. “So fresh, so modern.” Damn straight.

\* As told to David Delaney



# 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... (What's the story) morning glory? Wake up and smell the coffee.

Every morning I wake up hard, load up the Cuisinart Grind and Brew and jerk off in the shower while the coffee steams. These kinds of habits are pleasant and healthy, liable to interruption by one-night-stand, or dismal hangover. Masturbation and caffeine are harmless. People are not. Sleep with somebody every night for a week and the first evening without is going to hurt. Spend a summer lusting after a friend only to realise that they don't want you and you can't just forget them is also going to hurt. With people it's just a little too easy to let habit drift to obsession.

I'll tell you about the time Charlie and I slept together. Post-King's Affair, 10am. We sat in Starbucks, glittery and relatively naked, reading papers. "What a year," he kept saying. "What a fucking year."

And, "We should go to Gardies." "It tastes different in daylight. We should go to bed."

Right there: coy smile, bloodshot eyes. "Okay. Let's."

There weren't many clothes to remove. He looked at his groin and laughed. "Glitter gets everywhere." And at the end he lay there spread-eagled and said, "I kind of see why you like it. Pleasant change." The next day he drove back to London.

Three weeks back, no recollection. I'm not about to go all redemptive on you, but I feel a little like I slept with myself. All of the unanswered texts and the rapid escapes at a look of recognition between the Sainsbury's aisles. There's nothing duller than unrequited love.

If there's a time to say anything, it's post-rugby initiations. He's an unusual departure from the

bisexual stereotype: he follows *The Sartorialist* and he can catch a ball. Charlie and I, bearers of the funnel, sat stagnating in the bar before seven pints of vomit. "Nice aim this year." "We were neater."

Most of the initiates were long KO'ed. Only Panzer Fresher, ogre-sque, was left standing, mauling the Fresher Bicycle at the next table. "I heard he had a piece of your neighbour, too," Charlie said. "Anna? I doubt it."

He was giggling. "Seems like she thinks she can convert you... it's a nice gesture. Like in the movies! Player Does Fidelity. You're with me on this, right?"

I laughed. I said, "Where the hell else would I be?" And the next morning, of course, I stood in the shower and thought about fucking him; stepped out damp to smell the coffee brewing.

## BOXED IN

The weekly guide to staying in and switching on

**F**lashforward is based on the far-fetched yet intriguing concept of the occurrence of a global blackout. Everyone, worldwide, loses consciousness for 2 minutes 17 seconds and has a vision of their lives, exactly 6 months in the future.

Amongst the chaotic aftermath of this inexplicable event, the first episode presents us with the 'flashforwards' of the main characters, including FBI agents Mark Benford (Joseph Fiennes) and Demetri Noa (John Cho), who seek to investigate the blackout's cause. These visions display a dramatically different picture of the future, and provide intrigue in the gaps of the mosaic they provide. It's clear that writers/producers Brannon Braga and David S. Goyer keep back the most important pieces of the puzzle, giving only hints of phenomena such as Suspect Zero, a man seen on CCTV walking around, unaffected by the blackout.

The opening episodes' scenes of an apocalyptic LA certainly catch our attention, with slow-motion running and startling visual effects. A bid for our

emotions is also made, with the visions providing hope for some characters and anxiety for others, like Benford's wife Olivia (Sonya Walger), who sees herself having an affair with another man. These visions act as clues to the greater picture and provide threads of some of the main stories that will be pursued.

However, being hailed as HBO's new *Lost*, do we need to worry that it might fall victim to the same pitfalls? It certainly offers that same densely packed continuation of exciting discoveries and misleading clues, with stories being incessantly reworked. Mark's heroic entrance, striding through the fiery danger of an LA freeway helping those in his path, even seems reminiscent of Jack's post-plane crash introduction in *Lost*. Braga and Goyer may be able to keep the main questions in focus, though it could just end up as another frustrating *Lost*-like case of more questions being thrown up every time we even get close to answering one.

Nonetheless, after only three episodes having been aired on Channel 5, it's undeniable that we're left with a feeling of wanting more. Can the characters rework the events which lead up to their vision or are they stuck on a fateful pathway? And what caused the blackout in the first place? We're just going to have to wait and see, cliff-hanger by cliff-hanger. JOSIE FILMER

FlashForward is on every Monday on Channel 5 and is available at [www.five.tv](http://www.five.tv).

# Food and Drink

Fancy wining and dining with some added jazz? Rob Peel heads to the award winning Alimentum.



Alimentum on Hills Road. Ethical food, Jazz and Jerusalem artichokes

**W**hen would be the worst time to get tooth ache? How about just before you go to Cambridge's snappiest restaurant on a date with a special someone? It would certainly seem to be up there.

However, my affliction actually served me rather well. Alimentum is one of those restaurants where the size of a portion is in inverse proportion to its price. In such circumstances I have a tendency to lose all self control, gobble down the food in one greedy burst, and then feel a crush of sadness and guilt. Not so with tooth ache. I had to chew with extreme care to avoid hitting the offending culprit, and terrifying my girlfriend as my face goes white, my eyes water and I let out a whimper of excruciating pain.

So for the whole evening I was forced to eat my food at the pace of a geriatric sloth. Fortunately, this created the misleading impression that I am the kind of man sufficiently cultured to distinguish between a Mars bar and a parfait and alter my chew-rate accordingly.

Alimentum's head chef Mark Poynton left the behemoth of Cambridge dining Midsummer House two years ago, and Alimentum's reputation is on the up, even being mentioned in the same breath as the Fat Duck. So, having been living off pizza, cheese toasties and baked potatoes since the start of term, I was ready to be impressed.

The service was impeccable; friendly without being intrusive, and not at all condescending when we confirmed our student status

by ordering the cheapest wine on the menu. The butternut squash soup was, with some Blumenthal inspired theatricality, poured from a jug into a bowl specially prepared with a fried shallot and parmesan foam. But it was the main courses which won us over. My Jerusalem artichoke filo pastry with goat's cheese was a beautiful blend of earthy flavours, occasionally complemented with the zing of a sun dried tomato. Her duck was an ingenious dish where the one cut of meat was cooked and served in three different ways.

These deceptively dinky meals were in fact rather filling, so we sat back in the comfortable chairs and listened to the live band. It is not often that a restaurant review takes an abortive turn towards music review, but with Alimentum's Tuesday Jazz night one can do just that. As our desserts arrived, Italian based jazz singer Melissa Stott accompanied by pianist, double bassist and drummer began an effortlessly cool set of jazz favourites. Accompanying this, my hazelnut parfait with baked figs was excellent, but it was the chocolate bavaois served in a preserve jar which really left us smiling. A rich combination of dark chocolate, pistachios, honeycomb and cream made a wonderfully textured end to the meal.

Alimentum may be situated next to the unlovely Hills Road multiplex, and the decor may feel like a hotel lobby, but with its impeccable food and fantastic music you don't have to go far from the centre of Cambridge to feel completely transported.

## Other options for Fine Dining in Cambridge

### Midsummer House

The big daddy of posh dining in Cambridge, it earned its second Michelin Star in 2008. Sat on the edge of the eponymous common next to the river, this is only for the big spenders. The dinner menu is a cool £65, but for the cheapskates, a £30 lunch time menu is on offer. Start booking now for a graduation day.

### Cotto Restaurant

Serves all things locally sourced, organic and green. By day Cotto serves light lunches, and the excellent cafe is full of goodies from the onsite bakery. On Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays there is a three course dinner menu.



Our Tube

Search:  
beach+ball+goal



Liverpool, you must be gutted. Beaten once again. And all down to a red beach ball. Now the question: who's more of an idiot, the goalie, the ref, or the little twerp who threw it on pitch?



# GOING OUT & LIVING IT UP



Did Freshers Week leave your pockets cleaned out, with no money left for drink apart from Sainsbury’s Basics vodka? Abruptly develop a new range of interests, including readings by obscure linguists, sushi-rolling workshops and career talks on investment banking. Subscribe to every mailing list going and then take your pick from the inevitable deluge of invitations. Almost every event is attended by drinks and canapés. With something on most evenings, you can live through the term on a diet of red wine and prawn puff pastries. How far you take this depends on how long you can feign interest in a career in management consultancy. ROISIN KIBERD

Learn how to homebrew. Starter kits cost about £50, but when you do get up and running, ale or cider will come to about 2p per pint. *Varsity* has also observed that rolling a giant vat of alcohol to a party immediately makes you the most popular person there. COTTIA THOROWGOOD *the-homebrew-shop.co.uk*

If you’re more of a spirits kind of student (after all, liquor is quicker), save on expensive artificially-flavoured vodkas by infusing your own. There are loads of recipes on the internet, and once the fruit, vegetable or packet of Skittles (yes, really) has mellowed, you can fish it out and eat tasty vodka-flavoured food too. Be warned that the resulting vodka tastes very sweet and very strong, meaning that you will be plastered on an even smaller amount. Efficient. DAN DELANEY

Staff at Cambridge Wine Merchants will guide you through their expansive collection to some dirt cheap wines, and offer a ten percent discount if you can correctly answer a Trivial Pursuit question. You can even choose the category. One more word of advice though: the edition is old, so whatever you do, don’t go for Entertainment. BENJAMIN HALFPENNY *Cambridge Wine Merchants at 42 Mill Road, 32 Bridge Street and 2 Kings Parade*

Members of the Cambridge Union can work as stewards during debates and special events, and every time you volunteer you receive £5 drinks vouchers for the bar. JULIA RAMPEN

If you need wine glasses for a group social or if you’re just a social butterfly with lots of friends, Sainsbury’s is the place to go. It allows you to borrow any number of glasses in exchange for a simple deposit, and when you return the glasses, you get your money back. DANAE MERCER

## GETTING BACK



Too tired to bicycle or walk home, but suspicious of meter-happy taxi drivers? When you get into a cab, make sure you tell the cabbie how much you ‘have’ - that way, you won’t be charged any more than you’re willing to pay. ELIZABETH TAYLOR

You’re too broke for a taxi, but your bicycle rides like it was last fixed in the 1920s by a blind amputee. Fix your bike on the cheap. Go to any bike shop, have them look at it, ask them what they are going to replace, and buy the parts cheap on Ebay and fix ‘em on yourself. There are plenty of how-tos on the Internet. ALAN YOUNG

# BLAG YOUR WAY INTO ANY CLUB

**CONFIDENCE:** Keep eye contact with the person on the door. Act calm, especially when walking up to them. No matter what they say to you, never lose your temper.

**SCHMOOZING:** A club night will always have a promoter, and since this is Cambridge, it’s more than likely that he or she is a student or ex-student who’ll be on Facebook. Get in touch with them and try to get on their guestlist.

**DECEIT:** Call up in advance, say you’re the PA or manager for a band or celebrity visiting Cambridge (Lizo from *Newsround* doesn’t count) and your erstwhile Z-lister wants to check out the nightlife. Arrive early, claim you’re here to ‘scope the place out before he/ she gets here’. Do your best to blend it and make sure you avoid the people who let you in, lest they ask where Lizo is.

**BODY LANGUAGE:** Don’t cross your arms and don’t look shifty. Never, ever stumble. If you’re drunk enough to fall over, you’re too drunk to blag free entry. And go straight to the front immediately: if you’re important enough to blag, you’re definitely too important to queue.

**THE SMOKER’S PASS:** Get someone outside smoking with a stamp on their hand to wet it, so the ink runs. Then transfer the print onto your hand. DAN DELANEY

Down and out in Cambridge without a penny to your name? Varsity presents our no-nonsense recipe to living life on the cheap.

