

The Varsity Politics Survey p4-5

We asked who you would support in the 2010 election. Check out the results inside



Varsity

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Mansigani voted CUSU President

New leader pledges to make CUSU “a more relevant, connected Union”

GEMMA OKE

Rahul Mansigani will be the new CUSU President after a decisive win in the CUSU elections.

Mansigani won the vote with an 11 per cent majority over rival candidate Beccy Talmy, taking a total of 1403 votes. Talmy took 1103 votes, while 232 people voted to reopen nominations.

This year's turnout was lower than that of last year – only 13.1 per cent of the electoral roll voted, down from a turnout of 21.2 per cent last year.

Speaking exclusively to *Varsity*, Mansigani said that he was “thrilled” with the results and was looking forward to working for Cambridge students next year.

“I really hope to develop CUSU into a more relevant, connected Union, and will be putting all my effort into making sure that we're there to actively support JCRs, MCRs and individual students, as well as putting pressure on the University on issues like the sports centre, rents and access,” he said.

Runner-up Talmy said that she hoped her campaign had changed the way people think of CUSU as a student voice in the University. She said, “I feel incredibly glad to have been convinced over a thousand people that it's more important for CUSU to campaign for greater fairness and equality within the University and beyond, than to provide discounts and throw parties.

“I can only hope that [Rahul] will fight hard to bring about truly

meaningful change for students, showing them how much CUSU can empower them to do.”

The positions of CUSU Coordinator, Ethical Affairs and Access were uncontested, electing Chris Lillycrop, Sophie Hemery and Jamie Gibson, and Andy McGowan respectively.

The numbers of voters who chose to reopen nominations for his Coordinator position was 20.4 per cent, which represents a much higher proportion than that for the same position last year, Clare Tyson, where only 9.8 per cent of votes were for R.O.N.

The Womens' Officer position was closely contested, with Sarah Peters-Harrison narrowly coming ahead of Anna Goulding, taking 48 per cent of the vote.

Although the proportion of students voting in this year's elections fell, Maria Helmling, Education Officer Elect, has described voter interest as “extremely encouraging”. She added, however, that CUSU could do more to boost the profile of the elections and awareness of who can vote.

Of the new CUSU team she said, “I think the new sabbatical team has the real potential to change CUSU, Faculties and Colleges for the better and achieve concrete change in Cambridge”.

Mansigani was also elected as an NUS Delegate for the forthcoming year along with Fatima Junaid, Amy Taylor, Beccy Talmy and Luke Hawksbee. Morgan Wild was elected Student Support Officer whilst Amina Rai Mumtaz is the new President of the Graduate Union.



When Jesse Came To Town

Civil rights activist and Baptist minister Jesse Jackson visited Cambridge on Monday to give a speech at the Union. The minister was given three standing ovations and an honorary membership, with his speech addressing the world financial crisis and the tragically high levels of gun crime in the US. Earlier in the day Jackson, who had been a key member of Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, attended a tour of the American Cemetery in Madingley. Reflecting on casualties caused by war, Jackson condemned the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, stating “there are some wars that must be fought, and there are others made for TV dramas it seems”. See p6 for the *Varsity* interview. LAURIE TUFFREY

Hawking will stay in Britain, despite funding cuts

RICHARD MOORE

Contrary to media reports this week, Stephen Hawking, the former Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, has no plans to leave the UK for Canada in protest at the Government's cuts in funding for higher education.

This summer, Professor Hawking intends to make a two-month visit to the privately-funded Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, in Ontario, where he already holds the visiting position of Distinguished Research Chair.

A report in the *Daily Mail* suggested that this visit was a precursor to taking up a permanent position at the Institute. According to Professor Hawking's website, though, this is untrue: “It looks like Stephen's graduate assistant, Sam Blackburn, has been misquoted again.”

The University released a statement on Wednesday which stated: “Professor Stephen Hawking is Director of Research in the Centre for Theoretical Cosmology in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at the University of Cambridge. He will remain so in the long term. As part of his research he expects to make annual visits to the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Canada.”

Professor Hawking has been sharply critical of the Government's plans to cut £1 billion of funding for higher education in the UK.

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On varsity.co.uk this week

COMMENT

Hugo Gye muses on the rise of R.O.N., Rob Peal gives us a history lesson about the BBC and resident rower Charlie Adams gives us some thoughts on Bumps.

ENTERTAINMENT

Dan Grabiner on The White Stripes' critically acclaimed *Elephant*, Alastair Beddow on the closure of 6Music and much, much more.

FASHION

Read Charlotte Wu's tribute to Alexander McQueen and catch up with The Two Orphans and The Varsitorialist.

VARSITY

For even more coverage of Jesse Jackson's visit to Cambridge, watch our interview, filmed during his trip to the American Cemetery, at varsity.co.uk.



Scientists from Cambridge featured on commemorative stamps

The portraits of five iconic University of Cambridge scientists have been featured on commemorative split-design stamps issued by the Royal Mail. Charles Babbage, Dorothy Hodgkin, Sir Isaac Newton, Ernest Rutherford, and Professor Sir Nicholas Shackleton are part of the 10 scientists chosen by Royal Mail to mark the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society. According to Professor Sir Martin Rees, President of the Royal Society and Professor of Cosmology and Astrophysics at Cambridge, "These stamps commemorate some of the best known Fellows of the Royal Society and their extraordinary achievements. As we celebrate our 350th year we hope that they will generate a sense of excitement and pride in our scientific history, and ensure that science yields new discoveries in the 21st century."



Cat woman prowls streets of Cambridge to raise money for Haiti

A Cambridge student has been raising money for the Haiti Disaster Emergency Committee by donning a comedy tiger costume. Cat Davison, from Corpus, has been wearing the tiger suit for the past two weeks, raising £2600. Her 'cat campaign' has amassed a sizeable following on her Facebook group, and attracted several anonymous £100 donations. It has also attracted local attention, with *Cambridge News* and ITV Anglia lapping up the story. Cat has described some of the highlights, including attending a black tie 21st Birthday, taking part in 'Corpus Challenge' hockey tournament in Oxford and re-mastering bike riding. She intends to continue wearing the suit for as long as people are willing to sponsor her.

Cambridge Science Festival to open with bang

A two-week celebration of science is set to come to Cambridge when the 2010 Cambridge Science Festival starts next week. Beginning on March 8th, the city will be the site of the annual festival which aims to pique public interest in the sciences through a series of lectures, talks, demonstrations, and hands-on events for people of all ages.

The highlight of the festival will be the two Family Days, taking place on March 13th and 20th, and featuring events across the city. Most of the events are free, and include such activities as the CHaOS Science Roadshow, which will show how things "crash, bang, and squelch" through a series of drop-in experiments. Other events include learning about forensics, building a bridge using 2p coins, and understanding the science behind lottery and gambling. For more information visit the festival website at www.admin.cam.ac.uk/sciencefestival



Strawberry Fair to go ahead despite police protests

Bid to ban Strawberry Fair due to "excessive drunkenness" and "drug abuse" quashed by Council

CLAIRE GATZEN

Strawberry Fair, Cambridge's free summer music and arts festival, will go ahead this year despite a police-led campaign to ban it.

Police attempts to block the fair's license because of alleged antisocial behaviour fuelled by drugs and alcohol were quashed on Monday at a Cambridge City Council hearing.

The premise license for Strawberry Fair 2010 was approved and extended for an extra day due to the event's cultural significance.

Cllr Jennifer Liddle, Chair of the Licensing Committee, said: "We have decided Strawberry Fair is a very cultural event in Cambridge."

The licence was granted in spite of police opposition. In a submission to licensing chiefs, police solicitor Elliot Gold warned that if the fair goes ahead this year it "will result in widespread drug abuse, excessive drunkenness of those over and below



Last year's Strawberry Fair

18 years of age, disorder and wider anti-social behaviour".

Mr Gold cited an increase in the number of drug seizures at last year's Strawberry Fair and instances of urination and defecation in public places as reasons to ban the event, which attracts up to 15,000 people

annually.

Strawberry Fair organisers criticised the police for failing to take into account plans to deal with drug and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour.

Speaking to *Varsity*, the Strawberry Fair Committee said: "At the hearing the Police presented the

Licensing Committee with misleading footage which was strongly biased against Strawberry Fair.

"Despite these attempts to shock the Licensing Committee into banning the event, the opposite happened. In acknowledgement of the true value of the Fair, the licence for 2010 was approved – and was even extended from one to two days to allow the fair to run its ninth annual film festival the day before.

"The new licence has been granted subject to conditions that were proposed by the Strawberry Fair Committee, demonstrating their commitment to dealing with issues such as antisocial behaviour. These conditions include reducing the number of large stages from six to three, banning the selling of 'legal highs' on stalls and doubling the number of toilets to combat the problem of festival-goers urinating in public."

Daniel Zeichner, Labour's parliamentary candidate for Cambridge,

agreed that there had been an "over-reaction" from the police. He said: "Let's look at how to make the fair run smoothly, rather than calling for an end to it."

Justin Argent, Chair of Strawberry Fair, said: "We are absolutely delighted with the decision. This proves that the fair makes an essential cultural contribution to Cambridge."

In recent years, organisers have won the support of many residents living near Midsummer Common, where the festival is held, by addressing concerns ranging from parking problems to illegal camping.

Roger Chatterton, co-Chairman of Brunswick and North Kite Residents' Association, said: "A lot of people were getting fed up with the fair, but huge efforts from the organisers made a vast difference last year."

The first Strawberry Fair was held in 1974 when a group of Cambridge students decided to run an alternative event to the May Balls.

Get involved

If you would like to find out how to write for *Varsity*, come to one of our weekly meetings.

News: Monday 4pm, Queens' College Bar

Magazine: Wednesday 5.30pm, The Maypole (Portugal Place)

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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King's Mingle called off by Committee

Financial mismanagement by previous Committees blamed for cancellation

JANE ASHFORD-THOM

King's College's termly 'King's Mingle' event has been cancelled for this term, causing disappointment amongst students of the College.

The event, which is thought by many to be the highlight of the College's Ents calendar, has been called off under allegations of financial mismanagement by last year's King's Cellar Committee, the group in charge of Ents.

In an email sent to King's students, the current Cellar Committee President, Richard Leivers, has accused the previous Committee of poor accounting, meaning that his "hands have been somewhat tied" over the issue.

Leivers explained that the Cellar Bar, like all student societies, had to have its accounts audited by the College at the end of every year in order to protect the money of students.

"Unfortunately previous Committees have failed to keep sufficient accounts," he said, "meaning that the outgoing Committee was unable to present accounts for audit before the end of last term. Following negotiations with the senior treasurer, we were able to prevent this affecting the Michaelmas mingle, on the condition that accounts would be presented at the start of this term

and the accounts were frozen until this had been done.

"The freeze on the accounts essentially prevents us from running events until the accounts have been audited. Unfortunately the outgoing Committee are still yet to present accounts for audit, meaning that there is now insufficient time to organise a mingle for the end of this term."

The incoming Cellar Committee has passed on the responsibility of organising an alternative end of term event to KCSU, the College's JCR Committee. Leivers acknowledged, however, that "it should be made clear that this is *not* a Mingle in all but name, and is unlikely to be at all similar in terms of scale or format. The Cellar Committee will not be involved in putting on this event."

However, a statement from the President of KCSU has cast doubts upon the prospects of a viable alternative event with such short notice. "Unfortunately at this present moment in time it looks like this is not going to be approved by College, but we are still looking at ways to overcome the setback!" Past 'Mingles' have consistently sold out, and have featured a range of live acts and DJs. One of the only College Ents to feature different music in different rooms, they are likened to the King's Affair on a smaller scale.



Scene from a previous King's Mingle

Students fall victim to spate of attacks in Cambridge

FIONA VICKERSTAFF

University of Cambridge students have been the target of increasingly violent altercations in town.

Recently a third-year student had to degrade due to injuries suffered in a violent attack in January after leaving a pub in Castle Hill. The student, who has chosen to remain anonymous, described the incident as "unprovoked," adding: "They were drunk and clearly looking for a fight. One of them hit me around the face with a bottle. As I tried to react, I was hit in the head, again with a bottle."

As a result of the sharp blows, the student lost balance and fell on his elbow, breaking his arm. The injury has been so severe that he currently feels unable to continue his studies.

"I have lost the feeling in half my hand, and will need to wear a brace for three to six months," he said.

More recently a group of students, including a former Blues rower, was involved in an attack near St John's College.

As they made their way home at 12.30am following a night out, Hardy Cubasch and his friends were followed from Market Square by a group of local male residents. On arriving at their accommodation in Portugal Place, a confrontation

occurred in which the students were compelled to defend themselves.

"Initially I wasn't too concerned as we were walking within a main part of the city, most of which would have been under CCTV surveillance. Once it became obvious that they were concealing some form of weapons naturally our awareness

escalated and protecting everyone in the group became paramount," Cubasch said.

A porter from the nearby St John's College appeared on the scene shortly after the altercation began. Mistaking him for a policeman in high visibility clothing, the locals fled. Having been alerted

to the incident, police stopped the locals who alleged that they had been attacked by the students.

When questioned on the scene, the rower admitted to the assault and was arrested. However, he was released immediately after CCTV footage was consulted, which showed that the group had been followed and his attack had been an act of lawful self-defence.

Tim Pullan, CID, who is investigating the case, told *Varsity*: "It was very clear that the aggressors were the Cambridge town people."

Cubasch was keen to stress: "Don't be afraid to call the police or a friend immediately. We found the officers to be extremely helpful and obviously aware that situations like ours are not a rarity and can easily escalate into something serious."

Incidents such as these have made some students fearful of being in town alone at night. One female student said, "I know from my male friends that on nights during the weekend, they have come across aggressive gangs of men who just want to pick a fight."

She added, "It's a very scary prospect and has made me rethink where I walk late at night."

The victim of the bottle attack, who is now recuperating from his injuries, advised students: "Just keep your wits about you."



LAURIE TUFFREY

University withdraws from Iran cultural event

PATRICIA MCKEE

The Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies has cancelled a two-day conference that was to take place in London on February 26-27. Professor Charles Melville, its host, told a Persian BBC reporter that the event was annulled due to a lack of contributors, "because no one wanted to participate".

The event, named "New Approaches to Iranian Studies in the UK: Past, Present, Future" was sponsored by the Cultural Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran, thus linking its financial support directly to the Iranian Government.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Professor Melville offered his opinion on the failure to attract proposals: "I can easily imagine that many people felt very lukewarm about participating in an event, even of a purely academic nature, so obviously associated with Iranian officials, at a time when academics in Iran are being harassed, apparently violating human rights and civil liberties in a substantial way."