# THRIFTY LIVING

## FOOD



At breakfast, most college butteries often leave a jug of milk out; take an empty bottle with you and leave with a free pint or two. You can do this as often as you like, although it depends on how shameless you are in front of the buttery staff. TANJIL RASHID

If you can bear the distance, go to Asda (by TK Maxx) at about 11pm. Loads of the perishables will have been reduced, and they’re still good a day or two after the alleged ‘sell by date’. Similarly, Sainsbury’s will discount prices towards closing time, although its central location means you’ll be competing with other savvy students. HATTI WHITMAN *Asda, Beehive Centre, Coldhams Lane*

McDonald’s provide free ketchup, and Wetherspoon provides a whole range of various condiments – but you might want to avoid nicking them on a Friday night. As always, salt and pepper is free from your college buttery. TANJIL RASHID *McDonald’s, 9 Rose Crescent; Wetherspoon 39 St Andrews St.*

Stranded arts students with a 2pm lecture, fear not: you are not limited to the Sidgwick Buttery’s extortionate prices. Nearby college Selwyn will serve you lunch from 12.45am – 1.30pm on weekdays and is a far better choice. Prices are low, the building is atmospheric, and the food ranks highly among colleges. A proper meal will cost you around £3, salad bar is £1.40, and soup (and a bread roll) is available for under a pound. HEIDIAHO



## HOW TO DUMPSTER DIVE

Food might seem like the one thing that you can’t eliminate from your budget, but for the adventurous-minded, food is easy to get for free. You might have heard of dumpster diving (or skipping) behind Sainsbury’s, but true skippers have been deserting it for newer patches of abandoned surplus food. Sainsbury’s these days is open until midnight, meaning that employees are around until very late and then start again around 5am, thus leaving a narrow window of opportunity in which someone might still be having a fag break in the crucial skipping area. Some bins are also now locked and while the locks are flimsy, breaking them is not recommended as this legally constitutes trespassing. While skipping in itself is unlikely to lead to any problem with the police, this probably will.

The Co-op on Mill Road, best accessed in the dead of the night, offers a newer, safer alternative for skippers. For fresh produce (which supermarket skips often lack), the bins in the middle of the stalls of Market Square are a central place to get as many turnips and rhubarbs as your heart desires. ARTHUR ASSERAF





# ENTERTAINMENT

## FILM

Sign up to the MML library and take films out for free! Or go along to the Language Centre where you can watch achingly cool French Nouvelle Vague or somewhat disturbing Spanish cinema. REBECCA WALL  
*MML Faculty, Sidgwick Site; Language Centre, Downing Site*

John's and Christ's film societies regularly screen surprisingly recent films in high-quality 35mm film and Dolby sound: upcoming features include *District 9* and *Terminator Salvation*. Entry is £2.50. ZING TSJENG  
*stjohnsfilms.org.uk and christsfilms.org.uk*

Orange offers 2-for-1 cinema tickets on Wednesdays. If you're not on Orange, get somebody who isn't going to text in and then forward it to you. The deal also extends to the Arts Picturehouse, so you don't need to trek over to Cineworld or Vue if you fancy a film. ZING TSJENG

## MUSIC & BOOKS



Fopp have a 'Suck it and See' policy where you can exchange CDs you don't like for new ones. We're not advocating burning those CDs onto your laptop and then exchanging them for new ones, we're only saying... DAN DELANEY

Expensive magazines tend to get dropped off in charity shops around the end of term. Alternatively, you can take stacks of the latest glossy periodicals up to the Starbucks in Borders and spend Sunday morning browsing. ROISIN KIBERD

## THEATRE

In a bid to promote theatre-going amongst the young, Arts Council England has launched a scheme called 'A Night Less Ordinary' that offers free theatre tickets to under-26s. The Junction at Clifton Way hosts loads of experimental theatre and dance, and offers a limited number of free tickets for each performance as long as you book early. Upcoming plays include otherworldly arctic adventure *The Fahrenheit Twins*, which *The Guardian* awarded four stars. It might be a trek, but do you really want to watch *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the ADC again? DAN COHEN  
*anightlessordinary.org.uk; The Junction, Clifton Way*

## ONLINE FUN

Spotify: A music-streaming service that lets you create and swap playlists online. Great for looking up that random song at somebody's party or listening to entire albums without paying a penny.  
*spotify.com*

Sidereel and all2c: Search engines that look up movies and TV shows on video hosting websites (handy for getting around the college bitTorrent rules).  
*sidereel.com and all2c.tv*

Oh No They Didn't!: Get celeb gossip for free at this massive entertainment site. Updates with an average of 150 user-generated posts a day. You'll never do another essay again.  
*community.livejournal.com/ohnotheydidnt*

Hype Machine: Mp3 and music blog aggregator that collates artistes based on their level of blog hype. Use their search engine and find download links for everything from the latest indie tracks to wicked, left-field remixes. ZING TSJENG  
*hype.com*



**Ingredients: Ingenuity, tight-fistedness, thriftiness, slyness, confidence, improvisational ability and shamelessness, flavoured with a hint of amorality and served with a side of smugness.**

## CLOTHES & LIVING

A high number of charity shops in central Cambridge make the city a thrift shopper's haven, their rails kept well-stocked by a mix of students desperate to clear their rooms and grannies with attics full of shoulder-padded tack. It's enough to send you into dust-induced coughing fits. So how does one ensure the best second-hand finds? Like the quest to pull at Cindies, it's a question of standards and perseverance. Don't go in expecting mint-condition Birkin bags and pristine flapper dresses.

Instead search strategically and frequently, keeping an idea in mind of what you're looking for. Pokey shops in deserted parts of town (like the forlorn Save the Cats branch far up the Mill Road) will yield wonders like old cashmere jumpers. Central shops, such as the Cancer Research on Downing Street, tend to get the newer items, so expect last season Topshop, and whole shelves of worn-once Atmosphere shoes. Check back constantly, in particular at the smaller spots as they have a high turnover and you never know when some senselessly wealthy graduate will drop off their designer wardrobe. The beauty of buying old things is that expensive items age better - leather, jewellery and fur all look miles better with time, and will usually crop up in charity shops between the mum jeans and felted sweaters. Just don't ask if somebody died in it. ROISIN KIBERD

If all your plates and knives have mysteriously disappeared from the gyp-room, don't head over to Sainsbury's or (God forbid) John Lewis. Instead, go to Sally Ann's. OK, it's a bit of a walk, but the prospect of buying a set of plates,



glasses and cutlery for a couple of quid should be incentive enough.

The finds in this large charity depot are more exciting than your typical supermarket fare - we picked up a set of college china plates for 50p each, and that was comparatively expensive. Be sure to hunt around in the drawers for obscure kitchen utensils

and stock up on the 5p cutlery.

Stock is updated at midday and 4pm every day, but get there in the morning before all the other students (AKA the competition) have got out of bed for the best finds. CLAUDIA STOCKER & HATTI WHITMAN  
*Sally Ann's, 44A Mill Road*

## TIPS & TRICKS

Most charity shops have an end of season £1 sale where they try to clear out the old stock to clear space for the new season. Ask staff when they have one.

Mondays are generally the best time for shopping, when staff put in new stock. When an item doesn't sell in a week, the price often goes down by a pound.

It's often worth devoting an afternoon to a whistle-stop tour of each charity shop to get the best finds. The more you go around, the more likely you will find what you're looking for. RAYMOND LI



# Turner Prize Transformed

A Turner Prize without controversy? A potential winner admired by press and public alike? A traditional painter? **Flo Sharp** asks if the Turner Prize has finally grown up.

The Turner Prize, here it is again. The annual dogfight has resurfaced. Here comes the same merciless jibing by unforgiving journalists, eager to draw blood from that national establishment, Tate Britain, which hosts the grand prix of modern art. Already *The Mirror's* David Lee has cast an acerbic vote, stating "The Turner Prize has been dead and rotting for years...the prize is only kept alive in order to satisfy the vanity of those who run it at the Tate."

This time round, however, the Prize is ripe for re-assessment. Three of the four nominated artists - Richard Wright, Lucy Skaer, Enrico David - use traditional methods in their work, a fact that would gall those critics combing the prize for anything distastefully avant-garde.

Let us start with Lucy Skaer. Skaer has been nominated for her solo exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, and for her *Boat Used As A Vessel* exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel. She practises in all three branches of fine arts: sculpture, drawing and painting.

The inspiration for her art comes from found images, ranging from stark views of prison cells—which formed the basis for her watercolour series *Cells* (2005)—to images of student protests taken from newspaper archives. This year she has exhibited several works; sculptures, paintings and prints which forge a connection between media and, as the curator Lizzie Carey-Thomas puts it, between "the mobility of an object from one state to another."

The underlying current in her oeuvre is transformation, a theme which links her to two of her fellow nominees. Richard Wright transforms architectural spaces by drawing and painting directly onto the walls, and subsequently erasing the painted images. Technically, Wright's work is the most obviously traditional of the artists nominated. He has covered the back wall of the Tate

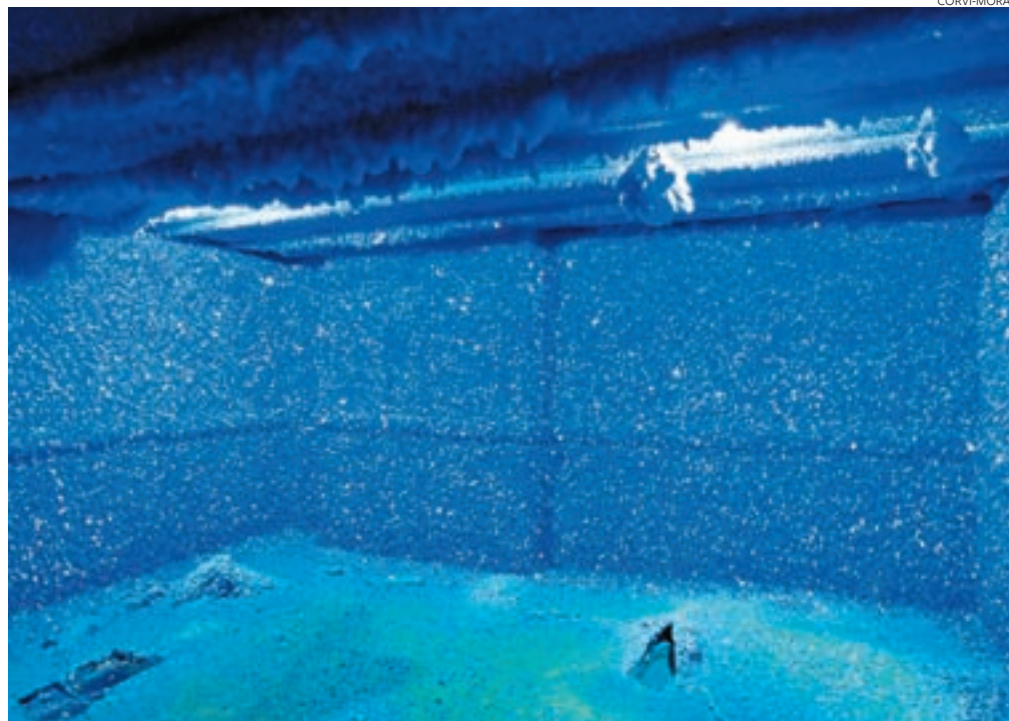
exhibition space with a vast mural, created using the traditional medieval materials of gold leaf and manuscript glue.

Wright has expressed an interest in reviving and revisiting art forms which have 'become debased', citing decorative art as one of these. Although his exquisite wall paintings are essentially decorative, they are designed with the intention to surprise, to catch the viewer unawares and to shift our perception of a given space.

The transformations of Wright's are rather more modest than the metamorphoses of Roger Hiorns, the fourth of the Turner Prize nominees. Hiorns's installations are an altogether more brazen affair. He is this year's media darling due to the public attention he has received for *Seizure*, a collaboration with Artangel in 2008, which saw the transformation of a derelict council flat in South London into a sparkling crystal cavern.

Artangel reopened *Seizure* this year when the demolition of the flats was postponed, and the crowds have kept on coming. Hiorns made his name with his innovative use of crystals—a kind of bio-chemical 'found-object', if you like. The public acclaim for *Seizure* undoubtedly helped to guarantee him a place on this year's shortlist. As 11/10 bookie's favourite, his dramatic approach may well secure him the prize.

Hiorns stands out for the sheer drama of his work, and for the originality in his use of material. This year he has covered the floor of the Tate with the modulating silvery dust of an atomised jet engine. *Untitled 2008* creates



The copper-sulphate crystal council flat created by bookie's favourite Roger Hiorns

a fine and delicate terrain out of an object of industrial strength. The central piece is flanked by sculptures made variously out of stainless steel, plastic, and, in true Turner Prize fashion, bovine brain matter.

The last artist on our list is Enrico David. David is a favoured protégée of Charles Saatchi, and in doing so, brings a touch of Brit-art history to the prize this year.

Returning to the theme of the traditional, David paints, as well as stitches, figurative images, though not in any conventional sense. His paintings of prancing carnivalesque, harlequin figures purport to reference graphic images from 1970s Italy, drawn from vintage book covers. David accompanies his paintings with sculpture, and light installations, advertising himself as a master of all trades, without fully explaining the links between them.

In his entry for this year's Turner Prize, *Absuction Cardigan*

2009, David has created, or rather staged an artwork, verging on the surreal, that shows images of male models plastered onto the surfaces of papier mâché egg men, juxtaposed with highly finished paintings of nightmarish figures and childlike motifs such as the Drummer Boy, as well as the bewildering addition of a picture of pop culture legend Kenneth Williams. The viewers are offered an insight into the psyche of the artist, a strange subconscious playground where figures loom out of the dark and Humpty-Dumpty egg men are the watchdogs.

The work for which the four artists have been nominated may be linked by some thematic strains, including their practice of traditional methods, and their interests in transformation. However it would be ignorant to try and force any correspondence between the artists, and as Jennifer Higgie, a judge on last year's panel, and co-editor of *Frieze* magazine asserts, "It needs to be reiterated: the Turner Prize is not a curated group show; it's four solo exhibitions." The exhibitions that the artists have assembled for the prize show in fact only serve to highlight their differences rather than enforce a sense of their similarities.

For now, I'll put my money on Hiorns to win, and egg-man Enrico as a close runner-up.



Turner Prize nominee Lucy Skaer re-imagines Brancusi's *Bird in Space* Series with her coal-dust sculptures *Black Alphabet*



## Bloc Party

TUESDAY OCTOBER 27TH, CORN EXCHANGE, 19:00 (SOLD OUT)

**Pick of the week Music** Remember 2004? Remember ‘Helicopter’? Remember the line “As if to say he doesn’t like chocolate?” Relive the magic.



# The Varsity Week



## Festival Of Ideas

UNTIL SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1ST, DIFFERENT VENUES

Boardroom meeting scenario: “Gosh, so what should we call this festival, then?” – “Um, I literally have no idea.” – “I know! THE FESTIVAL OF IDEAS!!!”

**Pick of the week Events**

## Film

### The Fantastic Mr Fox

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, FRI-SAT, MON-THU 11.00 (NOT MON-WED), 13.00, 15.00, 17.00 (NOT THURS), 19.00, 21.00, SUN 12.00, 14.00, 16.30, 18.30, 21.00.

The latest big-screen Roald Dahl adaptation. With a foxy cameo from Jarvis Cocker. And directed by Wes Anderson! Yes! Wes!

### Creation

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, FRI/SUN/MON 18.30, SAT 12.00, SUN 16.00 TUES/WED 13.30

Darwin biopic. A sequel which focuses on Darwin’s little known ultimate frisbee career is already in production. Its working title is *Recreation*.

### The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, FRI/SUN-WED 13.30 (NOT TUES), 16.00, 18.30, 21.00, SAT 14.30, 18.20, 22.15PM, THURS 12.00, 14.30, 21.00

You’re never going to see her in Sainsbury’s, lectures or about town. So catch Lily Cole with her travelling theatre company.

### Birdwatchers

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, FRI/SAT 13.30, SUN 11.00, MON 13.00, TUES/WED, 18.30

Sadly without anorak-clad RSPB twitchers in Norfolk. Instead, a mystical culture conflict.

### Thirst

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, DAILY (NOT SUN) 15.30, 20.50, SUN 13.00

A love story for the commitment phobe in you. Zooey Deschanel’s Summer is fashionable and lovely, yet hateable to pitiable Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt). Go see.

### Skin

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, THURSDAY 18.30  
Opening night of the Cambridge African Film Festival. Skin is a thought provoking insight into race relations, directed by Cambridge’s own Anthony Fabian.



### Saturday October 24th The Yes Men

FISHER BUILDING, ST JOHN’S, 19.45 (£2.50)  
Followed by a technological video link Q&A with Yes Men Andy and Mike via Skype Conference Call.

## Music & Nightlife

### Friday October 23rd Newton Faulkner

THE CORN EXCHANGE, 19.30 (SOLD OUT)  
If James Blunt and an Orc had a child, with the worst features of both.

### Friday October 23rd Frank Turner

THE JUNCTION, 20.00 (SOLD OUT)  
If Newton Faulkner and an Orc had a child, with the worst features of both.



### Saturday October 24th In The Flesh

CORN EXCHANGE 19.30 (£19.50-23.50 ADV)  
Like Pink Floyd? Like lasers? Then you’ll LOVE this Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular.

### Sunday October 25th Oasis @ Fez

FEZ, 22.00-03.00 (£4)  
Your weekend ends here.

### Sunday October 25th Caius Jazz

THE RED ROOM, GONVILLE & CAIUS, 20:30-23:30 (£3)  
Jazz, bitches and bling at Caius College with Jazz master Louis van der Westhuizen.

### Wednesday October 28th National Rail Disco

KAMBAR, 22.00-5.00 (£3-4)  
Last week they had Simon Amstell. This week Clean Bandit play live. Sick. We know where we’ll be.

### Wednesday October 28th Funeral For A Friend

THE JUNCTION, 19.00 (£15 ADV)  
Welsh emo. Dust off the MySpace, straighten the fringe, squeeze your fat rowing arse into those skinny jeans and get down there.

### Thursday October 29th The Subdance Returns

KAMBAR, 22.00-03.00 (£3-4)  
Lethal beats, cheap drinks and massive thrills.

## Theatre



### The Madness of King George

ADC THEATRE, FRI-SAT 19.30 (£6/9)  
Fresh from their appearance on the legendary Varsity Plinth the other week, the Mad King George is still kicking up a mad little fuss for another mad couple of days at the ADC.

### Red Demon

ADC THEATRE, FRI-SAT 22.30 (£4-6)  
10.30pm. 10.30. What? 10.30. Oh right, that’s before 11- jolly good! Goooo Red Demon!

### A Streetcar Named Desire

ADC THEATRE, TUES-SAT 19.45 (£6/9)  
After a sell-out show at the Donmar Warehouse, Rachel Weisz will be gracing the ADC stage alongside Marlon Brando and Ian McKellen in what is set to be a blinding reworking of Tennessee Williams’ tale.

### R.U.R

ADC THEATRE, WEDS-SAT 23.00 (£4-6)  
No joke, this has robots in it. A great opportunity to suss out how you feel about robots taking over the world, and if you might be able to fancy one of these metal men. Starring Bender from Futurama.

### Six Characters in Search of an Author

ARTS THEATRE, FRI-SAT 19.45, SAT 14.30 (£10-£27)  
Great opportunity to see fabby play directed by big phat up-and-coming, maybe future Artistic Director of the RSC, otherwise just general big dog, Rupert Goold. Get on it. Only a couple more days.

### That Face

CORPUS PLAYROOM, TUES-SAT 19.30 (£4-7)  
Really fooked up play by Polly Stenham, written when she was 19, performed at the Royal Court, and debuting now in Cambridge.

## 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 Januray 31st).

### People’s Portraits

GIRTON COLLEGE, UNTIL DECEMBER 1ST, (FREE)  
Millennial Royal Society of Portrait Painters’ collection on long-term loan to Girton, depicting ordinary people from all walks of life.

### Beka Smith: Ego/Alter Ego

FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE, UNTIL FRI 30TH (FREE)  
Last chance to see this portraiture exhibition by BP Portrait Prize nominated artist, best known for her portrait of Dr Charles Leslie Wayper, Historian and Life Fellow of Fitzwilliam.

### Stories of the Street: City Typographics

2ND FLOOR, GRAND ARCADE, UNTIL SAT 31ST (FREE)  
Part of the Festival of Ideas programme, this exhibition is organized by the Anglia Ruskin’s BA Graphic Arts students, which explores the city through its public typography.

### Political Cartoons

THE MICHAELCHURCH CENTRE, TRINITY STREET, MONDAY 26TH UNTIL NOVEMBER 7TH (FREE)  
Exhibition of past and present cartoons that savagely satirize politicians’ behaviour.

### Monday October 26th Camerata Musica

PETERHOUSE COLLEGE, 20.30 (£5-35)  
First concert of the 2009-10 season of the Camerata Musica series at Peterhouse. The Berlin Philharmonic Piano Quartet play Mozart, Schumann, and Brahms.

### Wednesday October 28th The Clerks

TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL, 20.00 (£10-15)  
The renowned men’s choir present *Qudduson: Sacred Songs of East and West*, an exploration the music of different faiths and different cultures.

## Talks & Events

### Friday October 23rd Clothes Swap

THE SHOP, XVIII JESUS LANE, 11.45-16.00 (£2.50-3)  
Be ethical and swap your clothes like Pokemon Cards for Cancer Research and Cambridge Design Collective.

### Saturday October 24th Drumming Workshop

PITT BUILDING, TRUMPINGTON STREET, 10.00-10.35, (FREE)  
Banging lessons for ages five and above. Booking essential.

### Saturday October 24th Writers Workshop: Michael Morpurgo

LADY MITCHELL HALL, SIDGWICK SITE, 10.30-11.30, (FULLY BOOKED)  
Special talk from your favourite children’s author who isn’t Roald Dahl.



### Saturday October 24th Wuthering Heights: An Enduring Love Affair

LITTLE HALL, SIDGWICK SITE, 15.00-16.00, (FREE)  
Professor Heather Glen and Dr Helen Small talk Brontë (above), Heathcliff and Kate Bush.

### Sunday October 25th See The Light

EVERYWHERE, 17.14 (FREE)  
Don’t be another statistic. The police reckon you should turn your bicycle lights on at exactly 17.14. Only if you’re cycling, obviously.

### Monday October 26th How to Read Poems

FACULTY OF ENGLISH, WEST ROAD, 18.00-19.00 (FREE)  
Finally, the answer to studying English at Cambridge.

### Tuesday October 27th The Culture and Heritage of Mongolia

MONGOLIA AND INNER ASIA STUDIES UNIT, THE MOND BUILDING, FREE SCHOOL LANE, 16.00-19.00 (FREE)  
All you will ever need to know in life about Inner Asia.



# MUSIC



Wayne Coyne of the Flaming Lips having a ball inside a bubble at this September’s Electric Picnic festival.