Last month University of London students peacefully disrupted a talk on Iran's Islamic Revolution at the UCL Union. The AhlulBayt Islamic Society had invited such speakers as Mohammad Marandi, who publicly defended the executions of two young men for their participation in protests against Ahmadinejad.

On November 30 of the previous year, the UCL Union cancelled its invitation of Islamic preacher Abu Usamah, who allegedly endorses killing homosexuals.

Its withdrawal was approved by one Iranian citizen at the University of London who preferred to remain anonymous: "The Iranian people are very grateful for this decision. If this event had happened, and as Cambridge is very well known worldwide, the Iranian regime would have claimed so much credit for it, and would use this as they do other events: for insidious propaganda purposes."

However, Professor Melville suggested that it might be detrimental to remain silent on such issues: "Is maintaining some sort of dialogue and contact better than boycotting things completely?"

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POLITICS SURVEY

Lib Dems in the lead

- Lib Dems win most student support in every category of *Varsity* survey
- Only 12% of students regard environment as most important issue in election
- Margaret Thatcher is most polarising of the last four Prime Ministers

VARSITY NEWS

In an electoral climate otherwise beset by apathy and disillusionment with major parties, Cambridge students seem poised to throw their support behind the Liberal Democrats in the next general election, a *Varsity* survey reveals.

The survey of undergraduates and postgraduates showed that if the election were to be held tomorrow, 31 per cent would vote for the Liberal Democrats, 25 per cent would support Labour, and 19 per cent would cast their ballot for the Conservatives.

The Green Party came in fourth place with 11 per cent of the support. The remainder was split between those who would choose not to vote and those supporting other parties. Other parties supported by students included the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the Scottish National Party (SNP). The BNP received two per cent of student votes.

The Liberal Democrats even won support from international and other non-voting students, with 36 per cent of overseas students saying they would vote Lib Dem, compared to 21 per cent voicing support for Labour and 14 per cent for the Conservatives.

When asked if they would pursue a career in politics, 31 per cent of the 17 per cent of overall survey takers who responded affirmatively said they wanted to pursue politics as a Lib Dem, compared to 20 per cent as a Labour politician, 19 per cent as a

Tory, and nine per cent as a Green.

The survey also showed an increasing amount of student apathy towards politics. An overwhelming 76 per cent of students said they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement, "British politicians across party lines fail to make strong ideological commitments in their quest to appeal to voters."

The attitude was reflected in responses to many other questions. One survey-taker commented: "All political parties amount to the same thing: fundamental change is needed; party politics is all about staying in power," whilst another said he or she was "pretty disillusioned with politics".

Part of the disillusionment can be linked to the monopoly enjoyed by the major parties. As one participant commented, "This is a two party system, and those parties that do have some sensible ideas do not have a chance without proportional representation to prove their credibility."

When asked which issue was the most important to them in the upcoming election (and given a choice between options which included international relations, domestic policy, the British economy, immigration, and education issues including fees), students rated domestic policy (28 per cent support) and the economy (24 per cent support) as the most crucial.

The environment and education came next, with 12 per cent and 11 per cent of participants, respectively, naming them as the most important issues.

Issues relating to foreign affairs do not seem to rank highly amongst the concerns of students this election season. International diplomacy and Britain's role in the EU both registered less than 10 per cent support.

Despite the fact that immigration is cited by Cambridge Labour candidate Daniel Zeichner as one of this year's top issues, it gained only 2.9 per cent support from survey participants.

Participants were also asked to rate each of the past four Prime Ministers on a scale of one to ten on four individual issues: international diplomacy, personal likeability, domestic policy, and economic policy.

front-runner in the economic policy category, with an average score of 5.5.

In the same poll, Tony Blair, Margaret Thatcher, and John Major had average ratings of 4.9, 4.2, and 4.1, respectively.

The most noteworthy result of the polls by far, however, was that in every single category, Margaret Thatcher got the most ratings of '1' and the most ratings of '10', suggesting that among students she is the most polarising of the four leaders.

Of those students who said they planned to seek a career in politics after leaving University, 24 per cent said they sought to be MPs. 28 per cent said they hoped to become Prime Minister. One student said he hoped to be King.

Responding to the breakdown of party support, Christopher Hill, Sir Patrick Sheehy, Professor of International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Studies, said: "Cambridge students seem to be reflecting the local constituency more than the national picture, with 67 per cent favouring supposedly left-of-centre parties."

Professor Hill was also surprised by the level of support for the Lib Dems: "[It] is striking that the Lib Dems are the most favoured party. This may be a harbinger of a nasty surprise for the other two main parties if students actually do turn out to vote."

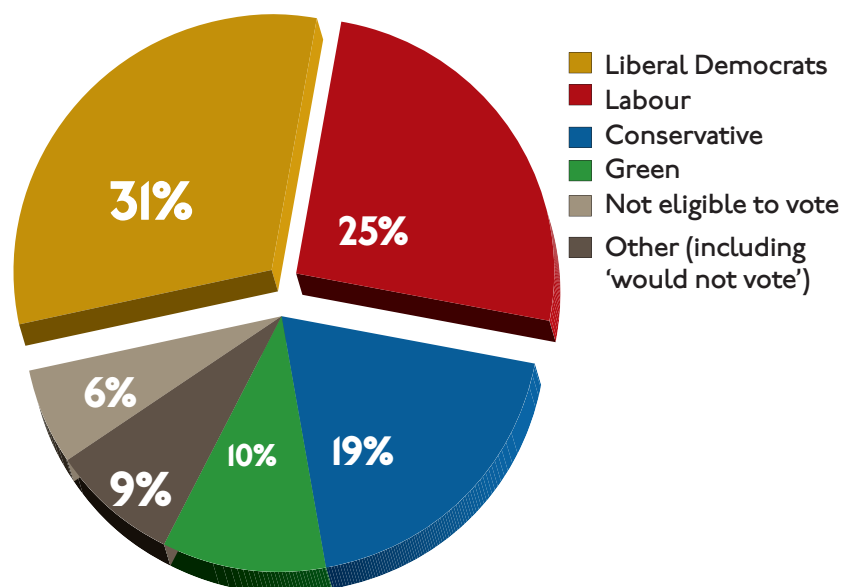
Overall participation in the survey was mixed, with History and Natural Sciences students forming nearly a third of all respondents. Among Colleges, King's and and Sidney



"All political parties amount to the same thing. Fundamental change is needed; party politics is all about staying in power."

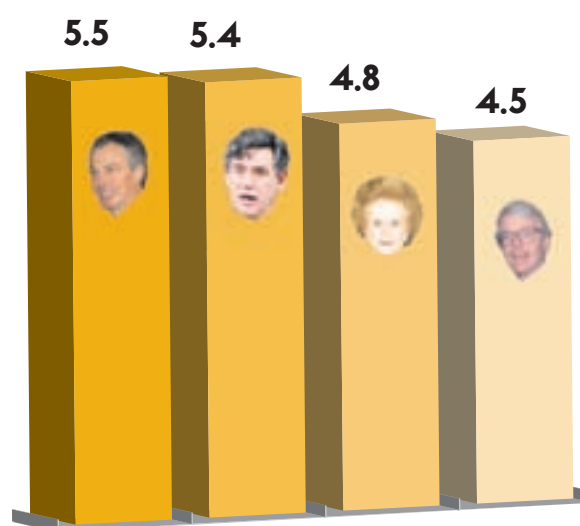
SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Student support of major political parties in the 2010 election



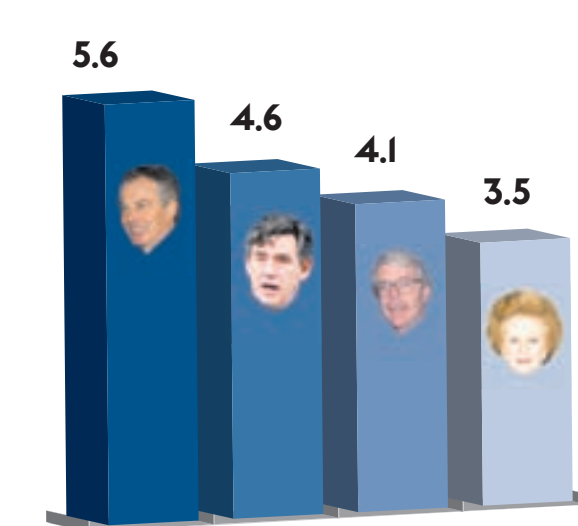
International Diplomacy of the past four Prime Ministers

Average rating out of 10 (10 being best)



Personal Likeability of the past four Prime Ministers

Average rating out of 10 (10 being best)





Messages from Cambridge's four major party candidates

Daniel Zeichner
LABOUR

Cambridge is critical. It'll probably make the difference between a Labour Government and a Conservative Government in a hung Parliament.

Labour will continue to invest in higher education, in the health service and in schools whereas it's quite clear that the conservatives are ideologically opposed to that kind of State.

The economy is the thing that most people are concerned about. But something else which the other candidates seem afraid to talk about is immigration. It comes up all the time particularly in the working class estates and I think it's reasonable for people to feel worried about it. Labour has a good set of policies that can reassure people when they're properly explained.

What I think is clear beyond doubt is that Brown has got the experience. There's that old question in Washington: who do we call when we want to call Europe? If they want to call Europe the person they call is Gordon Brown. That tells you all you need to know.

Nick Hillman
CONSERVATIVE

Cambridge should be at the forefront of our country's economic revival, but that will only happen if we have a good infrastructure, strong businesses and responsive public services.

The Labour Government has messed up the economy. We need to put it back on track so that we can make all the other changes we need, such as better schools, an improved NHS and a more generous overseas aid budget.

I believe we have the best policies for students as we are the only party committed to 10,000 more university places in 2010/11. I am not in favour of higher tuition fees because I do not think universities have explained how they are using the current income from fees.

We are committed to substantial changes to bring down the deficit more quickly than the other parties.

However, any reductions in public spending have to be implemented gradually and should focus on waste. Key services, such as the NHS, will be safe under us.

Julian Huppert
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT

I understand how Cambridge works. I'm an academic at the Cavendish, and this would make me one of a handful of scientists in the House of Commons. My values fit with Cambridge's values. I'm on Liberty's national council. I'm concerned about the environment. I'm an internationalist.

We want a fair taxation system. We want a fair start for children. We would scrap tuition fees over six years. We want a fair, green economy.

The number one issue is trust. Politics has become too much about spin, and not enough about facts, values, policy and delivery.

The student vote is very important. As a Fellow and former student I know many current students well, and the issues they face.

If we make drastic cuts now, we will destroy the economy. What we are proposing is to cut some spending in areas that we don't want (such as ID cards and Trident), and increase it in areas we do want, such as scrapping student fees, investing in education, and promoting the green economy.

Tony Juniper
GREEN

There's a need for a fresh voice in British politics, which reflects the scale of the challenges that we face as a modern society – the need to reconcile economic recovery with a low carbon future, at the same time as promoting a more equal society which is rich in jobs. At the moment, there isn't really a coherent approach to these issues, by the Government, but rather a piecemeal one, which will prove ineffective in the long term.

I'm hoping that young people who are coming now to vote, many for the first time, will appreciate the need for new voices coming to Parliament. Youngsters who will be joining the workforce in the next twenty to thirty years are concerned by long term issues which will affect them.

I believe that the main theme of the elections will be change that can be good for both the environment and people. I don't think the voters are inspired by the continuing point scoring of the main parties, who seem more intent on gaining power than they are passionate on solving problems.

Hi! Society



Student Community Action

Face it. Life in Cambridge typically revolves around a cycle of essay depression, Sainsbury's queues and post-Cindies trauma. But there is a life outside this hedonistic bubble, and Student Community Action (SCA) seeks to tap into it.

SCA is a group of student-run volunteers who help Cambridge's most disadvantaged citizens. Working predominantly with underprivileged children and the elderly, they provide stability and much-needed companionship to those in the community who don't form part of the 'Cambridge Bubble'.

Jonny Walker, a PPSIS student at Homerton, is part of the 'Big Siblings' scheme, which identifies underprivileged children and assigns them a 'big sibling' who is given an allowance by the charity in order that the child can be taken to the cinema or to a sporting activity. The 'big sibling' is often chosen when in the first and second years so that they can remain with their child throughout their University careers.

Jonny said: "In Cambridge, you can feel quite alienated from the real world. It's nice to have something authentic." He goes on to recommend SCA as being a "fantastic way to meet new people at the University".

Describing the merits of SCA, he contrasted it with other societies in Cambridge, which are "pretty self-indulgent", saying, "with us, you really get to know people. Our emphasis is on building relationships between students and the people we help on the outskirts, which few people here know much about."

Refuting the Cambridge bubble analogy, Jonny revealed: "people in Cambridge are more willing to accept help than you might think. Our students, to give a cliché, are really making quite a difference in the community."

With a rapidly expanding number of 300, it seems more and more students are willing to break out of that bubble.

To assist with their projects, Student Community Action will be holding a Battle of the Bands fundraiser at Soul Tree at the end of term. Go along and support their cause. CONNIE SCOZZARO

NEWS INTERVIEW

The Gospel according to Jesse

MICHAEL DERRINGER



Jesse Jackson, American civil rights icon, speaks to Zing Tsjeng about ethnic minorities in Britain's future

Jesse Jackson, to put it mildly, is a bit of a legend. Voted "most important black leader" in 2006 in an AP/AOL poll, Jackson is a luminary of the American civil rights movement. Today, he works as an international activist who has supported everything from the anti-war movement to the Northern Ireland peace process. It's no surprise that his speech at the Union is packed, though he is now sitting in one of the Union rooms, an imposing figure with a deep, Southern-inflected baritone voice.

Jackson can easily be considered a living fragment of history. In a lifetime, Jackson has lived through an historical arc that encompasses segregation, the civil rights movement, and emancipation. It culminates in the election of the first African-American to become President. "Obama ran the magnificent last lap of a 60 year race," Jackson concludes. In fact, Jackson ran twice for the Democratic nomination, and is widely credited as having introduced American society to the idea that a black man could be President.

In the lead-up to Obama's election, Jackson was caught off-air, commenting that he wanted to "cut [Obama's] nuts out" for "talking down to black people". By the time Obama's victory was announced, Jackson seemed to have put aside his misgivings: he was in tears in the moments before Obama's victory speech. He now defends the much-criticised Obama: "He is raising the right issues against strong and entrenched interests [...] At least he's willing to fight the right fight."

So what is the fate of a civil rights leader now that the civil rights movement has arguably reached its fruition? In Jackson's opinion, the movement is far from

over. African-Americans are still hit hard by wage inequality and poverty. When asked why this is the case despite civil rights legislation, Jackson replies, "We have up to now focussed on freedom. We must now focus on equality. That is the next step."