## The Flaming Lips EMBRYONIC ★★★★★

*Embryonic* is a mad science experiment gone unexpectedly, horribly right. Whatever sonic cross-pollination of alchemy, astrology and trial psychology went on in the lab, it produced The Flaming Lips’ best album in years. A dangerously sprawling record of eighteen tracks, it almost comes apart and loses its interest; but just when it’s about to stall, it bursts forward again with renewed vigour. This rough cohesion ultimately reveals itself as a deliberate pacing and process of exploration that reaches some startling places. What sets *Embryonic* apart sonically is the destroyed, beat-up sound of the whole record, where everything seems blasted and worn out and the delicate, prettier sounds have to sparkle or float through rawer static to get noticed. The opening track ‘Convinced Of The Hex’ introduces this aesthetic with authority. It’s a heavy, bust-up

jam that becomes almost hypnotic through repeated riffs and lyrics. Coyne seems fascinated with music’s potential to hypnotise on *Embryonic*, coming back again and again to musical and lyrical repetition in order to work up mesmerising songs and paranoid, oppressive moods. Repetition also takes the form of more subtle paraphrase on the album. In ‘Sagittarius Silver Announcement’, the lines “Free to be slaves now | To this silver machine” get recast as “Free to be one now | With this silver machine”. The way the initial prospect of enslavement suddenly becomes more a question of emancipation through conformity is actually quite chilling, given the cultish atmosphere of the song. Sharp, deceptively simple lyrics help make *Embryonic* a thoughtful record as well as progressive, and after the initial onslaught of the two lead-in tracks, melancholy reflections on the evil of humanity, environmental catastrophe and nightmare spectres take over. The musical quirks that populate

the album are a characteristic high point. At the 2:33 mark in ‘The Sparrow Looks Up At The Machine’ you can hear a mobile phone receiving a text message in close proximity to an active guitar amp or pickup. On ‘I Can Be A Frog’ Yeah Yeah Yeahs’ Karen O provides a series of animal sounds so playful they cause quavers of laughter in Coyne’s vocal. My favourite Karen O animal noises are her Gila Monster and Jaguar interpretations. Maybe her cat too. Coyne’s affinity for the absurd can lead to some questionable musical conduct. It’s difficult to support his vocoded singing on ‘Impulse’ – why suddenly channel T-Pain? – but this is the only serious wrong foot on the album. *Embryonic* has the feel of a record where interesting aspects will keep turning up, even after repeat listening. It’s just so damn pleasing to hear a band go this hard for new sounds and do it successfully, let’s hope The Flaming Lips keep up their scientific madness. PETER MORELLI

## Fightstar THE JUNCTION, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21ST ★★★★★

Growing up is hard. Acne-ridden and en-braced, a mere thirteen years old, the lesson was learnt quickly. Sitting at the back of the local girls’ school bus, my ear-buds jammed to savage aural depths, I buried teenage everything in emo. Girls could not be trusted. Music was the release. Dressing in black was important. Six strings, good. G-strings, bad. Fast forward some years later, and I headed to the Junction, ready to relive the harsh, honest nights of my youth. Fightstar were playing. Their Junction show represented a growing up of sorts for the London four piece: a band forced to fight reputation problems (apparently frontman Charlie Simpson, used to be in another band called

Busted) and record-label disputes. An intimate setting and the sweaty, ballsy rock should have made for one momentous show. With current album *Be Human* charting at #20 in the UK album charts, swollen, baying crowds were expected. But the gig,



Is this what you go to school for?

initially booked for the Corn Exchange, was moved to the Junction due to low ticket sales and failed to leave a lasting impression. The Young Guns, the evening’s support, were an unsigned act of premier quality bursting with youthful energy, angst and emotion. By the time Fightstar took to the stage, a stagnant air had quickly developed. Although anthems like ‘Deathcar’ and ‘Paint Your Target’ enthused the crowd, the motions felt well-trodden. Success, it seems, has dampened the energetic, gutsy quality which made early releases from the band so poignant. Recent singles, ‘Mercury Summer’ and ‘The English Way’ are undoubtedly brilliant on record, but were somehow lifelessly performed by Charlie and the lads. We were left rocked, but disappointed in black. Growing up is definitely hard. ROBERT THOMAS

# New Releases

## Editors IN THIS LIGHT AND ON THIS EVENING ★★★★★



For their third outing, Editors have bought a one-way ticket to Synth City. Gone are the trademark guitar riffs: *In This Light and On This Evening* is a record littered with dark, brooding electronic sounds, and it’s a gamble that pays off wonderfully. Chief among the new toys used on the record is an electronic drum kit, which propels a surprising sense of urgency throughout the record. But don’t let that make you think there’s no variety – it’s here in bounds. First single ‘Papillon’ is clearly this era’s anthem, ‘You Don’t Know Love’ is a slice of eighties delight, and ‘Walk The Fleet Road’ is Bon Iver with his finger in a socket. ‘Eat Raw Meat = Blood Drool’ shines, with its dirty bass and unashamedly poppy chorus making it a shoo-in for indie club nights. And with Tom Smith crooning over it all like the older, more serious brother of The Killers’ Brandon Flowers, it’s an album that’s sure to get pulses racing. BEN WHEAWELL

## Mr Hudson STRAIGHT NO CHASER ★★★★★



Although the production on Straight No Chaser makes it sound like dance music, the lumpen beats and bland musicality render it impossible to dance to. Slow tempi deaden vocal lines which approximate soaring melodies but expose Mr Hudson’s thin, nasal voice. The lyrical content has a tendency towards thuggishness and misogyny. On ‘Anyone But Him’, Hudson focuses on his disgust with the man in question, ignoring the woman who is being kissed by “his filthy lips”. Hudson’s emotional detachment evokes a blokey contest for a woman that neither party care about. Similarly, on ‘Stiff Upper Lip’, the narrator describes leaving his girlfriend in tawdry detail but evacuates the song of any emotional resonance. His proficient production skills result in ‘White Lies’ and ‘Supernova’ but his lack of musical invention leaves the listener unfulfilled. EDWARD HENDERSON

## Esbjörn Svensson Trio RETROSPECTIVE ★★★★★



The death of Swedish Jazz artist Esbjörn Svensson in a scuba-diving accident last year wasn’t met with the same riotous fervour as the demise of Michael Jackson. Children didn’t weep in the streets, the headlines didn’t turn into one monomaniacal tribute and greatest-hits albums weren’t rushed onto the shelves. But at last The Very Best Of E.S.T. has arrived and it’s better than any compilation from the King of Pop. *Retrospective* isn’t incredibly accessible but with its soul-wrenching sophistication and sublime pacing, you won’t find anything more considered. The gentle tripping piano in ‘From Gagarin’s Point Of View’ invokes a rare sense of melancholy and songs like ‘Behind the Yashmak’ wholly sweeps you away. If ten-minute instrumentals feel pretentious, step away. Otherwise, Svensson’s swan-song is delightful. DUNCAN STIBBARD-HAWKES

## Keith Jarrett PARIS / LONDON: TESTAMENT ★★★★★



Piano prodigy Keith Jarrett is one of jazz’s few luminaries to perform critically acclaimed classical music. Originally a sideman of Miles Davis, he became a global superstar after the success of 1975 The Köln Concert, an impassioned masterpiece of extemporization that became the best-selling solo jazz album of all time. Since then he has continued to play in small groups, and periodically returns to the world’s great concert halls to perform improvised solo recitals. Throughout the course of three CDs, Jarrett’s playing is sublime, though the Paris concert is not as outstanding as London’s. Grunting and moaning, his fingers weave idiosyncratic and timeless sounds: ecstatic folk and wonky blues. Jarrett’s oral sound effects are notoriously grating and there is a preponderance of dissonance making for rewarding music, but not for a dinner party. JONATHAN LIFCHULZ



## FILM AND ARTS

### Sarah Lightman: In Memoriam

NEW HALL ART COLLECTION, OCTOBER 19TH– NOVEMBER 14TH

★★★★★

The considerable technical ability of Sarah Lightman's drawings, which are on show at the New Hall Art Collection, is undermined by the sentimentality of the captions that accompany them. A picture of an empty coffee cup, which is the third part of a tripartite series of images, under which is narrated a disappointing meeting through a friend, is tagged by the wistful "I long for the days of uncomplicated friendship," a vacuous claim that rests on the notion that friendship is 'uncomplicated' in the first place. Feeble clichés are plucked

out of the air to add substance to Lightman's drawings, which, although aesthetically pleasing, do not have the strength to stand by themselves. Certainly the idea of the 'graphic diary' to which these images pertain justifies the need for explanatory notes, but the spontaneous and artless nature of diary entries is undermined by the contrived and hackneyed prose that accompanies these painstakingly drawn images.

An exquisitely drawn image of a salad bag is coupled with the entry "I work through a salad as I wait for a rejection from a gallery", a provocative, not to say irritating statement from an artist who has curated four contemporary art exhibitions since her graduation. Indeed, it is strange given the acclaim Lightman has received over

the past few years, not to mention the pedigree of her artistic training, that she has produced such an underwhelming exhibition here in Cambridge. Lightman completed a foundation year at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design which she followed up with a B.A. and M.F.A. at the Slade School of Art (one of the most reputable art schools in London) where she was awarded no less than four scholarships. She is now embarking upon a PhD in Autobiographical Comics at The University of Glasgow.

It seems then, what with the recent success she has enjoyed in her field of practice, Sarah has little to complain about. Her current exhibition, In Memoriam at the New Hall Art Collection, tells a different story. The predominant themes of Lightman's work are isolation, exclusion and rejection. A drawing of a packet of Oatcakes, an object which testifies to Lightman's claim that she analyses the "banal detritus" of the everyday, is underwritten by the mournful memory – "Oatcakes filled the silence when my friends don't call," – a grammatically erroneous sentence which evokes a rather bemusing but sad image of the artist poised next to the phone, audibly crunching her way through a packet of crackers.

As the accompanying literature explains, Lightman's work "focuses on her relationship with others, with objects increasingly substituting for portraits and scenes." The singularity of these objects (mainly foodstuffs) in the drawings, depicted using black pencil against a vacuous, plain white background, is evocative in the way it suggests empty space, and thus the loneliness of a single woman's 'banal' domestic existence. There is an undeniable pathos to Lightman's work; however the power of her images is ultimately disabled by the contrivance and sentimentality of the captions. FLORENCE SHARP



A drawing from Sarah Lightman's exhibition. But is there substance in foodstuffs?

### The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE

★★★★★

In spite of his top billing, to describe Heath Ledger as the star of *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* would be rather missing the point. His tragic story is by now well-known and requires no laboured retelling. But rather than sunder the production after Ledger's untimely death, Gilliam chose to film the yet-unshot dreamscape sequences with different actors. Johnny Depp, Jude Law and Colin Farrell all step up with predictable aplomb and magnificence to round off what is essentially an ensemble piece.

Christopher Plummer's Parnassus is a curmudgeonly inebriate, locked in a wager with the Devil for the soul of his daughter, Valentina. To save her, he must guide five souls through ponds of Buddhas and fields of ladders to salvation,

whilst his adversary attempts to lure them inside bars, motels and Russian housewives, where he can blow them up.

Of course, this is in some way the whole point of the film – the slew of both emerging and established



Heath Ledger: a banquet for the eyes.

Hollywood talent dazzles from the edges, but it's the director's addled, wondrous imagination that's in the centre of the frame. The art direction is truly superb; Gilliam offers up a deranged Dahlian sweet-shop, rich with colour and style, and some genius animation that's a genuine joy to watch as it unfurls.

Infuriatingly, and perhaps foreseeably considering Gilliam's previous catalogue, the real enemy in this piece is not Tom Waits' fantastic Devil, ever ensconced in fag ash and mob jazz, but the indecipherable narrative. Spiralling about like an acrobat in a blender, it eventually flatlines into the most impenetrable and unsatisfying ending since *Life on Mars*.

But this is a banquet for the eyes, rather than the mind, and it's what Gilliam does best. Though the story might be a touch befuddling, the *Imaginarium* is visual splendour borne of rare stock, and well worth enjoying. DAVID PEGG

## Arts Comment

### Small screens and Sentimentality. The tragic demise of the period drama

Ben Slingo

This column is a lament about the decline of television. There. That ought to puncture your enthusiasm. Diatribes on the corrupting fripperies of reality TV are no scarcer than the shows they condemn and bore just as woefully. The walls of the *Big Brother* house could be papered with the fatwas issued against it by journalists.

This article, however, is not about the programmes we despise. Its target is worthy television, television that edifies, television, above all, that makes us weep with sentimental affection for the licence fee. Specifically, I am alarmed by the state of television's most sacred genre: the period drama. Adapted from classic fiction, it does nothing less than vandalise literature.

Take Jane Austen, whose *Emma* is now being ponderously mutilated on the BBC. This summer I visited the meagre monument to her greatness in Winchester Cathedral. Prostrating myself before it I half-expected to find Andrew Davies already stationed there, spraying it with graffiti, doing in practice what he has always done on television.

Austen's limpid prose, vibrant satire and irony have been buried under a mound of petticoats, RADA accents and romantic sentimentality. *Pride and Prejudice*, a venomous social critique that offers nothing approaching final redemption, is, in Davies' hands, traduced as a charming love story with the happiest ending in literature.

It is easy enough to decry, more difficult to explain. Perhaps Granada's *Brideshead* will help. Loving, lavish and luxurious, it is unlikely ever to be equalled. Much as World War I was the war to end all wars, so Granada's *Brideshead* was the adaptation to end all adaptations. Our image of *Brideshead* has been unshakeably fixed by John Mortimer: one of languorous

Oxonians, more Mann-ly than manly, feeding strawberries to exotically named teddy bears. No longer the work of a rebarbative wit grown hot with Catholic zeal but of an ageing sentimental-ist nostalgic for undergraduate revelry. Forget that Sebastian, the golden apostate, ends up drink-sodden in a Tunisian monastery; forget that 'Arcadia' is a pagan motif; forget, above all, that the whole gaudy brocade of Oxford frivolity is dismissed as mere 'English charm', trivial beside the holy splendour of Rome. Just gape at grandiose fountains, decadent lunch parties and stunning views of Castle Howard.

The genius of the small screen, never displayed more brilliantly than in *Brideshead*, is to capture a scene, to freeze everything in a tableau vivant. The viewer is engulfed with images of Regency finery, which is what television does best, but the ambiguity of the novel is lost.

Challenging the precepts of the reader's imaginary world is the raison d'être of a great novelist. If Austen's portrayal of the conjugal cattle-market glistens, it does so mainly with vitriol. Only when reproduced on the screen is this acid diluted to sugar solution.

The intricate subversion of *Northanger Abbey*, where an ostensible send-up of the Gothic novel turns into an artful joke on those who expected one, reveals the inadequacy of television.

Other authors do flourish on the small screen. Dickens and Hardy are television's Sunday night darlings. The former wouldn't recognise subtlety if it cavorted in front of him like the Artful Dodger; the latter's most fiendish plot device was to have a letter get stuck under a doormat. Both suit the garish crudity of television.

By titillating our senses adaptations corrupt finer sensibilities. At least *Big Brother* refrained from traducing whole books, content to abuse a single literary phrase.



It is a truth universally acknowledged that a Sunday night without an Austen adaptation is a Sunday night wasted



# View from the Groundlings



## Cambridge Theatre

Imagine a play that combines the raw animal appeal of *Star Wars*' R2-D2 with the visionary interpretation of a play about homoeroticism and alcoholism, pushed into a nu-raved-up rendition of New Orleans, met with an incestuous angst-ridden look at 'the family', written by a 19yr old.

Just imagine! Sadly, this play has not yet been written, but if you adhere to my recommendations of the coming week then the end result might feel like you saw this play. For the record, this fictional masterpiece would be called *That Universal Robot's Face is Named Desire*.

The ADC lateshow is *R.U.R.* or *Rossum's Universal Robots*. According to director Ed Kiely, the play has suffered a range of abuses, including being "smashed up". I think it is pretty clear that this show has got the flavour, the bad behaviour, as well as the rhythm and the melody, so you'd be a fool to miss it. Might feature a whole cast of Austin Powers Fembots, or might just feature a whole cast of females.

The ADC mainshow is *A Streetcar Named Desire*, directed by a man who revolutionised the way we look at American theatre with his Barack Obama take on the classics. Alexander de Winter informs me that this period production will feature "eclectic modern music and eye-catchingly sexy clothing", and that "one member of the cast had speaking roles in two *Star Trek* episodes". Oooo maybe they met sexy R2-D2 when he cameoed over from *Star Wars*.

Finally, if you fancy a more intimate setting, jog off to the Corpus Playroom to see *That Face*. Written by Polly Stenham when she was only 19, it tore the Royal Court apart when it was playing in London, and is debuting in Cambridge next week. Director Josh Seymour commends this 'COOL', 'funny' and 'painful' evocation of family life.

Make sure you gander to the Marlowe meet and greet, today, at the Arts Theatre from 5-6. Free Wine. Nuff Said.LAUREN COONEY

# The Madness of George III

ADC MAINSHOW  
★★★★★

Rumour has it that when they made the film the producers had to change the title to *The Madness of King George* because American audiences would have been put off by having missed the first two films in the series. That is almost certainly ruddy nonsense. What is almost certainly true, however, is that Alan Bennett is really a national treasure – *George III* is a masterpiece, and the chaps down at the ADC last night gave it a bloody good go.

The show kicks off with George (Oliver Soden) and his wife (Lowri Amies) at some public occasion or other. Effortlessly regal and, well, pretty darn Georgian, the bewigged, brightly coloured couple descend the central staircase, waving and smiling at their public whilst all the time muttering away to themselves and their aides. A moment later a fruitknife-wielding madwoman tears onto the scene with designs on doing the king a mischief. The king brushes her off and utters: "The poor creature's mad. Do not hurt her". There we have it, ladies and gentlemen, that is dramatic irony.

Indeed, though he's convinced at first that his growing malady is nothing more than a hilarious touch of the old windpops, George soon starts to go a little bit mad around the edges. Cue the procession of increasingly brutal doctors

to treat the old chap – and they get pretty medieval on George's ass, I can tell you.

So, performances? Well, I suppose the whole play rests fairly squarely on the shoulders of our man George. I can safely report then that Oliver Soden was not just good in the role, he was utterly magnificent. Complex, witty, Soden's control of the character during the early glimpses of the king's madness was masterful and not just a little bit frightening. Then, during the more acrobatic heights of his episodes, Soden was a repetitive, dribbly, incoherent, pukey nightmare. It was very moving, really.

His queen was equally impressive. Played to naturalistic perfection by Lowri Amies, 'Mrs King' managed to remain defiant and impassioned despite the numerous indignities meted out to her by her husband's indiscretions and by the rumours and self-serving advice that they have on tap in the royal court.

Ben Kavanagh also deserves a mention. Playing the Prince of Wales as some sort of mega dandy, Kavanagh donned a pretty fruity waistcoat and had his collar turned-up to eleven. In fact, his feathered, blonde fringe and bronzed cheeks put me somewhat in mind of a young Judith Chalmers. Make no mistake though, Kavanagh's prince was a snake. Subtle, kind of mysterious, he was fantastic.

Others didn't fare quite so well – I'm not sure why James Sharpe

played two different physicians. Maybe someone called in sick, but they weren't really dissimilar enough and the whole thing got a touch sticky and confusing.

So, how was it? Well, ambitious,

poignant, funny, tragic, frightening, often stunning to look at: Patrick Garety's *George III* is a beautifully staged gem. Watch it, sirs, what what (and madams).

NATHAN BROOKER

GEORGE WOODHAMS



# Let Newton Be!

LADY MITCHELL HALL, TRINITY  
★★★★★

Playwright Craig Baxter has tried to encapsulate the scientist's legendary brilliance by penning three different Newtons: Isack the boy, Newton the insular genius, and Sir Isaac the autocrat of science.

While the claim made by the programme that "from the start and in the end, the science is there to back up the theology" is definitely true, people coming to see sparks of serious intellectual tension alight the stage will be left feeling that although Baxter has attempted to reveal Newton in this play, there was still much left uncovered.

The production was undoubtedly well rehearsed. Expression and delivery of lines, displaying the temperament, naivety and wisdom of Newton at different stages of his life were often immaculately delivered, alongside a small and simple stage of basic props. The problem lies in the fact that *Let Newton Be!* attempts to portray the life of a man whose valuable contributions primarily took place in his mind, and these intellectual probings are

difficult to portray to the audience.

While this problem is partly tackled by all three Newtons conversing with each other at strategic moments, the play lacked the ability to capture the audience in this play about an aloof mind that lives alone in a realm of intellect. This may have been unnoticeable had there been more dramatic tension and electric moments accompanying the exploration of genius.

All three actors were convincing but Paul Mcleary, who played Sir Isaac, notably embodied the sober, serious and deep thinking image of Newton we recognise. Arguments between Newton and another actor mimicking the heated and volatile arguments between Newton and his contemporaries, in particular Leibniz (Neil Jones), were particularly entertaining, and comedic timing came across effortlessly.

The play had a general temperament of jovial playfulness. However, a by-product of tightly aligning the production with source material alone meant that, although the play was enjoyable, the pitch of theatricality needed was not achieved, which would help bring to life the ideas and equations that have withstood over three hundred years.

SITA DINANAUTH

# Henna Night

CORPUS PLAYROOM  
★★★★★

On paper, this sounds as bloke-friendly as a lone, used tampon floating in a communal loo. It's full of things that, like tampons, men are supposed to be able to deal with, and in reality can't and don't: ex-girlfriends, possible pregnancies, and earnest feminist gabble like "Jack's come out of the whole thing rather heroically; men invariably do." Even the title ingeniously sandwiches together the twin nightmares of hairstyling and a posse of slags wearing pink cowboy hats.

It's better than that. Judith (Tilda Stickley) leaves her ex-boyfriend a message, threatening to kill herself. But – gasp – it's not Jack who comes to her aid: it's Jack's new girlfriend, Ros. Proving the long-untested theory that there is comedy to be found in chronic, suicidal depression.

It's never a good thing when a reviewer says things go downhill when the actors start talking. I felt sorry for Nicola Pollard as Ros, looking on as Judith gets most of the good lines: she was clearly suffering

from some respiratory malady that meant she ran out of oomph during her longer speeches.

To be fair, however, not even a gallon of Tixylix could've solved the problems posed by her body language. The play is already asking for a pretty major suspension of disbelief among its audience, leaving just fifty minutes to chart the change from loathing to camaraderie. Three cheers, then, for Stickley. It feels harsh to single one person out of a two-woman cast for praise, but she was undeniably strong and, vitally, believable as Judith, managing both the catty sarcasm with which she initially meets Ros and the emotional openness as her hostility melts.

Hendry's production is well-rehearsed, but wondered if it could ever be brilliant. It's clumsily written: the pivotal scene in which Ros wins Judith's respect by washing her hair nearly had me running out the auditorium with a handful of sick. I also found it funny, spirited, and oddly affecting. As for its faults, I don't know whether to point the finger of blame at the writing or acting. I'll just encourage you to make up your own mind, and maybe to remember to flush next time, yeah? GEORGE REYNOLDS

GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS: ★★★★★ Dodgy stool, what a mentalist ★★★★★ Pretty limp ★★★★★ Sound of mind ★★★★★ By George this is good  
★★★★★ Absolutely Bloody Mental



# THEATRE

## Red Demon

ADC LATESHOW  
★★★★★

First things first— there isn't actually a red demon to be seen in this entire production, despite its very promising name, but there's a load of other stuff going on at the Lateshow this week. Hideki Noda's play tells the story of an outsider, perceived as a monster, who arrives on an island. He/she/it is feared, ridiculed and eventually eaten by islanders, who live in a society governed by the 'village elders,' and where clearly being a bit different means you definitely won't get statutory rights, or friends, or laid.