He goes on to illustrate with the use of a sports analogy: "Why do we do so well on the soccer field? Because at least the playing field is equal and the rules are public... Under those conditions, we've done very well. Off the athletic field, access to education, healthcare, housing... the playing field's not been even. The rules are not made public. And so this is the next stage of the struggle."

"Freedom is the prerequisite to get to equality. We must close those gaps. It is in everybody's interest."

Freedom is the prerequisite to get to equality. We must close those gaps. It is in everybody's interest."

Jackson talks a lot about things being in the public interest. Like any politician, he is strongly on-message and doesn't deviate much from his self-made party line. The public interest is, in his mind, strongly linked to diversity, the latter being part of a "socialising process" that makes people "more comfortable with one another... In the last 25 years you've seen blacks and whites playing rugby together, playing cricket together,

going to concerts together. Once, that didn't happen. [...] All this integration of relationships is removing barriers and building new worlds of possibility."

And one of those worlds includes the voting power of ethnic minorities. Jackson, a supporter of "Operation Black Vote", a campaign that aims to galvanise political participation among black Britons, is no stranger to the power of the vote.

Turnout for the 2008 election hit record levels, particularly in the African American community. "The black voice must know that it does have the power to determine [elections]," Jackson argues. He recalls saying to a predominantly black audience at a Brixton church, "No one knows your vote because they've not really seen it before. Those who need your vote must know that. You leverage that vote to gain equality of opportunity." He is passionate about the issue. "As people come unto themselves, they have a new sense of self-expectation [sic]. And others start looking at the numbers after the election: where'd the votes come from? You begin to court that vote."

It might even mean the emergence of Britain's own Obama. But first, Jackson says, "Someone has to run. Somebody ought to run," he emphasises. "What is there about 10 Downing Street that a black man or woman could not do?" He firmly believes that Britain is "ripe for a breakthrough." According to Jackson, that "means running for every available office... To be judges, to be national leaders, to have a voice, to be in the Cabinet." It won't be easy – representation of ethnic minorities in British politics hovers at dispiritingly low levels. Out of

646 MPs currently serving, only 15 are from an ethnic minority. That's 2.3 per cent of Parliament, compared with the 8 per cent of the UK population from a non-white background.

Later in the chamber, Jackson is electrifying. He delivers a speech that, whilst slow to start, eventually gets going. "Keep hope alive!" he admonishes the audience. The talk eventually ends half an hour late, with Jackson shaking the hands of anybody near him like a cross between an elder statesman and a rock star. Finally, he exits to loud cheers, pumping his hand in the air.

But looking around, you can't help but notice that there are relatively few of the people Jackson's concerned with – the "black", "yellow" or "brown" faces he talks about. "I would challenge this University to make room for the real Britain. The 2010 version of Britain," he says. The issue's nothing new: just over one in ten Oxbridge students are from a non-white ethnic background. In Britain, though, issues of race have always taken a backseat to class, despite the two now being deeply intertwined.

Hearing it from the mouth of a famed civil rights leader somehow lends these well-trodden facts a new urgency; people leap up and give him two standing ovations before he leaves. But it doesn't quite negate the fact that while Jackson may have been preaching to the choir, it was one that was mostly white. In a way, Jackson's presence validates our progress; measured against the yardstick of what he's been through, we congratulate ourselves on how far we've come. As he points out, though, we've still got a long way to go.

VARSITY PROFILE

Alex Guttenplan

Fount of niche knowledge and object of Facebook adoration

"I have the memory for remembering interesting but useless facts," says Alex Guttenplan, Emmanuel College's University Challenge wunderkind. "That, and a lot of time procrastinating on Wikipedia". Many students won't even be able to count how many hours of their lives have been legitimised by that comment.

A second-year NatSci, he's been marked as the 'one to watch' of the current series of the long-running quiz show. In his first round, he got six starters, which – people say – is impressive. In the second round, he took eight, unleashing a virtuoso performance on the bonus rounds for which he was credited with saving the team effort.

He's been compared - favourably - to Gail Trimble, the 'human Google' of last year, who was ultimately disqualified along with the rest of her team on a technicality. He brushes the compliment off, saying that he "didn't see much of the last series".

He claims that his motivation was borne of seeing the success of his friend, Alex Kaufman, captain of 2008's winning team. Whilst he insists that there's no competitive edge, he readily admits that his inclination to take part only burgeoned after seeing his mate succeed.

Alex's performance has won him admiration, veering on the creepy, from within College and elsewhere. One Facebook group, the oddly appreciative 'alex guttenplan; very clever.

very nice (sic)' was established by two women who have, ostensibly, no connection to him whatsoever. When I mention them (there are many more) he chuckles nervously, commenting that "they're very strange – I try to avoid them", and he gives the impression of having been completely unprepared for the fame that some UC panellists garner. He does enjoy, however, the occasional congratulations directed his way when out and about, and cherishes a new-found friendship with the porters: "They all know my name now, whereas before they didn't."

We discuss his spare time. "There's a bit of rowing, quite a lot of music (he later mentions a passion for heavy metal), then the crazier things, like the science fiction society." Crazy times indeed. "And the Emmanuel Real Ice Cream Society". He relates a disastrous endeavour involving tomato and basil.

Alex is also a member of the University Sailing Club, and intends to sail to Bruges and back in the holidays in a team. "The boat will return with a quite a lot more Belgian beer aboard than when it left," he assures me.

His plans for the future are uncertain, although he's contemplating a move towards history and philosophy of science. Whatever decision he makes, it seems to be heavily influenced by his University loyalties. "I really like Cambridge; I like University; I'd really like to stay here as long as possible." DAVID PEGG

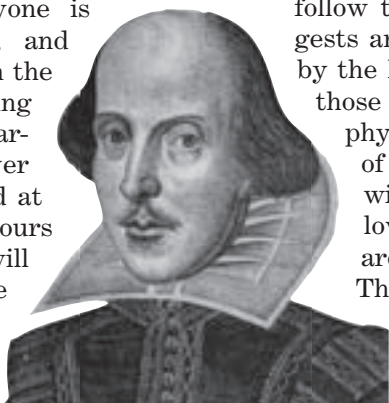


MICHAEL DERRINGER

University Watch

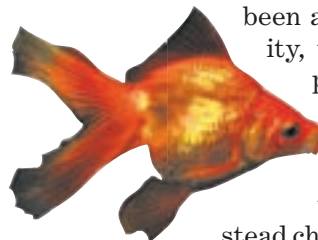
Wellesley College

A student group at Wellesley College in Massachusetts in the United States will begin a 24-hour continuous reading of the complete works of Shakespeare at 3 in the afternoon on Friday, March 3rd. During the round the clock event, which is titled '24 Shakes', all 14,000 lines, 154 sonnets and 39 plays written by Shakespeare will be read by students of the all-female institution. The event, which will take place at the campus' Shakespeare House, is to be sponsored by the college's Shakespeare Society. Anyone is welcome to attend, and even to participate in the event by simply showing up on the day and participating in whatever scene is being played at the time. As the 24 hours progress, students will update Twitter on the status of the event, keeping outsiders informed.



University of Texas

The Atheist Agenda, a student group at the University of Texas' San Antonio campus, is running its annual "Smut for Smut" campaign, which was set up in 2005. The campaign aims to highlight the fact that the Atheist Agenda believes the Bible to be equatable to pornography. The Atheist Agenda therefore allows students to swap religious texts for pornographic replacements during the event. The students in the group maintain that they would not want to follow the morals the Bible suggests and that images provided by the Bible are no better than those portrayed by pornography. This year, there is a group of religious students holding signs, with proclamations such as "Jesus loves the Atheist Agenda," forming around the Atheist Agenda's booth. There has even been police action to maintain a safe distance between the two growing groups throughout the rally.



The University of Oxford

In an act of vandalism and college rivalry over the weekend, students from Balliol College poured detergent into a Trinity College fishpond, killing all but one of the fish. As a result of the "prank", the pond in the college's Fellows' Garden will need to be drained and cleaned before it is once again habitable. The prank had been aimed at a fountain in Trinity, which Balliol students had planned to fill with washing-up liquid. The students changed their plan when they found the route to the fountain blocked and instead chanced upon the pond, where they carried out their plan. A group of Balliol students confessed to the action following a plea by the Dean of Balliol College to own up. Trinity students have in turn been warned by their Dean that any reciprocal action against Balliol will not be tolerated and will result in much stricter punishment than has been given in the past to similar actions.

ESMÉ NICHOLSON

Cambridge Spies



Somebody Call 911

One indie rocker found himself expelled from a local nightspot this Sabbath eve, after only the briefest of opportunities to sip from its Sunday night oasis.

His fresh-faced friend from home bundled away with him, our hero was left to muse upon the injustice of this treatment. With the bouncers reluctant to respond to his urgent, though somewhat slurred, bargaining, our dear friend did the sensible thing and dialled the emergency number. Redirected to local police by a disgruntled operator, our man called a further three times before surrendering to the injustice and the cold, returning to bed only to be woken by a phone call from a concerned constable.

Fight for the Right to Party

The kings of entertainment, the coordinators of all fun-filled frivolity at one College of this fine institution, began an affectionate play fight last week, amidst the bustle of their much-frequented drinkery.

A friendly left hook, a teasing boot in the groin...it was all ordinary alcohol-fuelled stuff until the Committee's chair was flung against the wall, one arm crushed and cracked.

So there was but one place this tale could end, the finishing line for far too many of the tales that have furnished this column thus far: Addenbrooke's A&E.

Run this Town

Fitness training at 7am can always prove tricky. There's hungover tardiness, there's the detestable no-show. So how did one dewey trip to Grantchester turn into the highlight of the lacrosse week? A pause for stretching. "Flower lulled" amidst Brooke's "sleepy grass," a pair volunteering to add an extra circuit to their cardio was found amidst the shrubbery, opting for some stretches and pumps of a less conventional sort.

Opening ceremony held for Downing College's new £8m theatre

Sir Trevor Nunn opens eco-friendly Howard Theatre

JONNY ALDRIDGE

Cambridge's latest theatre has been officially opened at Downing College. The opening ceremony at the Howard Theatre on Wednesday was attended by guest of honour, award-winning theatre director and Downing alumnus Sir Trevor Nunn.

The Howard Theatre, an £8 million project, comprises a 160 seat drama, conference and function area. The building boasts the latest in environmentally sustainable features, with solar panels fitted to the roof, efficient ground source heating, and rain water harvesting for flushing the theatre's toilets. It is made from Ketton Stone, a thermally efficient material also used in the newest extension to the University Library.

The theatre is the most recent contribution from Dr Alan Howard, Downing alumnus and creator of the Howard Foundation in 1982, who has been a major benefactor of the College for decades.

Professor Barry Everitt, Master of Downing College, told *Varsity* that Dr Howard "had expressed a desire to see a theatre built in the College many years earlier and so when we discussed this gift...it was with the specific intention of building a theatre to complete the Howard Court in the College."

The ceiling of the theatre is covered in trompe l'oeil artwork,



Sir Trevor Nunn at the opening ceremony of the new Howard Theatre

and a Grecian street scene decorates the front-of-house curtain. Poltrona Frau - an Italian firm who have supplied leather to Ferrari and BMW, and seats to the New York Metropolitan Opera - provided the leather seating for the theatre.

In February a production of *The Relapse* was put on by students, and a conference on 'Biology of the Skin' has already been held. The theatre, Everitt added, "has been received with enormous enthusiasm by the students, by the Fellowship, by the guests who came to *The Relapse* and, not unimportant, by the Howard family, too."

Whilst student theatre will be a major part of the theatre's function, the College has already started taking conference bookings for the

area, which can cater 80 guests at a formal dinner, or 180 at a drinks reception. Professor Everitt said, "The revenues from our business operations feed directly into the provision for our students."

Serita Rana, Deputy Development Director at Downing, said: "We are deeply proud of this magnificent building. This event is an opportunity to acknowledge Alan Howard's outstanding generosity to the College and to celebrate the thriving talent within the Downing community."

Downing is the first Cambridge College to achieve the Carbon Trust Standard.

The last building project at Downing, the Howard Building, was completed in 1996

Shoe-throwing caused mother's brain haemorrhage, says Chinese Premier

JAMES WILSON

The Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has claimed that his mother suffered a cerebral haemorrhage after seeing a shoe thrown at him at Cambridge University last year.

Speaking in an online chat on Saturday, Mr Wen said that his mother, Yang Xiulan, an 89-year-old former schoolteacher, was shocked to see postgraduate student Martin Jahnke throw a sports shoe at him during the talk in February 2009. The distress it caused her resulted in a brain haemorrhage.

"She still has difficulties in walking," Wen said, adding that her vision was also now impaired.

The Chinese transcripts of the online chat were ambiguous as to whether Wen's mother suffered the haemorrhage when she saw the incident on television or once he had returned to China.

But Xinhua, a Chinese news agency, has insisted that the two events were connected. State media reported on Saturday that

the haemorrhage was a direct consequence of what happened in Cambridge.

Mr Wen had been giving a lecture at the West Road Concert Hall when he was interrupted by the whistling and jeering of Mr Jahnke, a 27-year-old German student. The latter then stood up and shouted: "How can the University prostitute itself with this dictator? How can you listen to these lies?"

He was heckled by much of the audience before taking off his shoe and throwing it towards the stage.



Wen Jiabao at an Economic Forum

It missed Mr Wen but landed a few feet away.

At the time, Mr Wen said: "This despicable behaviour cannot stand in the way of friendship between China and the UK."

Cambridge University's Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard, added that she regretted what had transpired. "This University is a place for considered argument and debate, not for shoe-throwing," she said.

Whether Mr Wen's opinion will have changed due to what happened to his mother is unknown.

It is possible that a stressful incident such as what happened to Mr Wen could have resulted in a cerebral haemorrhage for someone involved.

The bleeding, which occurs within the brain tissue itself, is often associated with brain trauma or a haemorrhagic stroke, whilst high blood pressure can multiply the risk of a spontaneous cerebral haemorrhage by two to six times.

Mr Wen has said that he will pass on the good wishes of the online community to his mother.

Recent Bollywood blockbuster filmed in Cambridge

TABATHA LEGGETT

A Bollywood film that was partially shot at the University of Cambridge was released on Friday.

Teen Patti, which translates as "Three Husbands" and refers to a type of Indian card game, stars Oscar winner Sir Ben Kingsley and Indian superstar Amitabh Bachchan. The movie makes Kingsley the first Oscar winner to star in a Bollywood film.

The film, which was directed by Leena Yadav, tells the story of an unsuccessful mathematics professor whose latest dissertation attempts to predict the winners of card games. In addition to Cambridge, the movie also features locations in London and Mumbai.

Bachchan plays the mathematical genius whose latest formula leads to utter chaos. Kingsley plays the world's greatest living mathematician.