Noda has taken a story that has been told before (I kept thinking of the penguins in *Happy Feet*) and turned it into something different (do you see the important moral messages beginning to LEAP out at you?). Hats off to this cast for not going all arty and pretentious on us with this play— it must have been tempting.

Katie Alcock really holds it all together, albeit with a lot of angst and sharp, emphatic hand gestures. Mind you, I'd probably be the same if I was referred to constantly as 'That Woman', and eventually fed bits of a person whom I'd tried to save. I debated over Peter Skidmore's Tombi: on the one hand, his constant jiggling did make me want to yell out that maybe he should just bloody well go to the loo, but his wide-eyed, 'rabbit in the headlights' narration is very effective.

The ensemble is a bit like

Marmite, or Take That: you either love them or hate them. They screech and wail their way from crude hags to upper class elders and back to menacing local villagers without much distinction. Apart from when they crack out the standard 'posh person's voice,' it is hard to tell who is who. If you get over that, however, the ensemble's energy is contagious, and they keep the action moving brilliantly.

So, what of the elusive Red Demon? Vaish Girish has mesmerising moments, as she scampers around speaking in conversational Tamil, providing a beautiful and effective contrast to the ensemble's shrieking. The danger with this play is of over-complicating it; the set is unnecessarily busy, as the cast only really uses a table that moonlights as a boat, and a few broken table legs. Also, there are enough naturally comic moments to cancel out the need for self-conscious pantomime: at one point somebody does actually say "it's

behiiiiind youuu!" We get it.

The play itself is about as mixed as a mixed bag can be, and despite a couple of irritations I have to hand it to the cast for keeping its grip on a script that is so full of messages (even Martin Luther King makes an appearance) that you're not quite sure whether you're being told to avoid strange islands, be nice to foreigners, or remember your packed lunch so that you don't end up having to eat said foreigner. Think you know the answer? Don't be too sure. JEMIMA MIDDLETON



CAIT CROSSE

## Six Characters in Search of an Author

THE ARTS THEATRE  
★★★★★

In Headlong's renovation of Pirandello's modernist classic, his six characters are much the same, they are still in search of an author, but they arrive 90 years later. The 1920s theatre manager is re-imagined as a noughties drama-documentary producer under pressure from her insensitive 'cock' of a sushi-eating exec to create tear-jerking television about child euthanasia.

Pirandello's leading-man and leading-lady are ingeniously

substituted for frumpy, bodywarmer-clad 'reconstruction actors', the technician is replaced by a camera-man (and plenty of cameras) and the rehearsal room becomes the kind of soulless piece of real estate that the script self-critically acknowledges as 'short hand for post-modern alienation.'

It is in the second half when theatrical limits are pushed further than Pirandello's wildest dreams: DVD director's commentary, a distressing televised sequence where the Producer leaves the theatre, live 'rewind' and 'fast-forward', a water tank (perhaps Rupert Goold saw ETG).

But these are not just gimmicks. They are underpinned by a profound interrogation of our assumptions. What is real? By what do we define ourselves? "This isn't

my story" claims our producer-protagonist in a self-congratulating television interview. Soon enough the story we're watching becomes hers. Before too long, the notion of 'storytelling', the thing that makes her who she is, falls apart amid the crippling exposure of the illusory falsity of ending, or 'the end.'

It's fundamentally satirical. Goold and his writing partner Ben Power capture the language and pretensions of the media perfectly ("We're a film making collective. It's democratic," they preach) It's bitchy about contemporary theatre, has a pop at David Tennant, and, through the reconstruction actors, pokes fun at soap-opera door-slamming 'realism' and quasi-Chekovian 'naturalism.' Of course it satirises us too, by providing an opportunity for us to rejoice in our favourite undergraduate meta-gobbledygook.

This production is not only blessed with flair, wit and a mischievous spirit of experiment but also the kind of questioning intellectuality that is often so lacking in the theatre (not least in Cambridge.) It's a winning combination, and one which the budding artistes among us should really be aspiring to, which is why I was upset to see so many empty seats... JAMES LEWIS



## 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 3: Haiku

**Winner: 'Short Summers'**  
by Jess Booth

Summer 1993

A hand grows whiter;  
The trafficking of skies out  
Side; outplays the lamp

Summer 1994

With the hand-break: Shhh  
A tide - unfolding sheet - So  
Stones slope: Ear To Ear

Summer 1995

The cicatrising  
*Ailanthus altissima*;  
Such patterned eyelids

Summer 1996

The Grano haired to  
Finesse. The church grown Pyrite.  
Crepuscle. - Pause.

Summer 1997

The Cigarras shift  
The piercings in the Sky  
Hand gestures up. - Cut

**Runner-up: Haiku**  
by Tim Waters

Flared form of a bird:  
Riotous shadow, roaring wings,  
Tail-feather frost.

Susurrus and shot  
Golden limbs beneath cracked boughs  
The leaves' wounds blood-soft

**Runner-up: Little Poem**  
by Rachel Dewhirst

Watching the leaves fall  
Blindly, those fragile dancers  
Step and flatten, gone

#### Next week's competition:

Monologues. Time for some prose. Write a 300 word prose monologue on a chosen topic, spoken by one person, for performance or otherwise. Your monologue could be interior or exterior: a brooding stream of consciousness or a grand speech made to a mass audience. Good luck! Send submissions to Eliot D'Silva at [literary@varsity.co.uk](mailto:literary@varsity.co.uk) no later than 9am on Monday, October 26th for the chance to win two tickets to the following week's ADC main show, and see your work printed in our next issue.



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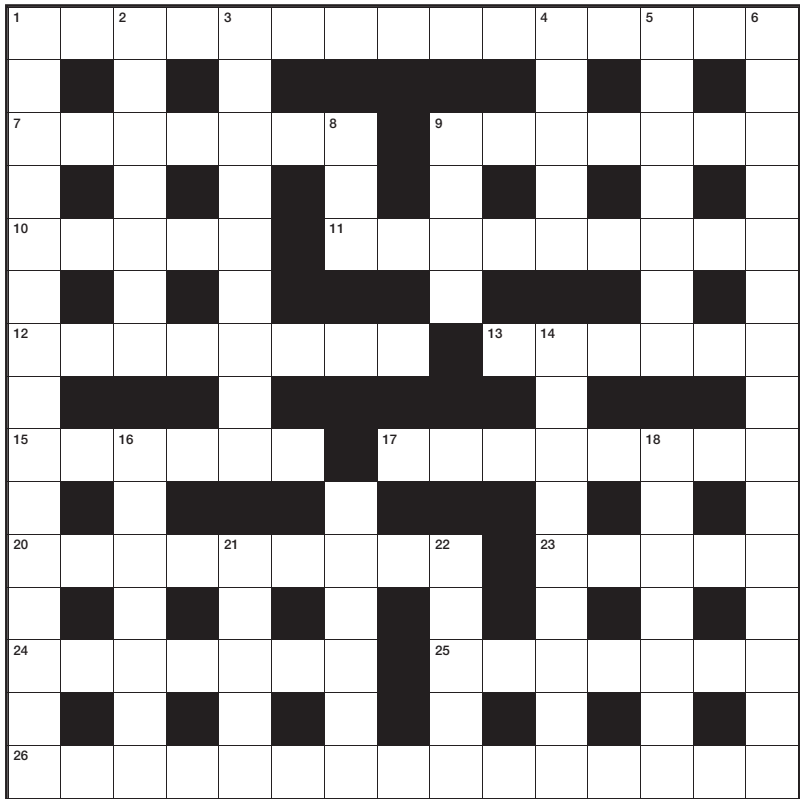
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# Games & puzzles

## Varsity Crossword



### Across

- 1 Boer zeppelin ace oddly is won by President. (5,5,5)  
7 Squares get confused: 'No blogs?' (7)  
9 Great sex explosion! (3,4)  
10 Poem on cinema. (5)  
11 Kiwi raver goes crazy at bridge

site. (5,4)

- 12 Whisper - US/USSR ruck without underwear is disturbed. (8)  
13 Celebrity church produces carbohydrate. (6)  
15 Spanish king hangs around the sea for cure. (6)  
17 German is in gangsta weapon. (8)  
20 Racial policy divides scottish

- head. (9)  
23 Goddess against drug students. (5)  
24 It keeps going messy i.e. train. (7)  
25 Mad Othello's not left in Africa. (7)  
26 Agreement arranged in electorate den. (7,8)

### Down

- 1 Keanu Thatcher is modern right-winger. (15)  
2 Strange, to sell tub of ammunition. (7)  
3 'Strictly' judge in old student town. (9)  
4 'Slap a german' it alerts you. (5)  
5 Terrorists question Washington's right to conflict. (4,3)  
6 John Bull lives there in his castle. (11,4)  
8 Knight reduces risk by thousands, turns it all around (3)  
9 Many drink five less. (4)  
14 Elvis teed off on broadcast. (9)  
16 The average guess could not be crueler. (7)  
18 Singer transgresses beside god. (7)  
19 Tell me about wind. (6)  
21 Giant breast object. (5)  
22 Sex toy left inside irritating singer. (5)

Set by Hythloday

Answers to last issue's crossword (no. 510)  
**Across:** 7 Radio, 8 Colourful, 10 Ampere, 11 Paranoid, 12 Accredited, 13 Exit, 15 Falsest, 17 Elected, 20 Tour, 22 Enormity, 25 Bantered, 26 Louder, 27 Chainsaws, 28 Begin. **Down:** 1 Karmic law, 2 Fine arts, 3 Compete, 4 Doorbell, 5 Brunei, 6 Music, 9 Head, 14 Aesthetic, 16 Surprise, 18 Computer, 19 Let down, 21 Obtain, 23 Owls, 24 Maths.

## Sudoku

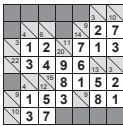
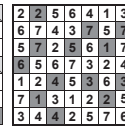
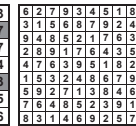
The object is to insert the numbers in the boxes to satisfy only one condition: each row, column and 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 through 9 exactly once.

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

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### The Varsity Scribblepad

### Last issue's solutions

		
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## Kakuro

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

				9		9			
			5				15		
			20						
		17							13
8					8				
					6				
6						12			
					3				
		19							
				4					

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## Hitori

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

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

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# John's again set for college rugby domination

» Red Boys run riot against their traditionally closest rivals



Frankie Brown  
Senior Sports Reporter

St John's College RUFC produced a dominant forward display to carve out a convincing victory against arch-rivals Jesus on Tuesday afternoon. Despite dogged resistance, Jesus lacked the size and power to combat a bristling Johns pack playing tight and direct rugby.

Jesus' start was good, with patient play from the kick-off producing a penalty in front of the posts which Ian Childs coolly slotted home. For the first quarter their intelligent kicking and effective line-out disguised Johns' overwhelming physical superiority. Gradually however the Red Boys began to dominate, forcing turnovers as Jesus failed to find a way through the defence.

A line-out deep in Jesus territory saw a driving maul of nearly twenty metres from the determined John's

pack, accompanied by the rallying cries of their supporters on the touchline. A five-metre scrum was awarded, and the end was predictable. Jesus were battered back behind their own line and Lum at number 8 had the simple job of touching the ball down.

Sonenfeld missed the conversion, but it was a sign of things to come. John's increasingly asserted themselves on the game and a second try followed. Fly-half Mathonway Thomas scored a fine individual effort right under the posts and Sonenfeld this time made no mistake to pick up the two extra points. A third try was added just before half-time, which left the home side with an ominous 19-3 lead at the break.

Jesus began the second half as they did the first, competing well at the breakdown and recycling the ball patiently. A ten minute period of sustained pressure however produced no points, as the John's wall remained firm. Then a sudden breakaway and quick hands from the backs saw Jesus' hard work go up in smoke as a try was immediately scored.