Kingsley has an eager following in India, owing to his iconic performance as Gandhi in Richard Attenborough's epic about the Indian independence

leader three decades ago. That film has become something of an institution in India and is broadcast every year.

Although *Teen Patti* is unlikely to achieve the staggering success of *Gandhi*, the film is expected to do well. It was made with a production budget of £4.5 million, which is high by Bollywood standards.

Some scenes were filmed in front of and inside St John's College, the second largest of Cambridge's Colleges. Both Kingsley and Bachchan were present at St John's to film their scenes. Alongside other scene sets, the filming process involved setting up a large bandstand on the grounds of the College.

The idea of St John's being featured in a big Bollywood film has excited some. One Johnian told the BBC, "It's awesome! I really like it when you watch John's on TV. It's happened a few times before, but normally in quite low production films with not many famous people, but this guy is literally huge! I can't believe he's here."



On the set of *Teen Patti* outside St John's College

Attack at Trailer of Life

MATTHEW SYMINGTON

Police are searching for a student who is accused of assaulting and racially abusing a member of staff at the Trailer of Life during the early hours of Tuesday morning.

At around 3.10am Piotr Duda of

the Trailer of Life became embroiled in a dispute over change with a group of students. Duda alleges that one male student from the group became abusive, calling him as a "Polish c**t".

After returning the money to the student, Duda asked the group to leave. Roughly 15 minutes later, it is alleged that the student returned to the Trailer of Life with food from another outlet, jumped onto the counter and threw the food at Duda's face before fleeing.

Duda pursued the student and caught him in time to have him identified by nearby CCTV cameras. Police are hoping to use this footage to identify the man.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Duda spoke of his disappointment at the incident. "This kind of thing, though it doesn't happen very often, is very unpleasant and embarrassing."



The Trailer of Life in Market Square

Comment



CHARLIE BELL

The Falklands will never be Argentinian

As unrest stirs in the islands once more, Britain may soon have to make a decision about war. But whatever happens, we must defend our own citizens

Just a few weeks ago, the news came from South America: President de Kirchner of Argentina has decided that now is the time to reopen the debate over the Falklands. As far as Argentinian postulating goes, the argument has been on the agenda for a while, despite Argentina being comprehensively beaten in the 1980s, both on an intellectual level and in warfare.

But sadly the ugly murmurings of war have once again hit the headlines. Whether there is really a popular call for capture (or reclaiming) of the islands by the Argentine population is extremely unlikely at best. But the political will is certainly there; the nationalist de Kirchner is doing badly in the polls, and needs something to boost her popularity. The problem in this case is that if she really thinks an invasion is wise, she is playing with people's lives. Even for those who completely discredit Kant, it is difficult to see people as anything other than ends in themselves in the 21st century. To cause the death of Argentine soldiers, and indeed British, in an unnecessary conflict is utterly disgraceful behaviour.

There are two reasons she would be unwise to invade. Firstly, they don't stand a chance. Even if the whole of South America decide that they will support her (and their pledges thus far have been lukewarm at best), Britain simply will not let the islands go, and this time it is unlikely that the USA will sit on the sidelines. If they were to do so, all of Obama's high talk of freedom would rather lose its gloss.

There were a few angry voices even around Cambridge last week when Argentina made the pronouncement that they were going to attempt to get the UN involved. Ban Ki-moon, who thus far has been a fairly wet Secretary

“The islanders are British, and have decided to remain so.”

General, would spark outrage amongst the major world powers if he were to even suggest that the islands be given back to the

Argentines. The fact is, they have absolutely no right to claim them.

One argument put forward by the Argentine Government in the current situation is their need for the resources which are to be exploited by the Falkland Islanders, and on this they may have a point. But the solution certainly is not occupation, but rather negotiation. Even in this regard, they have shaky grounds for their arguments – perhaps it would be better for the British to offer some form of free trade with Argentina rather than to hand over what will be a major (and necessary) natural resource for the islanders to exploit in order to survive.

The Argentine claim comes from the fairly chequered history of the islands, but falls short on one fundamental point: the islanders now are British and, more importantly, have decided again and again to remain so. This leaves the islands in the position of having an entirely British population, who, by self determination, wish to remain so. This concept, springing even from the League of Nations in the first half of the last century, reigns supreme still to this day, and was part of the reason for

the breakup of the USSR in the early 1990s.

This means that the Argentine claim is entirely about territory, whereas the British defence is of people, of their own citizens, which they are obliged to do at all costs. If Argentina were to declare war, they would be fighting for land and resources, whereas the British would be forced to defend people from what would be, in effect, unrepresentative occupation. This is unacceptable to the majority of countries in the world, and indeed the situation now seems to resemble inverted colonialism. Britain may once again be forced to fight for its own citizens, to prevent them becoming subject to a regime out of their control. If the islanders wanted to become Argentine, it would be different – in fact, we would have no claim, and would be unjustified in remaining there. But this is very much not the case.

The days of claiming land against the interests of the local population

are very much gone. Even the so-called occupation of Iraq was not seen as a long term solution, and that country has once again been returned to its people for governing. Britain hasn't helped itself, however, in the argument for self-determination; it is of course arguable that invading Afghanistan,

even under the auspices of peacekeeping, has prevented the Afghans from being ruled by their own people. The difference there is that Britain is helping NATO fight not only to allow Afghans the opportunity to be represented in the form of a democracy, but also to

prevent attacks on British citizens, which it should do once again in the Falklands. We cannot, and I believe will not, have a situation where we have to welcome to Britain *British* refugees, fleeing from Argentine occupation. Although every single life lost in war is a tragedy, if we are once again tested over this claim, we must act decisively, and, if necessary, fight to keep our citizens free.



DAN GRABINER

A high school student with an “I Love Horatio Nelson” T-shirt, a man furiously masturbating at his desk, a beautiful girl with dreadlocks who “nexts” me immediately, another gentleman ‘relaxing’, a group of stoners who embark on the tricky mission of passing a joint from Pennsylvania to England...

For those familiar with chatroulette.com, this will be an habitual sequence. Simple and addictive, the pure concept website immediately and randomly connects users one-on-one via video and/or sound, leaving them free to launch into passionate and lengthy conversation or hit “next” and be faced with another user. As I write, there are

Taking chatrooms for a spin

Why everyone should experience the Internet in its purest form

over 23,000 people online and in the twilight hours of the American weekend I have seen this reach 50,000. It's addictive, interesting, often hilarious, sometimes moving, and inevitably perverted, with some of the depraved deviants able to shock even the most hardened online indulgers.

Through Chatroulette I've benefited from a ninety minute consultation with a New York hotel designer (“You shouldn't have your fridge so close to the oven; that's doing nothing for your chi”), been run up and down the road by Petra, a Norwegian lady who wanted to show me “what real snow looks like” and enjoyed countless late night jams with musicians all over the world: a jazz guitarist in Nashville,

a masked trumpeter with a giant swastika flag behind him, and a self-described “female bass vocalist” who produced some of the lowest notes known to the human ear. It made me feel a bit sick.

Some of the most profound conversations are to be had with the large stoner contingent, visibly and heartwarming close-knit groups of friends sharing a pipe (if American) or a spliff (if European), while simultaneously expounding the erudite and the vacuous.

Chatroulette, however, is not for the faint-hearted. You earn your meaningful moments by wading through the wankers. In my early excursions I would click “next” at the slightest glimpse of skin but recently I've been trying to engage



with this middle-aged, obese male community. Loudly reciting portions from your Bar Mitzvah seems to be a pretty reliable method of being “nexted”.

There is a touch of the *X Factor* about it: you are being judged. Everyone's a Louis Walsh (actually I think I came across him during a late night session yesterday). You can see the irritated boredom in the eyes of the stranger just before they cut you off, or if (in my experience) your hair looks particularly ridiculous, that Cheryl Cole “you have SO much potential” expression flashes across the face of the neo-Nazi polishing his machete in his dorm and you know that there's a future in this relationship. Forty seconds at least.

Chatroulette is as pure and simple as the Internet gets. It's

real, democratic interaction, and it's quickly becoming a dynamic space for the world's weirdos and geniuses alike. It doesn't have an agenda, no changing layout, no profiles to complete, no pokes, likes or updates to hide behind. With only the most minimal of adverts across the bottom of the page, Chatroulette is a throwback to those first rapid-fire chatrooms of the mid 90s where you can come and go as you please without a trace (unless someone is recording their conversations for an ‘hilarious’ YouTube video of people's responses to their “show me boobs” sign).

Weird procrastination tool it may be, but an immoral infatuation? I'm not so sure. Take a spin, take an interest in the person opposite and see if it doesn't feel somehow worthy and genuine.

VARSITY

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A-pathetic turnout

Congratulations to Rahul Mansigani on becoming the President of CUSU for next year. The race for the Presidency was certainly closer than last year's competition, and displayed impressive and conscientious debate on the part of the candidates. Unfortunately, voter turn-out was far lower than last year. With only 13.1% of the possible voters filling out ballot papers, as compared to last year's 21.2%, it would seem as though the battle for CUSU is only just beginning.

Beccy Talmy, the defeated Presidential candidate, hopes that "people will realise that they can make CUSU strong through their own involvement," which hits on the crux of the problem. With each College essentially having its own student union, dealing with its individual issues, many students undoubtedly feel that CUSU is irrelevant, and remain unaware of its actions. Certainly this, as well as a regrettable apathy, is what has capped voter numbers in recent CUSU elections and referenda. This is not so much a failing on the part of the individuals involved; it is rather a reputation of the institution as a whole which has unfortunately become entrenched. The College/national issues divide of the College JMAs and JCRs and CUSU needs to be made more explicit.

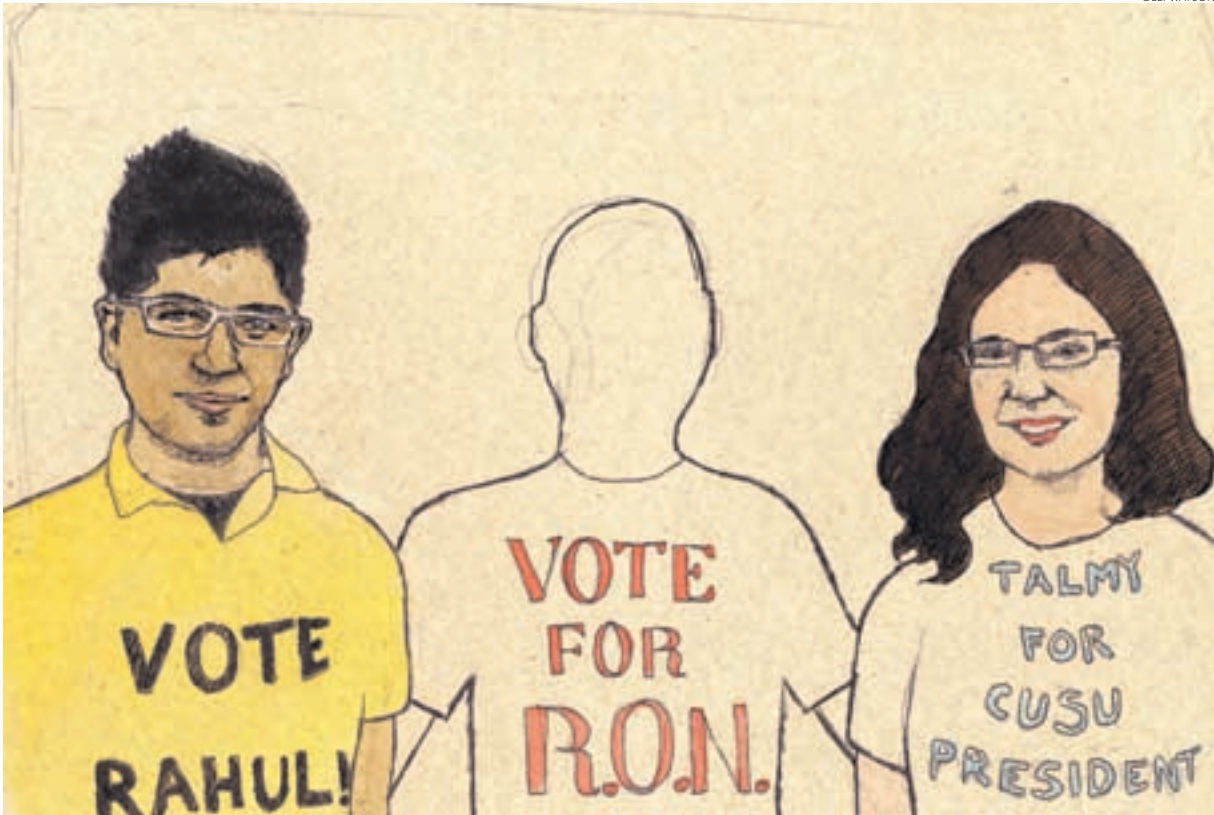
This is an issue, at least, of which our President-Elect seems to be aware. Mansigani has stated that he "hope[s] to develop CUSU into a more relevant, connected union": this is crucial. What CUSU really needs is relevance if it is to turn around voter apathy.

Out of Left field

The quality and seriousness of the written comments we received for this week's Politics Survey - even those which reflected the apathy or disappointment of student voters - were extremely (and encouragingly) high. It is interesting and, we feel, promising that the Liberal Democrats have evidently made significant inroads into student thought this year. It is in a sense unsurprising that the Lib Dem programme, which favours students' interests on matters of finance and national voice, has proved so popular. The general trend of our research seem to suggest that those students who do plan to vote have thought carefully about what's best for them, and will vote accordingly.

It was abundantly clear from the results of our questions polling opinion on the past four Prime Ministers that some students are uncomfortable assessing the recent British political past. The only instances in which it appeared that students had strong views about past politicians was with regard to Margaret Thatcher, who had the most ratings of '10' and the most ratings of '1' for every question. Although she is the furthest away in historical terms, with most of our survey-takers barely old enough to have been alive during her time in power, she evidently still inspires the most impassioned opinions.

And that is ultimately what we were hoping to uncover with our survey: impassioned opinions. Especially in the wake of this week's disappointing CUSU election turnout, we hope more than anything else to show with our survey that some students do have strong, informed political opinions - and to convince those who don't that politics is not only important, but also interesting.



OLLY WATSON

Letters to the Editor

I'm shocked that your editorial last week ('Super-pub or feel the rub') failed to mention the profusion of excellent drinking holes located in the Gwydir Street area



of Cambridge, close to Mill Road. Affectionately nicknamed 'Pub Heaven', it's home to some of the best pubs in the country, including The Elm Tree and The Cambridge Blue. And the fun doesn't stop there: over on the other side of town, the tiny St Radegund is a fantastic little pub full of character and serving a great variety of locally brewed ales. We certainly don't need a new 'super-pub' in Cambridge when we already have enough super drinking establishments to satisfy even the thirstiest of Cambridge's rowers and hacks.

Alex Atkins
Trinity

I hugely enjoyed the interview with Ken Livingstone in your News section last week. Not only was it good to see a Labour politician get some coverage after features on Nigel Lawson, Zac Goldsmith, and Simon Heffer, but the piece was well conceived and snappily written. Personally, I think an independent London is a terrible idea, but I read Ken's defence of it with interest.

Becky Cooper
Girton

Charlotte Roach has now written the same article about the sports centre for *Varsity* two years in a row. Maybe the reason it hasn't materialised yet is that she's the only one who cares about it.

Alesha Goddard
Hughes Hall

I was pleased to see such an excellent interview with Ian Hislop in last week's issue. Also, the picture on the front of V2 deserves special mention - it really captured Hislop's cheeky schoolboy sense of humour.

Tabatha Phillips
Darwin

I'm disappointed by the amount of attention *Varsity* gives to Cheryl

Cole. Whilst I appreciate that the pop singer may be an idol for a great number of people, I am beginning to find her persistent appearances in your newspaper offensive. Her name has cropped up in three editions consecutively this term, and I recall her picture being used even more last term. Even if her hair is fabulous and 'Fight For This Love' was an excellent pop song, I don't see why the Geordie songstrel should get so much coverage. Not only is this unfair to the other members of Girls Aloud, but, in the light of recent events, the last thing she wants is more media attention. Now, please cease these constant references and broaden your frame of reference. At least one mention of Peter Andre would be nice.

Max Feltner
Pembroke

Can we have easier crosswords please?

Name withheld

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

Overrated

Week 8: Ronald Reagan



In 1999, there was a push by congressional Republicans to carve Ronald Reagan's face into Mount Rushmore. Five years later, there was a motion

to put his likeness on the \$10 bill. Thankfully, both calls fell on deaf ears, but there is perhaps no stronger illustration of the sheer unthinking reverence in which the 40th President is held, especially amongst Conservatives. However, so pervasive have been their attempts to canonise their hero that even Barack Obama, during his primary campaign, praised Reagan for curbing the "excesses" of the 60s and 70s (even though the liberal 'excesses' generally understood by Reagan voters included civil rights, gay rights, feminism, the environmental movement, consumer protection and Great Society programmes). This deification of Reagan has got to stop.

It cannot be said that Reagan 'won' the Cold War; the Soviets never tried to match American defence spending and their economy was already creaking. Indeed, the fact that the USSR was already on its last legs makes Reagan's huge increase in military spending - and the attendant surge in the national deficit - all the more unwarrantable. His foreign policy record elsewhere was even more heinous. The Iran-Contra scandal was worse than Watergate; although inexcusable, at least Watergate did not involve the government-sponsored murder of innocent civilians in Central America.

Reagan's career was defined by a monstrous contempt for

the vulnerable. In 1964, while Johnson was raising his standard in the War on Poverty, Reagan was joking that the millions who went to bed hungry each night were "all on a diet". As president, Reagan drastically cut low-income housing subsidies; unsurprisingly, homelessness ballooned on his watch. He also slashed food stamp benefits and Aid to Families with Dependent Children and increasingly left welfare assistance to non-profit organisations with precarious finances. He justified this with 'blame-the-victim' dog-whistle rhetoric - with clear racial overtones - chiding Cadillac-driving "welfare queens". This uncaring mentality also informed his refusal to acknowledge the

existence of HIV/AIDs until 1987.

The Reagan administration saw inequality reach a level unseen since before 1929, yet succeeded in convincing Americans that markets were a friend of the little guy. He ushered in a predatory capitalism, of corporate raiders and hostile takeovers, of Ivan Boesky and 'greed is healthy'. He helped lay the foundations for many of today's problems. His administration, by ramping up aid to the mujahideen, aided the rise of Osama Bin Laden. He ended New Deal restrictions on mortgage lending (boy, that ended well). Indeed, his legacy can be summed up by a succinct headline from an op-ed piece by Paul Krugman: "Reagan did it". DANIEL JANES

THE ESSAY

Whatever happened to classics?

The classics and class have always been uncomfortably linked. In the history of this country's education system, knowledge of the classics was traditionally the gatekeeper of privilege. If you acquired the classics you gained a passport to the establishment. Fail and the corridors of power remained out of reach. And, despite a vigorous history of working-class autodidacts - such as one Alfred Williams, born in 1877, who taught himself Latin and Greek by chalking up irregular verbs in his forge - the gate has remained largely shut to the working classes. It is no coincidence that the high-water-mark of the British Empire, and that of British classical learning, were more or less coterminous.

Even the words 'classics' and 'class' derive from the same root; the Latin *classis* comes from the verb *calo*, to summon. A *classis* is a group of people 'summoned together'. It is a word associated with Servius Tullius, one of the early kings of Rome, who was supposed to have conducted the first census. The men in the top six classes were *classici*. By the second century AD, the term *classici* came to be used of the most distinguished authors - the *scriptores classici*.

But the baby has been thrown out with the bathwater. The impulse in the latter half of the 20th century was, instead of broadening access to the study of ancient languages, to strangle it slowly, at least in the state education sector. The result is that Latin and Greek have become more the preserve of independent and public schools, and their inevitable poster-boy Eton-and-Balliol man Boris Johnson. With splendid paradox, the Government does not recognise Latin - the progenitor of a handful of modern European tongues - as a language, as far as the national curriculum is concerned. A quota of just 27 PGCE places is available nationally to would-be Latin teachers each year, and there are a mere eight places for those on graduate on-the-job training schemes.

And along with the insidious identification of the study of classics with a certain social class has

“The classics are regarded as irrelevant to ‘modern Britain’.”

also come a popular notion of the classics as somehow inherently the property of the political right. This is no accident, of course, Johnson himself is a Tory. The classics prodigy Enoch Powell created an infamous identification between classics and the right when he summoned up the shade of Virgil in his 'Rivers of Blood' speech.



Are Latin and Greek only for the posh? **Charlotte Higgins** argues that the study of the ancient world is not the property of the Left or the Right

The study of Latin has, in Catholic countries, been necessarily identified in the past with the rigidities of the Church. When French students took to the barricades in Paris in May 1968, one of the injustices they protested against was the compulsory study of Latin. Even now, the right in Britain are more sympathetic to the claims of the classics than their Labour colleagues. For the post-Blair Labour party, the classics are damned because they stink of privilege and are, worst of all, regarded as irrelevant to 'modern Britain'.

What is so bewildering about this popular notion, however, is how little it reflects the daily practice of the classics by professional scholars. You can find right-wing classicists, of course, but it is miles easier to come across classicists whose work contributes to ideas on the left. You might think of the pioneering work of feminist classicists, which has been important since the birth of the women's movement and beyond (it was Jane Harrison who quoted Terence in support of the suffragists). Meanwhile, research on Greek homosexuality continues to make an important contribution to ideas within the gay rights movement. Numberless ideas from the ancient world - from Sparta to Athens' radical democracy - have been reeled in by the left. Gilbert Murray, perhaps the greatest British classicist and public intellectual, was Liberal, not Conservative in his politics. Today, thoughtful work abounds by scholars, such as Joy Connolly's on Cicero, with its underlying critique of US society under the Republicans.

In the arts world, the arguments about 'elitist' or 'relevant' culture are, thankfully, tired and outmoded. But they haven't always been. When Labour was elected in

1997, the Government poured cash into the arts, but at the same time berated them for elitism and inaccessibility. The policy arguments were beaten out over the course of a decade. First, under former culture secretary Chris Smith, the arts were seen to be contributing to the economy as part

“The arts inspire and delight us, disgust and frighten us, speak to our dreams and nightmares.”

of the 'creative industries'. Then, the justification was all about the arts' instrumental uses - the arts can help in literacy, and healthcare, and make children more aspirational, was the argument. Gordon Brown likes the idea of the arts as knitted into our national life, part of the glue that can hold us together against the divisive forces that threaten to drag us asunder.

But in the end all these arguments about use skirt around the main issue. It had to be acknowledged that the arts are important not just because of the money that they help bring in from foreign tourism, or because singing in the choir helps a class of primary school children's discipline, but because they have some intangible, transformative power that resonates in our very souls. They inspire and delight us, disgust and frighten us, speak to our dreams and nightmares. This kind of personal stuff is hard to articulate, least of all in a political context, but the arts have managed to do it.

A similar task faces classicists who wish to see their subject embraced by politicians. Classicists can always argue about the uses of classics - that, like the arts, their study improves literacy and discipline; or that they help students understand grammar or learn modern languages; or that knowledge of the ancient world is crucial to understanding the institutions and structures that enfold our lives today. All these arguments are important, and should always be part of the arsenal - but they will invite objections. In the end, Latin and ancient Greek are unspoken ancient languages. They are not, in fact, particularly 'useful' in day-to-day life. And why should they be 'useful'? Have we not found that 'useful' people, those busy bankers and financial regulators, have fallen short, somewhat?

The value of the classics, like the value of the arts, is difficult to articulate, verging on the intangible. Their value is about their very remoteness from ordinary life - the fact that they can provide a place where the intellect can range freely over subjects taken more or less in the abstract, rather than snagging on the barbs and hooks of the everyday. Their value is that they offer a playground for the imagination, in which our very disconnectedness from ancient Greece and Rome invites the willing mind to elaborate the gaps and lacunae. Their value is that they are removed from our busy, relevant, modern society and from the forces that conspire to factory-make mini-consumers in the guise of educating our children.

Charlotte Higgins is the chief arts writer of the *Guardian*. Her books are *Latin Love Lessons* and *It's All Greek to Me* (Short Books). Her next book, for Jonathan Cape, will be about searching for Roman Britain.

Not-Sci



Science in the USA

I'm not a huge fan of the Yanks' 'Yes we can' slogans. Similarly, I do not think that praise for Obama by educated thinkers is a better indication of his ultimate worth than the simple passage of time. But the last year has seen him make many wise science decisions, all in the same year that has the UK has repeatedly made me wonder what the UK Government's science advisors actually do.

Obama has appointed the first ever science Nobel laureate, Steven Chu, in cabinet, and the Harvard physicist Professor John Holdren and the MIT biologist Professor Eric Lander, both responsible for exceptional work in their field, as primary advisors. This is paralleled by a UK government with a chief scientific advisor, John Beddington, who, according to a report by MPs, "rather than champion evidence-based science within Government, appears to see his role as defending government policy or, in the case of homeopathy, explaining why there is no clear government policy."

Interestingly, "lack of evidence" is a general theme with us Brits, seen when David Nutt was sacked from a job he wasn't even paid to do due to his evidence-based opinion on cannabis. A move which prompted three out of the six (also unpaid) government science advisors to resign.

Apart from lifting the stem cell funding ban, Obama has also announced increases in funding for science research, \$550m for the National Science Foundation and \$1bn for the National Institute of Health, whilst the UK Government have proposed serious cuts to science research, a move condemned by thousands of scientists and academics, including six Nobel laureates. Is the committee which decided to find homeopathy the same committee which decided to cut funding on evidence-based research?

Over the last few years, the British Government has repeatedly shown through cuts, policies on the NHS, and treatment of evidence and educated scientists that if you want to be valued as a scientist, in politics or otherwise, you should move to the USA.

SITA DINANAUTH



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James Moore General Manager, DBA Tools Division

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VARSLTY

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Application forms are available for download from varsity.co.uk/jobs

The deadline for all May Week positions and the Michaelmas editor is Monday April 27th.

The deadline for Michaelmas section editor applications is Friday May 28th.

If you have any questions, please e-mail the current editors, Emma Mustich & Laurie Tuffrey, at editor@varsity.co.uk

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FRIDAY MARCH 5TH 2010

V2

The Varsity Magazine

FEATURES, ARTS, FASHION & REVIEWS

Childhood Favourites

WE LOOK BACK AT CLASSICS FROM YESTERYEAR

Plus The Zeitgeist Tape p14, Yeasayer p18 and Theatre p26-27

The Zeitgeist Tape

The fortnight's entertainment water-cooler gossip, digested for your pleasure



Remember that 2003 song ‘Your Body is a Wonderland’? It’s been seven years since the proto-‘You’re Beautiful’ assaulted our ears, but John Mayer is still in the news. This time, it’s for a recent *Playboy* interview. For some reason, the Connecticut-born musician is considered to be in the possession of a ‘hood pass’. What does a ‘hood pass’ mean? Well, if you’re John Mayer, it means you can make comments like this: “My dick is sort of like a white supremacist. I’ve got a Benetton heart and a fuckin’ David Duke cock.”

David Duke is the former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Benetton, on the other hand, is the preppy Italian fashion label that uses multi-ethnic models in its advertising. OK, John, we get it. Your penis would like to wear a white bedsheet, but

your heart longs to wear brightly-coloured polos. Mayer then helpfully explains what a ‘hood pass’ is by using a racial slur. It is exactly the racial slur you’re thinking of. Mayer also opines: “Not to say that my struggle is like the collective struggle of black America. But maybe my struggle is similar to one black dude’s.” Which struggle are you referring to here, John? Is it your struggle to be taken seriously as a musician despite your verbal diarrhoea and somewhat flawed interpretation of racial politics?

What’s interesting about the Mayer debacle is how little backlash there’s been. There’s been relatively little criticism from fellow musicians or from fans. At a recent concert Mayer said, “I hate to come off like an asshole. Thank you guys for believing that I am not”. Mayer has

claimed that he was kidding around, which people seem to accept – rapper Questlove from The Roots said he would give Mayer “the benefit of the doubt” and assume “there was a punchline that went awry”.


The Mayer gaffe is typical of our generation. We’ve become so self-deprecating and ‘postmodern’ that every fraught issue is up for grabs: race, gender, religion, sexuality. We’ve evolved beyond the petty judgemental attitudes of our parents – so of course we can call gay people ‘fags’ (Mayer also does this in the interview). Of course we can make jokes about black people! It’s ironic! It’s banter! We’re not racist, we’ve got lots of black friends! Why are you being so serious? Political correctness is sooo overrated and it’s just CENSORSHIP, you can’t tell me what to say or think etc., etc.

Mayer is a good example. In his apology, he adopts the classic “I’m not a racist, I was only trying to make a clever joke” apology stance, as if he’d only messed up the punchline of a knock-knock joke. But you can make a racist comment without signing up to be Grand Wizard. You can also own up to making an immature and racially insensitive comment without trying to pass it off as irony. Or at least acknowledge that it’s the worst kind of irony – it’s irony in the Alanis Morissette sense: offensive and not very ironic at all. There’s always room for intelligent, gross-out humour and pointed irony (see: Sarah Silverman), but casually comparing to your genitalia to a former KKK leader while discussing how black girls “throw” themselves at you isn’t one of them.