The physicality of the game was

beginning to take its toll on the Jesus side, as several forced substitutions were made, but there was no let-up from their opponents. More tries appeared inevitable, and they duly followed, as the tiring Jesus defenders began to miss crucial tackles. Ben Wilson rounded off an excellent game at scrum-half with a try just before the end to leave the scoreline an emphatic 36-3 to the Red Boys.

Although it was a brave effort from a depleted Jesus side, the scoreline was a fair reflection of the match. John's lacked speed and precision in attack, but their line was rarely threatened, and such was their domination in the pack that it did not really matter. The forwards, led by Lum and Barratt, were content to keep it simple, and Jesus had no answer.

It was not always pretty, but it was highly effective, and there was little in the Jesus performance to suggest John's will struggle to make it ten league titles in a row. Indeed, neither should they lose the unbeaten record which all the current players hold whilst wearing a St John's shirt.



EMILY MATTHEWS

# Footballers sailing after consecutive victories

» Bad conditions at Fenners and a strong team overcome by ascendent Blues

» The mast is high among the Blues crew who overturned last year's defeat



Vince Bennici  
Sports Reporter

This game may have only been a friendly – an annual fixture the Blues are obliged to play – but the starting eleven who took the field following an enforced reshuffle were evidently determined to build last week's great performance. Lars Boyd was one of three changes, earning his debut in goal for the first team after regular Stuart Ferguson was unable to play. Alongside him two fully fledged

Blues Eddie Burrows and Matt Stock were drafted into the team to add their experience in a perennially difficult game.

It was the experience, and pace, of Stock that would eventually separate the two teams, his neat finish mid-way through the first half giving Cambridge a hard fought, and well deserved, 1-0 victory. Conditions at the Fenners ground were far from ideal, persistent rain coating the otherwise pristine turf in a layer of moisture that inhibited the Blues' usual playing style. Against a Navy team which, unsurprisingly, was man-for-man larger and more physical than the Blues, sliding tackles were flying in from the outset. Despite passes going astray the Blues' morale and confidence did not falter, absorbing spells of pressure in a scrappy contest. It was during one of these spells that Cambridge was able to take the lead, Baxter starting a counter-attack from his own half which ended with Stock burying the ball in the bottom corner.

As the half progressed the Navy became increasingly frustrated – players on the pitch and the sideline berating the referee. By the end of the first half the game had lost all qualities of a "friendly"; the odd lunge and occasional clip round the back of the head accompanying their verbal aggression. The Navy's coach was eventually warned by the referee after calling stand-in linesman Hartley a "nugget", among other,

more colourfully phrased, things. The opposition surged forward as the half drew to a close and would have equalised if not for a superb save from Boyd diving to his left.

At half-time Hartley, relieved of his officiating duties, came on to partner Burrows as Johnson moved himself into attack. Despite losing influential players Baxter and Stock, Johnson's team-talk seemed to have an effect, the Blues returning to the pitch a more competitive outfit. Surviving on a fragile lead the Blues slowly started to dominate the game. A nervy final ten minutes elapsed with Cambridge remaining composed, sensible possession football ensuring the game ended with the Blues' 100% record still intact.

Skipper Johnson was upbeat about the result after the final

whistle, stressing the importance of them keeping a clean sheet and adding that, "last week we played brilliantly and this week we had to battle and get a 1-0. It was pretty tough, they're a big side but I'm pleased; we bossed the second half". The Blues did not deliver a fantastic performance; it was not pretty and the football did not flow. Only centre-backs Dan Gwyther and James Day had flawless displays. Yet tireless hard work earned their victory, and for that reason, in many ways, this result is more encouraging than the 4-0 thrashing last week. Overcoming a tough side which defeated them 3-1 in the corresponding fixture last year in less than ideal conditions certainly entitles the Blues players to feel a certain amount of satisfaction about their efforts.

## The Anorak

### Football:

Division 1  
Christ's 3 - 4 Downing  
Pembroke 0 - 1 Girton  
St John's 2 - 4 Emmanuel  
Trinity 2 - 0 Jesus  
St Catz P - P Fitzwilliam

### Rugby:

Division 1  
Downing 43 - 5 St Catz  
Trinity 0 - 48 St John's  
Jesus 52 - 7 Girton

### Ladies' Hockey:

Division 1  
Churchill 1 - 4 St Catz  
Jesus 0 - 0 Emmanuel  
Downing 0 - 0 St John's  
Fitzwilliam 0 - 4 Murray Edwards

### Men's Hockey:

Division 1  
Churchill 1 - 7 Robinson  
St John's 1 - 6 Old Leysians  
Downing 3 - 1 Emmanuel

## Sport in Brief

### Women's rugby

92-0 was the emphatic final score when the Ladies' Blues rugby team met Nottingham University. Having won the league last year with Nottingham coming second, CUW RFC went into the game expecting a tough and fast match with more speed than their usual Sunday league RFUW games. The match began with a positive kick into the back corner, with the motivation of a pint from the Captain for a try in the first 10 minutes! Following a penalty score, the tries kept coming. Special mention goes to the two starting centres, Laura Britton and Rachel Thompson, who scored 7 of the 13 tries in total. We look for this success to set the standard of our BUCS league and as a great boost for the new players.

### Rowing

The Blues started tentatively against a confident but ultimately limited East Anglia team. This young team looked to create pressure early, but the still forming chemistry between new and returning players allowed their opponents some easy baskets and a disappointing 4 point deficit after 1 quarter. However, the work rate improved dramatically in the next 2 quarters. The Blues took over the game, tightening up on rebounding and converting their shots. Strong 4th quarter showings from Rich Martin and Chris Haar eventually delivered the knockout blow, resulting in a 92-78 victory. Top scorer was ex-Lion Milos Puzovic with 24, aided by strong rebounding from Felix Schaaaf.

## Absolutely nothing to do with Cambridge

Colombian second division club Real Santander again grabbed the global headlines this week with a heart-breaking 2-2 draw away to local rivals Bucaramanga followed by a 2-1 home defeat to Carlos 'el pibe' Valderrama's old club, Unión Magdalena. This was the *albos'* first defeat since *Varsity* began covering the *hormigueros*.

Deco, the paper's full-time Colombian sport correspondent, opined on the matter. "The pressure of recent success is obviously getting to the players, as coverage in the international media is obviously a different kettle of fish to playing on cow fields, which was the reality for Real until very recently. That said, the rumour is that the Board are planning to visit Cambridge very soon to give thanks to the staff for the increased publicity, as well as to pick up some cakes from Fitzbillies for the players who are desperate to try them after reading the weekly advert."

Cambridge University AFC (4-4-2)  
Goals: Stock  
Subs: Hartley (Baxter)





# One of an endangered species?

**Olly West** talks to former Christ's student Steve Palmer, whose remarkable but little-known distinction is being the only Cantab to have built a professional football career since the 1970s

On the 28 July 2001. Queens Park Rangers FC, in administration and fresh from relegation to the third tier of English football for the first time since 1967, took the field for a pre-season friendly against arch-rivals Chelsea with a makeshift side, the majority of whom had just met.

A remarkable 3-1 victory marked the beginning of an upturn in fortunes which resulted in promotion after three seasons.

Yet among the sound bites of manager Ian Holloway and other players dying their hair blue-and-white as demonstrations of loyalty, captain Steve Palmer dictated matters on the pitch whilst keeping a modest profile off it, and was at the centre of this mini-resurgence.

Perhaps it is apt that Palmer's role at the club was so understated. Having graduated from Christ's in 1989 with a degree in software engineering, Steve is, according to *the Times*, "the only professional footballer in the modern era to boast a degree from Cambridge University", although boasting about it is certainly not something he does – he was not even aware of his unique status.

Before joining QPR, Palmer had signed for Ipswich Town upon graduation, winning promotion with the

Tractor Boys to the inaugural Premier League. A move to Watford followed in 1995 for a six-year spell in which he gained another promotion, then becoming the only Hornet to be ever-present in their sole season in the top division, which included a 1-0 victory at Anfield.

Fellow Christ's alumnus Maurice Cox managed three seasons for Torquay United in the late 70s but "The Professor's" achievements are particularly exceptional considering a footballing climate in which players are signed by clubs before reaching double figures.

According to Palmer, Academy Performance Manager at Tottenham Hotspur since retiring from MK Dons, his final club, in 2005, the reason he managed it was simple. "I had a clear desire and ambition to be a footballer. I didn't see it as an obstacle. Both my family and Brighton and Hove Albion, who I was with at the time, encouraged me to carry on with my education."

Despite his achievements, Palmer had no delusions of grandeur. "It was a bit of a novelty for the media when I started but once you cross the line into professional sport you are judged on nothing but your performance. My ambition was to gain the respect of my peers and make 500 appearances – which I did."

I venture that his education may have helped him become the calm head and great reader of the game that so often made up for a perceived lack of pace or elegance, yet he will not accept such a pretence. "I wouldn't go down that line. If anything, my ability to study was perhaps due to the same attributes that allowed me to learn the game."

His university background only came back to haunt him when Watford fans

began a chant of "Walking along, smoking a bong, walking in a Palmer wonderland".

Indeed, what made Palmer so popular wherever he went was his work ethic. As one Watford fan site raged when he was released, "As if there could ever be a time when Steve Palmer wasn't worth his wages, when he wouldn't do what was asked of him without a murmur of complaint." Understated maybe. Under-appreciated not so.

Yet if his attitude could be a lesson for many modern-day footballers, the three-time Blue's genuine pride in his academic work is an example too. "Looking back on the whole experience gives me immense pride. I see it as an achievement."

With daily training, and always in the knowledge that a professional sports career may await, it is not unreasonable to assume that other extra-curricular leisure activities were limited. Yet Steve had other problems. "I think the engineering degree was the bigger restriction. I'd do my extra training, but I'd gone there with a purpose and I didn't see any point in risking that."

One obvious question arises. Why, given its illustrious list of sporting alumni, does the University boast so few professional footballers? Football is, as Steve points out, not played at a professional level as are rowing or rugby. Yet can this explain the disparity?

"I honestly think it's a question of numbers. Look at how many people play football in the country compared to those other sports. It's quite simply very competitive." However, Palmer "would be surprised if we didn't see another graduate make it soon".

I struggle to share his optimism, but what can be said is that the football world is gradually becoming aware of the need for a more formalised education for tomorrow's hopefuls, especially considering a success rate which Palmer estimates at "under 0.5%". His current role encompasses this, and there is a classroom and education

programme for the 15 and 16 year olds at Spurs who train on day release. Furthermore, the scholars, who leave school at 16, are made to complete an appropriate qualification. The club also has a full-time education officer on hand for those who do not make it to the glamorous world of professional football.

It has been a full cycle back to the classroom, at least partially, although Palmer's role principally consists of ensuring provision of

suitable playing facilities, and he is on the training field as much as he can. He is clearly unworried that his remarkable achievements are not advertised other than by topping annual "Football's top ten clever clogs" lists.

Yet whilst he may have dealt with Michael Owen in his day, the important issue remains unsolved: could Steve Palmer make a crucial saving tackle facing a failing computer in an essay crisis?



Steve Palmer, heading for a league career?

Cyrus Daboo

## From the Archives

*'Pro Palmer joins rare breed', Varsity 10, Feb 1989*

Professionals who have graced the pitches of Oxbridge are an even rarer breed but Christ's student Steve Palmer is aiming to stop them becoming extinct.

Palmer, the last of his three Blues as captain, is currently a non-contract player with his local club Brighton and Hove Albion, promoted to division 2 last year,

as well attracting interest from Cambridge United and Ipswich Town. Following his expected graduation this summer, he will be devoting all his energies to making a league career.

"Coming here is doing my football no good at all and when I return to Brighton the fitness is always a problem, but I'm only 20 which gives me a good 10 years of football and I've always got the degree should I ever need it", Palmer remarked.