Another case in point: Jesse Jackson said at his recent Union speech that Cambridge had to become more racially diverse. Pretty wise words. Cambridge isn’t exactly the pinnacle of multi-culturalism. According to Jackson, you can’t achieve the height of academic achievement without the depth or breadth that comes from knowing people from different backgrounds, racial or otherwise.

As Zeitgeist Tape walked out of the Union, we overheard a white guy say to his black friend, with equal amounts of jokey irony and sincerity: “You’re my depth.” John Mayer would be proud. ZING TSJENG


Full archives of ‘Victoria Beale: Self-Help’ and ‘The Zeitgeist Tape’ are online at varsity.co.uk/features now.



HOT

END OF TERM It's over, thank God.

CAMBRIDGE IN SPACE Engineering grad Nicholas Patrick sets off on second space mission. Thanks for making us feel inadequate, Nick.



GORILLAZ Back with a new album featuring an all-star cast of cameos including Lou Reed.

CHERYL COLE The new People's Princess? Discuss. Now if only she would divorce Ashley.

NIRVANA: THE FILM The man behind the Bob

Dylan biopic 'I'm Not There' is adapting the story of the grunge rock band for film. We are cautiously hopeful...

IPAD FACEBOOK SCAMS "Researchers Wanted - Get An iPad Early

And Keep It! If Apple isn't selling iPads yet, what makes you think that Facebook will give you one?

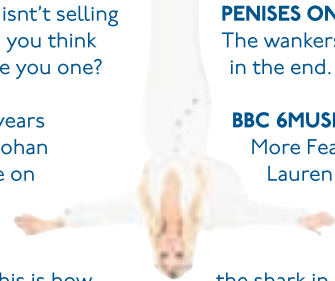
LINDSAY LOHAN Six years on from *Mean Girls*, Lohan announces a UK move on Twitter and poses as Christ on the cover of a fashion magazine. We doubt this is how you engineer a comeback.

PENISES ON CHATROULETTE The wankers will always get you in the end. See Comment, p.8.


BBC 6MUSIC CLOSING DOWN More Fearnie Cotton and less Lauren Laverne? Cheers, BBC.

EXAM TERM Like the shark in *Jaws*, it's coming to get you. God damn it.

NOT



Street Profile



MICHAEL DERRINGER
27, VARSITY BUSINESS MANAGER

Which words do you most overuse?
Very excited.

If you weren't in Cambridge, where would you like to be?
Under the sea.

What is Cambridge to you?
It's a playground.

What's hot?
Bangers and mash.

What's not?
Competition.


Best way to survive life in Cambridge?
Work 24/7.

Who would play you in the film of your life?
Robert De Niro.

What do you dream about?
Television.

Tell us a secret about yourself.
I used to be a choirboy.

And finally, dogs or cats?
Ferrets.



Week 8: Vote for Me

Bruce Springsteen - 'Born To Run'
Head of the drinking society, captain of the hockey team, May Ball production manager, JCR catering officer, chess club champion...what's next on your list of world domination? CUSU President, obviously.

The Flaming Lips - 'Yeah Yeah Yeah Song'
The campaign's heating up: 10,000 flyers have been printed, you've designed some suitably garish Y-shirts and Thom Yorke might even play a gig for you at the Corn Exchange. Success.

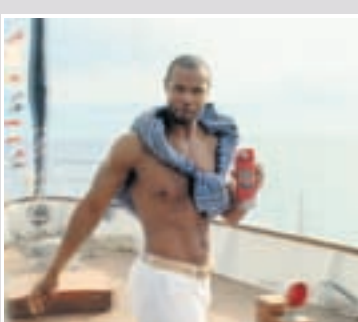
Huey Lewis and the News - 'The Power of Love'
Prowling the streets of Cambridge, you sabotage your competition by drawing moustaches on their posters. Surely a victory is in the bag.

Spandau Ballet - 'Gold'
Hustings at Homerton: "What's your favourite colour?" asks a girl in the front. "That's easy," you reply, "Gold. It's the colour of success."

D:Ream - 'Things Can Only Get Better'
Results are in. Beaten by 80%, you stage a public meltdown in Market Square. "CUSU," you say, "is so overrated. I'm going to Brussels."

OurTube

SEARCH:
i'm+on+a+horse



||

Old Spice stick everything a girl wants into one 30 second advert. As they put it: "we're not saying this body wash will make your man smell into a romantic millionaire jet fighter pilot, but we are insinuating it."

Overheard

"Like, why would you even have St David's Day when you could have, like, St Norwegian day or summat?"

"Coz there's no kings in Norway." (12pm, Robinson)

Look into my eyes...

Nick King meets magician, entertainer and all-round mentalist, **Derren Brown**, to discuss how he does those things he does

From the moment you first meet Derren Brown he exudes a warmth and charisma that commands your attention entirely. This is the man who has been described as the “scariest man in Britain” and as possessing a “witch’s heart”, but when I meet him he is dressed casually in a shirt and purple pullover, sipping liquorice tea. He asks a bit about *Varsity* and I pull out a copy of last week’s issue to show him; “It’s better than Bristol’s,” he announces, impressed, “ours was called *Epigram* and it was rubbish.”

I ask what his overall memories were of university. “I think I was a bit of a dick. I used to wear extraordinarily colourful, gaudy clothes and was horrible – I don’t think I’d have liked me at all. When I started performing it took care of all that: I’m still wearing [looks at colourful jumper he is wearing] but I became much quieter in my ordinary life because all that desire for attention now had a bona fide outlet.” When pressed to define exactly what it is that he does, Brown pauses, “I don’t know what label to put on it other than doing what I enjoy... I do wonder why I do it and what the point of it is. Ultimately I just have to settle with the perfectly good, healthy, and worthwhile reason that entertaining people is a fine end and there doesn’t have to be anything more noble than that. Beyond that, if they enjoy it and it makes them think a little bit about what they believe then that is very satisfying.”

The Events, his recent four-part series on Channel 4 opened with his famous prediction of the National Lottery. He is surprisingly modest about this feat. “It was never an aim for it to be a big publicity stunt; Channel 4 decided to make a big thing about it. The idea of me predicting the National Lottery sounds like a major thing, but it really wasn’t. I was just trying to think of a good idea for the first of a series of four specials which would have appealed and attracted the same people who watch the shows anyway. But Channel 4 said, ‘This has the potential to be huge,’ and really went for it, which is fantastic but slightly daunting.”

Brown has been criticised by some individuals for misleading his audiences about how he has achieved certain effects. He responds to my question about how much these explanations are divulging the truth and how much

they are enhancing the effect, saying, “It is always to enhance the effect; there is only the effect... I’ll explain something if the explanation is at least as entertaining as the trick, I won’t simply explain.”

“Predicting the National Lottery, it was never an aim for it to be a big publicity stunt.”

What about the Friday night show which purported to explain how he had predicted the Lottery? “That was written and conceived months before we knew it was going to be this huge hit and [it was expected that] the people that would be watching it on the Friday would be people who ‘got me’ and knew that I wasn’t really going to stand there and say how it was done. So there was this whole sort of ambiguity and false trails thing of wisdom of crowds and then me saying at the end, ‘well you don’t have to believe that’. That sort of got missed by people who wouldn’t normally watch my show.”

Another side of Brown’s work is his underlying scepticism about unsubstantiated belief, especially with regard to religion. He recalls how his scepticism of his own faith

developed while he was at university, at the same time as forging a passion for magic and hypnotism. When I enquire whether these changes were interrelated, he responds affirmatively: “Yes, definitely. The interest in hypnosis came first and what I got from that was an interest in magic and the general scepticism that comes from that, and I got a general sense of how easily people could be fooled.” Yet Brown is no militant atheist; it is clear he has both a respect for and an interest in the beliefs of others: “I consider myself as an atheist (that I don’t believe) in the same way that I don’t happen to collect stamps and don’t happen to do a number of other things. I don’t have the same vehemence for it [religion] but I don’t consider myself an ‘anti-theist.’” Does he think

there is a role for faith in the world? “There are many different embodiments of faith and some of them are socially repulsive and some are perfectly socially pleasant. I think that what is a very good reason for believing in something is that it might genuinely make somebody happier and they might take a huge amount of comfort from it. My concern is the obvious thing: whether people are hurting or upsetting other people.”

This exemplifies Brown’s entire approach, a balance between “scepticism but at the same time a love of wanting it to be true,” all behind a respectful, friendly, and funny persona.

I ask Brown whether he experienced any reaction to the news he was gay – something he revealed in *The Independent* in 2007, “No, I think it is one of those odd things. I guess most people, myself included, big it up in your mind as this big awful hurdle that at some point you have to deal with and then when you do no one cares.”

Our time is nearly up and Brown is required on stage. He waits for me to wrap up the interview before thanking me and giving me a ticket to see the night’s performance. It is rare for a person to live up to their fans’ expectations when they are met in the flesh; it is even rarer for a person to surpass this expectation. As I leave Brown doing a sound-check on stage, I reflect on the sheer diversity of his character: mentalist, magician, psychologist, rationalist, comic but perhaps most importantly, and most often overlooked,

a genuinely nice man trying to give people a good time.



Derren Brown: not an impressive juggler

Fun-da-mentalist

The Best of Brown

Russian Roulette Live (2003)

Brown’s first brush with controversy came when he picked out one man in 12,000 to load a single bullet into a six-chamber hand gun. The same man was also the only witness to Brown’s stunt.

Seance (2004)

Taking 12 people to a hall in London, Brown ‘contacted’ the spirit of a woman who killed herself in a suicide pact. While the show didn’t go out live, it did receive 700 complaints when it aired and numerous calls mostly from viewers who felt “something unusual”.

Messiah (2005)

In an attempt to question the power of suggestion, Brown successfully tried to convince a Christian evangelist, an alien abductee, a psychic, a New Age theorist and a medium that he was a practitioner in their field. He managed to convince all five, receiving endorsements from four.

The Gathering (2005)

Brown demonstrated his psychic ‘mind-reading’ powers through a series of stunts, including correctly predicting a London taxi driver’s route to a randomly-picked location and hypnotising the audience to forget the night’s events for half an hour after the show.

The Heist (2006)

Brown convinced a group of selected participants to hold up (with a toy gun) and rob a security van using subliminal messaging. He stated that this was one of his proudest moments.

The System (2008)

The ‘system’ was a method of guaranteeing a winner in a horse-race, which Brown would then use to win big money for the show’s participant. In the end, no real ‘system’ was revealed, with Brown’s process of elimination theory made after spending nine hours flipping a coin to get heads ten times in a row.



Olivia wears dress: model's own, necklace: 1930s vintage, hairband and tights: stylist's own. Eve wears dress, necklace: Topshop, lace top: Topshop Unique, boots & hairpin: model's own. Victoria wears dress: Topshop, sunglasses: Dior, shoes: model's own. Helena wears dress: model's own, tulle skirt (just seen): H&M, tights: Topshop, sunglasses: Rayban. PHOTOGRAPHY: Joe Pitt-Rashid

THE & ENGLISH SUMMER





Clap Your Hands Say Yea

Brooklyn's finest **Yeasayer** take time out from their UK tour to speak to **Peter Morelli** about their "Bubblegum Tones That Really, Really Hit Your Cerebellum Hard"

There probably could not have been higher critical expectations for Brooklyn band Yeasayer's follow-up to their debut record *All Hour Cymbals*. Right from the band's inception they garnered attention for coming at music in a slightly different way from the rest of the crowd. There's always an electronic swoop, a random sonic quirk, Eastern-style scale or just sick musicianship to help them overleap the standard indie sound. So their new release *Odd Blood*, out now on Mute records, was expected to be a wild progression, a flight further into the sonic empyrean. It was to find a place of its own, somewhere out there in the indie stratosphere. In many ways *Odd Blood* achieves that high promise, although it still feels like the something great in Yeasayer which so many sense did not emerge as fully formed on the new release as was hoped. Catching up with Yeasayer member Ira Wolf Tuton just as they set out on their UK tour, I hoped to get some answers as to how the new release, with its characteristic strengths and surprise weaknesses, came about.

After just a few minutes of discussion with Ira it became evident that experimentation had indeed played a large part in the writing and recording of *Odd Blood*: "With the

production we were looking for those bubblegum tones that really, really hit your cerebellum hard. That's part of our production process: labouring over and over and trying to figure out what is a new interesting tone for a certain part and not just relying on an electric guitar." Wondering whether this experimentation was a more personal project of artistic exploration or a search for sounds that would appease the critics, I

asked Ira if he felt that Yeasayer needed to prove themselves to their listeners. The answer came hard and fast: "No. We need to prove ourselves to ourselves. We've been fortunate enough to develop a fan base that supports us and keeps us going. Hopefully that'll give us a chance to write and produce more projects and explore different parts of our brains. If people like [the music] then that's great because it helps us

to be able to do it for a living and I don't want to do anything else." If this answer came a little too hard and fast – suggesting that having to prove themselves is something Yeasayer has indeed thought about – negotiating the demands of the public and the critics isn't all the band has been thinking about. Ira spoke at length about how we live in a "time in human history when media and technologies are developing at a

pace that we as humans almost can't even comprehend". Does Yeasayer channel this modern condition in their music? "Definitely. I think it would be inevitable. We're using the most modern recording technologies. We probably wouldn't be able to do what we do if we didn't have them; that's the system that we've learned our craft under. We're not trying to be retroist, we're trying to be as contemporary as possible and reflect the realities of our time."

That's when *Odd Blood* starts to make sense: it's a record written and recorded by three musicians supremely committed to the artistic project of reflecting the modern condition, searching out new sounds, writing and creating music for now. (Ira even spoke of making his artistic ideal the music of the future, though he was quick to add "but that's a lofty goal".) Given this experimental project and their creative formula it really is no surprise that *Odd Blood* turned out the way it did, yielding some striking new music, along with some, well, odd quirks. Whatever you think about the new record, Yeasayer's artistic conviction, healthy obsession with making it new and unconcern for the critics suggests that they remain a band to be watched, and that *Odd Blood* is ultimately the positive second step in what is going to be an exciting career.



Yeasayer: chewing bubblegum and kicking ass

Comedy, controversy and more comedy

Ed Kiely meets **Stewart Lee**, the notoriously uncompromising comedian behind 'Jerry Springer – The Opera'

When I ask him about his status as an oft-cited inspiration for comedians, Stewart Lee is mystified. "I don't understand it. My niece showed me in Russell Brand's book where he cites me as an influence." The cynicism towards critical plaudits is genuine. On his publicity, alongside quotes attesting to the genius of his stand-up (Gervais describes him as "the funniest, most cliché-free comedian on the circuit") he also lists his worst reviews (among them: "The worst stand-up I have ever seen... smug and contemptible" – *Chortle*). Lee catalogues these reviews not as an act of defeatism, however, but out of a desire for something better.

Idealism permeates his most current tour show, *If You Prefer a Milder Comedian, Please Ask for One*. Most significant among the targets of his satire is *Top Gear*. In an unflinching routine, Lee wishes that Richard Hammond's crash had been fatal before describing the imagined death in some detail, in order to ridicule the outrageous statements made by *Top Gear* hosts (Jeremy Clarkson having described

Gordon Brown as a "one-eyed Scottish idiot"). On the night that I see it, the Suffolk audience largely doesn't seem to appreciate the irony. Lee is unapologetic. "Most people get behind it eventually. It's obvious what it means if you listen." Why is *Top Gear* so popular? "I think fearful middle Englanders feel comforted by *Top Gear*'s dismissal of supposedly politically

"Jerry Springer – The Opera' was a worthwhile piece of art with a point and a meaning"

correct concerns. Clarkson works this market very well."

Unlike many comedians, Lee is a proud supporter of political correctness. He doesn't completely dismiss the shock comedy of Frankie Boyle and Jimmy Carr – "I'm a bit bored of it now. They are both technically very good writers though" – so much as react against their

one-liner style: "People say I should Twitter, and write jokes of less than 140 characters, so my new aim is to write no joke less than 140 minutes." This is a fair reflection of Lee's unique delivery – when the Richard Hammond routine became the target of opprobrium for the *Mail on Sunday*, the article noted with some distaste that "Lee spends 20 minutes telling audiences about his dislike of Hammond in his show."

Controversy is nothing new to him. Lee is most famous as the co-writer of provocative *Jerry Springer – The Opera*. However, when I ask what distinguishes this work from the Jonathan Ross debacle, he is succinct: "*Jerry Springer – The Opera* was a worthwhile piece of art with a point and a meaning. Brand/Ross was two over-excited men making a mistake." Lee is emphatic that comedy is underappreciated as an art form: "In most publicly funded arts centres up and down the country, [between] tribute acts and hypnotists, comedians are the only people taking actual original art to the masses." He is overwhelmingly committed to live stand-up as a form, rather than

on television. "TV will get worse. Stand-up will get better." Can a comedian move into the mainstream and retain critical bite? "Not really. You can't be a gamekeeper and a pheasant."

He remains uncompromising in both style and substance. While this hasn't been without its penalties – he has noted in the past that he lost most of the proceeds from *Jerry Springer* as a result of staging it unaltered – he could never be accused of selling out. His last tour chronicled his difficulties with the BBC as they first commissioned, then dropped his television series (though *Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle* was eventually broadcast last year, and has just been recommissioned). I ask if he feels vindicated in his unwillingness to compromise his vision and he replies: "Yes. It would have worked even better if we'd done it even more like what I wanted. But they



Off with his head

were all very brave and tolerant." You get the impression that Lee is happy where he is.

When we were very young

As exam term looms Varsity writers take a break from their books to revisit childhood friends



Daddy-Long-Legs

Jean Webster

Admittedly, I first read *Daddy-Long-Legs* at the age of 18, but that's why I'm convinced it's so wonderful. This 1912 novel about orphan Jerusha "Judy" Abbott's years in college at the expense of an anonymous benefactor is heart-warming enough to revive the inner child of even the most disillusioned university student. Our spirited heroine has more charm than a Mark Twain character, the illustrations all the deliciousness of stick-figure simplicity, the style the ease that comes with epistolary excellence. This is a children's book for adults, a hot water bottle for the soul. RACHEL PEAT

The Magician's Nephew

C. S. Lewis

Before there was the Wardrobe, there was the Wood Between the Worlds. Chronologically first, C. S. Lewis' oft-overlooked adventure lays the foundations for all that Narnia business to come. Quaintly-named Londoners Digory and Polly journey through a succession of suburban attics to an inter-dimensional forest, finally chancing upon Narnia in its dreamy, allegorical Genesis. We see the foundations of the wardrobe, the first dealings with Lewis' fictional world (courtesy of creepy inventor Uncle Andrew), and, best of all, arch-villainess Jadis makes her fiery debut, unhinged and awe-inspiring as she tears apart London streets. *The Magician's Nephew* is a Boy's Own adventure with a philosophical subtext, subtler and stranger than any of the Prince Caspian crusades. ROISIN KIBERD

Just William

Richmal Crompton

The *Just William* series of books is set in middle class Britain, around World War II, and focuses on the antics of 11-year-old William Brown. Each chapter is a new prank/ money-making scheme/ game/ a hilarious misinterpretation of something an adult has said, which inevitably ends with irate grown-ups and often a shilling or two in William's pocket. These books are populated by unforgettably colourful characters and they send up middle class Britain wonderfully through the child-like, but by no means innocent, perspective of William. These were the books that I loved to have read to me as a child and still enjoy reading now. PLOY RADFORD



Alice In Wonderland

Lewis Carroll

When I was younger, I believed I was Alice. Albeit fanatical, who else would have her tattooed on them? I could comprehend her startled expressions when falling down the rabbit hole, into a schizophrenic mad universe where nothing made sense. I understood how distressed she must have been when confronted with mind meddling rhymes and arrogant characters. After all, I did go to school where the characters were cruel pupils and I couldn't understand the equations. Who could not fall for the first nonsensical children's classic? With elements of logic problems, puns and escapism, it's a must for every generation. JESS DOLBY



Eloise

Kay Thompson

For the Plaza's most famous six-year-old resident, Eloise, getting bored was simply never allowed. Whether in Paris, Moscow or New York, this precocious young lady, who "Queen Victoria would have seen as an equal", and "Henry James would have wanted to study" always knew how to hold her own. With her comrades Weeny, Skibadee and Nanny, she imparted "rawther" useful pearls of wisdom to little girls worldwide. Naughtiness was her currency for succeeding in life, and anything could be achieved when a Kleenex box was used as a hat. Not yet pretty, but already a person, Eloise reigns as my literary heroine, even today. LARA PRENDERGAST

The Twits

Roald Dahl

The *Twits* always reminded me of my parents. Not because of the humorous domestic abuse I hasten to add, but rather, having re-read Roald Dahl's mischievous tale so often, the Twits felt almost like close relatives. This wasn't the only reason we related, though. As a fairly naughty child, I found their antics and impish one-upmanship almost inspirational. Like few other children's books, *The Twits* purposefully and brilliantly subverts the tiresome warning of the parent: 'Don't give them ideas'. I loved, and often recreated, the worm spaghetti and the shrinking stick, and it became my handbook to getting my own back on annoying parents. RHYS JONES



The Faraway Tree

Enid Blyton

A tree that, if you climb it, leads to a magical world? I'm sure most Cambridge students wouldn't mind one of those. Enid Blyton's *The Faraway Tree* was a staple of my childhood because it had EVERYTHING. Fairies, men with saucepans on their heads, pop cakes filled with honey and the most incredible slide ever created – the slippery slip. And of course there was the thrill of wondering whether the world at the top would let you wish for a special birthday surprise, or produce a slap-happy school teacher... The ultimate escapism, my imagination wouldn't have been the same without it. HETTA HOWES

The Hungry Caterpillar

Eric Carle

Mention three words to almost anybody, and almost immediately their eyes will mist over with nostalgia: *The Hungry Caterpillar*. The children's picture book with a pleasingly simple narrative and lush illustrations was written by Eric Carle and published in 1969. It has to date sold 30 million copies, which isn't bad for a book with only 224 words and acts essentially as an inventory of everything a brightly-coloured caterpillar munches through before it becomes a butterfly (it begins to feel a little queasy by the time it hits the salami and the cupcake). Since its publication, the caterpillar protagonist has featured on everything from the Google header to the BBC Big Read, a 2003 poll to find out Britain's most beloved books. It placed 199 – not bad for a picture book recommended for ages two and above. ZING TSJENG

Over the Edge

Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell, the author and illustrator behind the Edge Chronicles, talk to Laura Freeman about hanging out in wardrobes and why girls don't read their books

Sending a journalist to interview her childhood hero can make for biased copy. Faced with an idol the spirit of journalistic enquiry crumbles. The normally incisive reporter finds himself asking: "So, were you always this great?" while the last ten minutes of tape record the star-struck journalist producing various first editions, album covers, and paper napkins for signing.

Waiting for Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell, the author-illustrator team behind the hugely successful series of children's books *The Edge Chronicles*, I try to keep this in mind, but when Stewart rings to say that they will be late I carefully save his number. Not because I plan to call him but just because... he's my hero.

I was nine when *Beyond the Deepwoods* was published. The tenth and final instalment, *The Immortals* came out last year. I have invested thirteen years of my life in the Edge. So, when it comes to interviewing Stewart and Riddell, I fall foul of every rule I've set. I produce a first edition Deepwoods for signing, I tell Riddell that I've bought four of his drawings, I ask which their favourite book is only as an opportunity to launch into a eulogy of mine. Mercifully they are used to this sort of thing. They have just come from a signing at The Leys School and are practised at dealing with nine-year-old fans.

The Edge, like *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, started with a map. A map of a promontory, a great flint of a world jutting out over an abyss. A world populated by extraordinary flora and fauna: bander-bears, wigwigs, wood trolls,

hammelhorns and *The Edge's* own he-who-must-not-be-named, the gloamglozer. All are drawn with taxonomic precision by Riddell. For writer Stewart, Riddell's Moleskine sketchbooks "are almost like natural history books. It's as if I'm looking at something that already exists."

The Edge's ancestors are Tolkien, Narnia and Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast. They are both devotees of Peake, "In *The Edge Chronicles*, there's more than a dollop of that sensibility, that visual fantasy. My favourite review ever was 'This is Gormenghast for kids'." On Tolkien they are divided; Riddell is a fan, Stewart less so. In the case of Narnia, their allegiances are reversed. "I know you loved it, your whole wardrobe business," Riddell reminds Stewart, "that thing of going to it and saying: 'please let there be a world on the other side'. Most of your childhood was spent in some sort of cupboard or another..." Stewart, who has a drier sense of humour than the effusive Riddell recalls "That's the tragedy of childhood: always being disappointed by your own wardrobe."

As for Riddell, he works in the great tradition of black-and-white illustrators: Tenniel, Rackham, Heath Robinson, Beardsley, E. H. Shepherd, Searle.

Looking further back, Riddell cites Dürer,



Rembrandt and Goya as influences. Not to be outdone, Stewart mentions that he likes the Chapman Brothers.

Like couples who have long been married, Stewart and Riddell have a joint memory bank. They finish sentences, defer on facts, and know what the other will have to drink. They met eighteen years ago, at the nursery school gates. "Our sons were two." They were introduced by presumptuous mutual friends who said to their wives, "Your husbands do the same sort of thing. Why don't they get together?"

Stewart invited Riddell to breakfast. "Was it breakfast?" "At first, yeah..." "I thought it was a morning coffee or something..." "And I left a sprinkling of books out..." "He had one

installments on their blog *Weird New Worlds*. "Basically it's therapy," Riddell confesses, "treating our withdrawal symptoms. We can't just go cold turkey." Now they are working on a series of books about "pioneer America with dragons." There is strictly no map.

The last fifteen years have been a golden age of children's literature: Harry Potter, Northern Lights, Lemony Snickett, *The Edge*. I ask who they think will last the course. "Pullman will be read in 100 years time, I think perhaps Harry Potter won't. It is too much of its time. A bit like Enid Blyton. Rowling will be seen as this extraordinary phenomenon, but people will see her influences more clearly. Someone like Philip Pullman is an original." And as for *The Edge*? Riddell weighs in: "I'd like to think that as far as *The Edge* is concerned, it will be a little footnote and people will say 'What were they doing?'"

Publishers thought that *The Edge* could not be done. Books for the over sevens just weren't illustrated, and Stewart and Riddell wanted to produce illustrated books for readers aged seven to twelve. The gamble paid off. The books sell in the US, Germany, Japan, Portugal, Brazil, Serbia, Montenegro, Lithuania. "In terms of translation rights," Stewart wryly observes, "the breakup of Eastern Europe was extremely good for us." Their publishers also said that the series would never appeal to girls. "We are so glad to have met you," Stewart says as they leave, "so glad you are a girl." And, as I watch them walk off into the sunset, clutching my Deepwoods, I do feel like a girl, aged about nine. That's the power of great children's literature – you never really outgrow it.

"That's the tragedy of childhood: always being disappointed by your own wardrobe."

on every stair. What a big head." Then they ran into each other at a publishing party in London. Riddell recalls the meeting: "Our eyes met across a crowded room. It was one of those moments..." "I had met various illustrators, but not mentioning any names, they weren't any good, and then I met Chris..." "Well, the point is: we met each other." They took the train back to Brighton together and eighteen years, and two million UK copies later, here they are. They now live on the same street.

After nearly two decades of *The Edge*, which ended with a cliff-hanger - literally, our heroes are dropped off the edge into the unknown - they are struggling to let go. The adventure continues in weekly chapter



My friend Michael

Over a cup of tea, celebrated children's author **Michael Morpurgo** tells **Anna Trench** about nurturing reading and the importance of mucky feet

There's always a fear attached to meeting your heroes, but when that hero is one from childhood, the fear is amplified. For, as melodramatic as it may sound, if they don't add up to the conception you had, if they falter anywhere in your romantic notion, then your whole childhood is in jeopardy, is in danger of becoming a make-believe sham. When you read books as a child, there is no cynical critical shield. You jump wholeheartedly into your favourite author's world, you trust them completely in the places they take you to and the people and creatures you meet there.

So it was with trepidation that I met the

“Here was a man who had made me believe I could befriend foxes and lions, unearth unicorns and save whales, run off to war to win back my beloved horse.”

children's author Michael Morpurgo for tea. Here was a man who had made me believe I could befriend foxes and lions, unearth unicorns and save whales, run off to war to win back my beloved horse. But with two thirds of the English Tripos behind me, and the sentiment-busting faculties of Prac Crit drummed in, I wondered how I could relate to the man whose adventures I submerged myself at the age of eight.

Morpurgo looks, in the best possible way, like a rosy-cheeked, slightly scruffy, gentleman farmer. He is one of the nicest and most sincere men I have ever met. Perhaps unsurprisingly, for an author who has written over a hundred books, he seems incapable of giving an answer that doesn't involve a story. And so I learn, during the course of the interview, about his childhood spent birds-nesting in the 100-acre wood of his prep school, the time he and his friends made a make-shift chapel in the rhododendron bushes and became blood brothers in thrall to a boy who believed he was Jesus (later fictionalized in *The War of Jenkin's Ear*), his short-lived foray into the army, the dislike of reading that made him turn to the comic books his step-father banned and his discovery as a teacher in a classroom of thirty disinterested kids that story-telling might just be the trick to capturing their attention.