## The Sporting World Week 3: France

Late September – first hockey training of the year – and I'm knocking a ball across the damp surface, rueing my lack of ball control. No reason to lose sleep; the habitual autumnal rustiness is Karma's reconciliation of the inevitable excesses of the summer break.

This is not without remedy: repetitions of basic drills usually ward off symptoms quickly enough. Pyramids, Diamonds, Tens, Forties – polygons or natural numbers

equate to pain, but it works.

Imagine my surprise when, resigned to an hour of torture, the coach sets up a novel drill to treat earlyseasonitis. Player A propels aerial ball towards goal from centre spot. Player B stands on penalty spot and attempts to smash ball into goal net first time, over-the-shoulder, on-the-volley. Not encompassed by 'basics' any way you look at it. Confused? As was I. This is beyond the realms of the University of Cambridge.

Welcome to French Hockey.

I had approached my forage abroad with open-mindedness, yet the training session with Lille Métropole HC proved too radical for me. I sought an early-season transfer and wound up at IRIS Lambersart, playing in the second tier of the French National League.

First up, a challenging series of track runs. This was more like it. Considering myself out of shape, and suffering from a mild ailment, I was surprised to be consistently at the front of a group of athletes some of whom had a handful of international caps. Commenting on my performance, a team-mate offered a physiological explanation:

"En Angleterre, vous avez trois poumons. Non?" Three lungs or not, and grateful for the kind words, I am no Gebrselassie. Catching our breath for five minutes, we were instructed to fetch our sticks, for what I assumed would be some simple passing drills, or a small game. Nope. One-on-threes. Yes, as in one attacker versus three defenders. A veritable flair factory.

I would see more evidence of this prioritisation of exuberance over functionality throughout the season. It was best illustrated on the way to the league match against Nice, where I was ritually mocked by team-members for

expressing horror at their consumption of the complementary beer and peanuts as a pre-match snack. Or perhaps in the fact that of sixteen-or-so first-team members, ten were heavy smokers.

The panache with which the Lambersart club members trained, played and enjoyed their lives and made me a part of was surely a reflection of the wider culture into which I was fortunate enough to be assimilated for six months, the mode de vie lilloise (of Lille). That said, in hockey terms I'm yet to be convinced by this approach. So for now, I think, give me Dodecahedrons, Eighty-sevens and pasta salad. DAN QUARSHIE



# Saracens just have the edge over Blues

» Cambridge turn up the heat after last week's defeat and give Saracens a run for their money

 CAMBRIDGE 24

 SARACENS 35

**Ed Thornton**  
Sports Reporter

The Blues undoubtedly spent last week cursing the whipping they received from Northampton, but thankfully it looks like they managed to squeeze in some precious hours on the training paddock too. Despite the score, Monday night's performance against the Saracens showed huge improvement in almost every area of Cambridge's game as they put up a solid fight against a very professional Saracens side that included eight first-teamers.

In the first half the Blues more than matched their opponents up front and dominated the scrums, lineouts and breakdowns. The forwards were well drilled, and showed an impressive physical presence that was lacking last week.

Unfortunately the Blues' back-line, suffering without Broadfoot and Reid, could not match their pack's performance and the first half was epitomised for Cambridge by a passage of play in which three successive mauls brought the Blues within sniffing distance of the line only to be wasted by a poorly

executed move in the centre of the park. The Saracens' back line on the other hand pounced on their opportunities and when they took advantage of their superior kicking ability and Cambridge's weak tackling to run in four tries before half time it looked as if another trouncing was on the cards. At 28-3 down at half-time, a difficult second half was on its way.

Vickerman's half time talk must have been strong because the whole movement of the game changed.

The Blues' pack set the tone again with a powerful scrum followed by a slide-over try for second row Will Jones but now the Saracens were being tested in all areas of the park, especially by Freddie Shepherd's decision to crash the ball up with some real force.

The backs orchestrated two tries before the game was out with only one reply from Saracens. The first came when Jamie Hood danced through half a dozen tackles and the second when James Greenwood

confidently outpaced two players to bring Cambridge within eleven points of victory. Greenwood almost pinched another on the opposite wing when he optimistically volleyed a wayward Saracens pass and chased it to the line but it wasn't to be and the game ended a minute later with the Blues still trailing. The home team left the field the stronger side to a loud reception but must not forget the first half problems.

In a way, the score flattered the Saracens but if the Blues do not

improve their defence they will have the same problem week after week. No matter what you do with the ball in hand it is almost impossible to win games if you let the opposition score multiple tries by running through the centre channels and that is what must be learnt.

Hooker Pat Crossley was on the sideline this week where he had a perfect view of the problem. He said, "we are leaking soft tries, and come December we can't do that." The Blues now have two weeks to improve before they host Crawshays Welsh on the 4th of November.



More missed tackles as Saracens break Cambridge's line

## Line-up

### Cambridge:

1: Andy Daniel (St. Edmund's)  
2: Jamie Gilbert (St. Edmund's)  
[Andy Badcock (Girton)] 3: Tom Harris (Churchill) 4: Will Jones (St. Edmund's) 5: Dan Vickerman (Hughes Hall) 6: Hayden Henderson (St. Edmund's)  
[Tom Harrington (Wolfson)] 7: Ed White (Jesus) 8: Ben Maidment (St. Edmunds) 9: Doug Rowe (Hughes Hall) 10: Jamie Hood (Hughes Hall) 11: Marc Rosenberg (Hughes Hall) [Miles Daley (Jesus)] 12: Freddie Shepherd (St. Edmund's) 13: James Greenwood (Hughes Hall) 14: Ilia Cherezov (St. John's) 15: Will Balfour (Queens')

# Best result in seven years but still stalemate

» Cambridge Ladies hockey break their Oxford hoodoo with a frustrating draw

 CAMBRIDGE 0

 OXFORD 0

**Bec Langton**  
Sports Reporter

Having lost 4-0 against Bristol the previous week, Cambridge were eager to earn their first points in the BUCs Northern Premier division against their dark blue rivals. This would not be an easy task; the Light Blues had suffered defeat to Oxford at every meeting in the past seven years. However, as the narrow 2-1 defeat at the last Varsity match had shown there was every chance that Cambridge could prove their ability and even the score.

They started well, pushing the opposition into their own half, and taking play into the Oxford D. The build up, was, as usual, exceptional. Ruth Graham used her skill and pace to open up the right side of the pitch and, linking with returning captain Charlotte Brearley, trapped the

Dark Blues in their own twenty-five as Cambridge piled on the pressure. However, it was the penetration and finish which once again let the side down. As Coach Daniel Griggs suggested, "the ideas are there". It was simply the end product that lacked.

Oxford looked far from dangerous. Mel Addy was instrumental in the back line, making tackles in crucial areas to disarm a quick-paced Oxford front line and redistributing balls down the centre, allowing Cambridge to once again turn play in their favour. The Light Blues were able to pressurise the Dark Blues effectively, winning a number of short corners, and repeatedly looked menacing on the back, particularly when the quick feet of Jess Hume and enthusiasm of Rachel Quick were targeted. However the two teams went into the break on an even footing.

Cambridge returned for the second half with tenacity but neither side were able to break the deadlock. Alice Ferguson at left back injected a new level of aggression and dynamism into the game, allowing newcomer Lucie Browning to make her mark at centre midfield. Yet the chance that arrived with ten

minutes left to play when Sophie Palmer picked up a ball on the left post was denied by a poor umpiring decision and a moment of hesitation,

an ending characteristic of the game as a whole. This was symptomatic of the Blues' inability to convert pressure into points. Whilst the Blues

will be proud of their best result against Oxford in seven years, they will be disappointed at being unable to take the elusive win.

MICHAEL DERRINGER



Intense scenes at Wilberforce Road



Blues improve but lose again. John's dominate Jesus.

Rugby29&31



Steve Palmer: the only professional footballer of the modern era with a Cambridge degree

Feature30



# SPORT

## King's crowned at Athletics Cuppers

» Catz take the women's competition as optimistic predictions are made for Freshers Varsity



DHANEESHA SENARATNE

can be equally as useful as excellence in this format. The would-be gold medal was his in the discus and 100m, and he claimed "silver" in the long jump, 110m hurdles and shot put.

Mouland's exemplary hurdling display in the sprint was one of the highlights of the day, but he also achieved points in the high jump and pole vault amongst others. Supported by team-mate Nate Sharpe, who won the pole vault with a Blues-standard jump as well as competing in the 100m, 200m, 200m hurdles and long jump, it was almost inevitable that King's would reign.

Last year's champions St Catharine's faced a strong challenge to their title from women's Blues captain Kate Laidlow's strong Jesus team. Yet it was not to be, Laidlow herself took the 100m crown but St Catharine's the Cuppers title.

However, whilst only two Colleges were ever in the mix, promise was shown across the board. A competitive 800m which ended in victory for Emma's Rose Penfold in a time of 2.24.0 demonstrated that CUAC women will have a selection headache for all the right reasons in the middle distance events. Rachel Kitchen and Grace Geilinger, both of whom narrowly missed out on half-Blue standard, pushed each other hard in the 1500m, whilst the steeplechase of the same distance was claimed by returning Blue Polly Keen.

Keen's team-mate Clare Palmer too claimed victory - in the discus with yet another Blues-standard throw, and Laura Duke also reached this standard in winning the hammer. Yet it was the men's hammer where

one of the surprises was to be had. Fitz's John Garrity, a Goldie rower, launched a solid throw of 34.50 to destroy the competition, though he could not transfer his talents to the javelin as Ray Malekout of Selwyn edged out the rest of the field.

An expected pattern of victories for Blues athletes offset by some surprising new figures winning events began to emerge, but the quantity of Blues-standard performances was exceptional considering the time of year. To have so many Cambridge athletes at that level already will have Oxford literally quivering in their spikes.

However, what really concerns captains and fans alike is the fresher-count. On Sunday, Christian Roberts (200m hurdles winner), Alex Jackson (winner of the high jump and second place in the javelin and triple jump), and Ismail Akram, whose impressive 12.68 took the triple jump, showed themselves as ones to watch for the men's team.

For the women, Lizzie

Thompson impressed in claiming the 100m hurdles and triple, despite being a 400m hurdle specialist. Amanda Smolinsky proved herself a talented fresher with a win in the pole vault and third place in the high jump, whilst Nicki Moss had a good run in the 100m finishing just behind Laidlow and establishing herself as a valuable member of the women's sprint squad for the year ahead.

Confident predictions were made by both men and women's captains. All that remains to be seen is if the Cuppers champions can take the intense pressure of Varsity Athletics.



EMILY MATTHEWS

Lucy Spray  
Sports Reporter

A sunny if blustery Wilberforce Road was again the place to be for the University's sportspeople to attempt to win the first bit of College silverware of the academic year. In two closely fought competitions some "athletes" were complete beginners at the event, whilst for many, this day was a chance to stake a claim for the upcoming "Freshers' Varsity".

The respective men's and women's Blues captains would have been pleased with the turn-out on what was the first occasion the programme had been condensed to a single day. It seemed that the ease with which college captains could gather their teams together in the new format

allowed greater talent to shine.

Decathlete Josh Mouland, the King's captain, provided the day's outstanding performance, so it was no surprise to see his team finish in first position. Following close behind were Selwyn, who also boasted a decathlete, Ed Moyse, adding a personal aspect to the day's competition and showing that versatility

### Top 5s

#### Men

- 1) King's: 171 (points)
- 2) Selwyn: 164
- 3) Peterhouse: 118
- 4) Clare: 107
- 5) Queens: 95

#### Women

- 1) St Catharine's: 164
- 2) Jesus: 141
- 3) Peterhouse: 78
- 4) Fitzwilliam: 72
- 5) Selwyn: 67