Most recently, it is Morpurgo's story of a boy and his horse that has captured the country's attention, thanks to the National Theatre's production of *War Horse*. The tale, of a farm boy and his horse, torn apart and reunited too late by war, sets the whole theatre crying. Any pretence an audience member might have of critical distance is

shattered. Part of this is due to the beautiful rendering by the puppeteers of the movements of the horses. But the story itself is one that has all the classic markings of a tear-jerker: war, animals, love, death, unlikely friendship, family conflict. Yet the book and the play somehow escape saccharine sentimentality. There is often, especially in children's literature, confusion between emotion and sentiment, but disentangling the one from the other is a near impossible task. “You can still have enormous emotional investment in the suffering of people in a story,” Morpurgo explains, “without it being sentimental. But I think the problem is, you can only have that if it is firmly rooted in a reality which we all respect and understand.” Hence Morpurgo's bank of stories: each book he has written stems from a landscape or an experience he has known and which he makes us believe we can know too.

The majority of Morpurgo's stories are set in the countryside. It's a countryside that many of the children who read his books won't have known. “Most grown up people and children don't look at the birds flying past the window, they only notice them when they're dead in the road. Most people haven't got a clue about when the swallows come. So when they find they have got a connection – and I found it through Ted Hughes' poetry – you find this connection to other animals and creatures, its cemented. You never forget it once its there because you feel you're part of this bigger plan.”

His faith in the importance of a connection to nature led Morpurgo and his wife to set up Farms for City Children in 1976. The idea was to set up a farm where inner-city school children could escape to for a week. “We wanted to create a situation where kids, many of whom had had a real poverty of life experience, could be extended emotionally,

“Morpurgo's books are full of children connecting with others, but also of suffering alone.”

physically, intellectually, outside their home, and then maybe, just maybe, they could change attitudes towards their work and towards each other.” The children work with farmers mucking out the dairies, milking cows and even helping sheep give birth. “The result was that by the end of their week they came back with their heads full. They'd experienced great discomfort; they'd seen lambs die. They'd been to places they'd never thought they'd go to. In that sense it was like a great book, an adventure.”

This sincere belief in changing the experiences of children through concrete action was also the impetus behind Morpurgo's creation of the Children's Laureate with Ted Hughes in 1999. The award has done

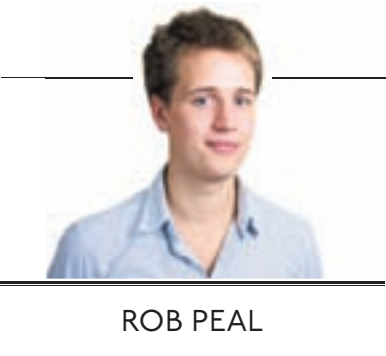
much to celebrate the range of children's literature and bring it to a wider audience.

“But what's really sad is that in spite of this appeal we still have about 3 million children who don't read. All that's happening is that people who are reading are reading more. We're not actually breaking through.” The breaking through is only done through “story-telling by mums and dads”. Too often this isn't compensated for in schools. And when children miss out on that, “it's like missing out on mother's milk – you don't get the intellectual and emotional nutrition when you're very young.” The problem is that this absence is rarely compensated for in the classroom. Rather than making story-telling a crucial part of early education, British schools focus on testing and “unless you get them in the first place enjoying the stories they're not going to bother with learning the rest, the punctuation and spelling and so forth.”

“What reading makes you do,” says Morpurgo, “whether you like it or not, is empathise. You are being widened and deepened and hurt.” Morpurgo's books are full of children connecting with others, but also of suffering alone. “Like most people I've found myself very isolated from others around me, but books can lessen that isolation,” he says. “You think ‘gosh, that's just how I feel.’ You never thought someone else could feel like that. It's rather simplistic, but it's true.” It's that unapologetic conviction in the power of emotional involvement that carries through Morpurgo's work. It's a fine line between emotion and sentiment, but Michael Morpurgo's safe.

Michael Morpurgo is currently spearheading The Wicked Young Writers Award, seeking young writers between five and twenty-five years old. The final date for entries is the July 31st 2010. Download an application form at www.wickedyoungwriters.com





Arts Comment

ROB PEAL

A new language used to discuss the arts has become entrenched in contemporary Britain. ‘Art-Bollocks’ can be heard on Radio Four, read in the Sunday Supplements, and even witnessed in Cambridge lecture rooms. Alongside the pretentious post-modern jargon, the emphatic hand gestures and the earnest smile, speakers of this language employ an extremely annoying array of ‘verbal ticks’. These commonly used phrases seem to serve a very particular purpose: disguising the fact that many people making grandiose claims about the arts have no idea what they are talking about.

Such verbal ticks are designed to cover spurious statements with a cloak of profundity, so that mushy half-baked ideas can be expressed with a false confidence. They deceive the listener by making the mundane and meaningless seem authoritative, and are so prevalent that once you recognise them, you will not be able to stop hearing them. So, here are

‘Verbal ticks’ used by the art world betray a trade defined by vagueness

a few examples of ‘Art-Bollocks’, habitually spoken.

‘Kind of like a...’: Commonly used to introduce a fanciful comparison. To claim something is ‘like a’ would be to actually believe in the opinion you are about to offer, but ‘kind of like a’ removes all necessity to do so. E.g. “The thing about 9/11 is that it’s kind of like an artwork in its own right.” (Damien Hirst in an interview with BBC, September 10th, 2002).

‘Almost as if’: An endlessly used phrase used to permit a nonsensical claim. By establishing a basis of imprecision, it escapes any responsibility that the following statement should be defensible. E.g. “... which in construction reflects the surrounding architecture – almost as if the interior space of the Turbine Hall has been turned inside out.” (Blurb from the Tate Modern about the new installation by Mirosław Balka, 2009).

‘For me’: Have you ever noticed how often people begin an opinion about the arts by defining it in

relation to themselves? By doing so, the speaker immunises themselves by making any question of such an opinion an affront upon their own right to hold it. E.g. “For me, the most powerful effect of The Upper Room is its absolute sincerity” (Ekow Eshun, artistic director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, *The Independent*, 2010).

‘The List’: More of a technique than a ‘verbal tick’, listing allows the speaker to bedazzle listeners into submission with an array of increasingly abstract notions, without ever having to suffer the inconvenience of explaining or justifying them. E.g. “The tent is womb, home, exile, intimacy, loneliness done out in nylon.” (Description of Tracey Emin’s *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-95*, Tate Magazine, 2002)

The term ‘Art-Bollocks’ was coined



by Brian Asbee with an article entitled *A Beginner’s Guide to Art Bollocks and How to Be a Critic*. In the years since, this language of feeble mindedness has proliferated. Perhaps the language only reflects the subject it has been created to describe.

If this is the case, we are faced with an enormous case of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*: empty, thoughtless artwork is being produced, and a language of vagueness is being developed to cover this up.

The masterful exponent of simple English usage, George Orwell, attacked a similar trend in political language during the mid-40s. He pointed out the dangerous implications of bad language: by stupefying common thought bad language makes a population open to tyranny. We are now living under the tyranny of a cultural establishment which has made a virtue of vagueness and imprecision through the development of a language which gives the appearance of solidity to pure wind.

Classics Revisited



Vladimir Nabokov *Lolita*

Published today, *Lolita* would surely induce the same sensationalist headlines that labelled it “sheer unrestrained pornography” fifty years ago. But despite the novel’s immoral content, plot remains secondary to character. Crackling with Nabokov’s technical genius, Humbert Humbert’s imaginative narration picks apart society’s failings whilst blithely ignoring his own vulgarity. Nabokov uses Humbert’s relationship with Lolita to illuminate the selfishness of a society where we insist on our own satisfaction first without considering the effect on the outside world. This loathsome stance set in a loathsome plot is only the more shocking for its continued relevance. JAMES VINCENT

FOOD & DRINK

Happy Multi-Deity Easter

With Easter looming, *Varsity’s* spring chicken **Rosie Corner** prepares a meal for all demoninations.

Forget Christmas, the real food-lover’s holiday is Easter: pancakes, Simnel cake, hot-cross buns, enough chocolate to cause a cardiac arrest, spring greens, the first of the season’s artichokes. After a winter of austerity, the scent of spring is in the air and while the lambs are fattening up it’s time for the feasting to begin.

Faced with the task of feeding the cast and crew of the Pembroke Players’ Quality Street, I deduced that celebrating the food of only one springtime festival would be insufficient, so instead I opted for the big five: Easter, Eostre, Purim, Holi and the Japanese Cherry Blossom festival. After failing to find some free council-owned cherry blossom I decided on a pink theme for my Japan-inspired treats: pink-tinged strawberry meringues. After beating three

egg whites for 45 minutes I folded in six tablespoons of caster sugar and a tablespoon of mashed strawberry pulp before placing them on baking parchment for 1 hour at 120°C. Providence decreed however that my punishment for using strawberries out of season would be 24 meringues stuck unflinchingly to their baking parchment. The other recipes proved less prone to disaster: for Easter, the Christian festival of rebirth and redemption (and inspiration for that finest of films, the 1970s version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*) I boiled eight eggs in water and red food colouring for 15 minutes until suitably sanguine. Red is a perennially lucky colour,

but I’m sure addition of green, blue or purple food colouring would have an equally pleasing effect. For Purim, the Jewish festival celebrating the triumph of Esther over Haman, I made little kreplach: mince and onion pastries in a triangular shape to remind us of Haman’s tri-cornered hat. Lovely, but definitely in need ketchup. Interestingly enough it’s very difficult to find kosher ketchup, despite the fact that the most famous ketchup brand in the world, Heinz, was founded by a Jewish family.

Holi was a tricky one. Most of the snacks for this festival require a lot of ghee, 17 different spices and deep frying, so instead I plumped for the traditional drink Thandi, a milk, almond, rosewater and fennel seed transfusion which is delicious but should under no circumstances be added to your tea by mistake.

The pièce de resistance was without doubt the Wicker Man Pizza of Eostre. Inspired by the film, this bonded-figure pizza, strikingly reminiscent of the Prague golem, oozed cherry tomatoes and mozzarella and, for only a few pounds, fed a hungry clan of eight. Happy springtime to you, food lovers of all denominations!

Menu



Wicker Man Pizza and Spring Vegetables in White Wine

For the pizza:
3 sachets of Sainsbury’s pizza dough mix
1 tin of Chair de Tomates and 2 bags of cherry tomatoes
1 bag of grated mozzarella
1 punnet of mushrooms, sliced
1 packet of fresh basil, shredded

Mix the dough with reference to the packet instructions and, on a floured surface, shape 2/3 of the dough into the man shape and lay on a lined baking sheet. Paint with the tomato sauce and layer on the filling. When it can take no more, form long strips of ‘wicker’ out of your dough and set about constructing your implement of torture. Once suitably grotesque looking, paint the exposed dough with some beaten egg and place in an oven at 200°C for around 40 minutes.

For the vegetables:
3 courgettes, halved lengthways and cross ways
½ a bag of frozen peas, 2 bundles of asparagus and 1 little gem lettuce
1 litre of chicken stock
200ml of cheap and fruity white wine and 6 tablespoons of olive oil

Prepare the veg and wack it in a pan with the stock, wine and half the olive oil. Cook for about 20 minutes, adding a little pepper to taste, until the kitchen turns green. Add the lettuce and cook for another 5 minutes. Remove the veg with a slotted spoon and boil down the stock mixture until it reduces by half. Beat in the remaining olive oil and drench the veg. Suitably pagan-tastic.

Varsity

Listings

Pick of the Week

Soundcheck

FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE, THURSDAY 11TH, 21.00 (£6 ADV./£7 ON THE DOOR)

Fitz's end-of-term extravaganza promises to be a cracker, with DJ sets from Londoners Queens of Noize and Flash Louis. In the acoustic room, band of the moment The Ellafunks will be supplying some eminently- danceable covers of classics. With drinks at budget-friendly prices, what better way to celebrate Lent Term being over? Tip: stock up on glowsticks for the UV arena.



Film

Alice in Wonderland

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE DAILY 11:00 13:20 (EXCEPT SUN) 15:40 18:00 20:30. ALSO FRI AND SAT 23:00

Pick of the week Film Tim Burton is back with his gothically whimsical take on the Carroll classic. Johnny Depp does a rip off of his own Willy Wonka character as the Mad Hatter, and newcomer Mia Wasikowska plays a sexed-up Alice.



The crazies

VUE CINEMAS DAILY 12:00 14:20 16:50 19:10 21:30 (EXCEPT SAT SUN 16:40 19:00 21:20). FRI SAT WED 23:40

Standard horror film re-make that manages to be fairly watchable, with a soundtrack provided by Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash.

The Violin

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, FRIDAY MARCH 5TH, 13:00

Mexican film about a rebellious violinist that won its principal actor acclaim at Cannes. Elegant and feisty.

Micmacs

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE DAILY 16:30 21:15 (EXCEPT SUN 16:00 20:45 TUES 14:00 21:15) ALSO MON 11:00

French comedy drama about a group of lovable circus freaks who take on rogue arms dealers with trickery, acrobatics and ingenuity. Avoid.

Exit Through the Gift Shop

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE DAILY 17:00 (EXCEPT FRI 17:15 TUE 16:30) 21:30 (EXCEPT TUE 21:00). ALSO MON THU 12:15 AND TUE 11:30

Quirky documentary about the elusive artist Banksy, narrated by a chipper Rhys Ifans. Attempts to catch the anonymous artist on film.

The Last Station

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE DAILY, 18:45 (EXCEPT SUN 18:15)

Continuing Tolstoy-based wankery starring a bundle of pouting cinema greats.



Music & Nightlife

Friday March 5th

CCMS Recitals: Ralph Vaughan Williams' 'Songs of Travel' and Hugo Wolf's 'Harfenspieler'

CHRIST'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, 20.00 (FREE)

Christ's College Music Society Recitals present John Barber (baritone) and Edwin Hillier (baritone) accompanied by Tom Smith. For some quintessentially British wanderlust and Austrian nostalgia, pull up a pew.

Saturday March 6th

CUCO: Beethoven, Chopin, Ravel

WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL, 20.00-22.30 (£3/10/14)

Pick of the week Music

Conducted by Kenneth Woods, with Mateusz Borowiak at the piano, this hefty programme framed by Beethoven is lightened by Ravel's Tombeau de Couperin and Chopin's rousing Piano Concerto no.1.

Sunday March 7th

Clare Jazz: The Ellafunks and The Mouse Outfit

CLARE CELLARS, 21.00-00.00

The Ellafunks (seven guys, one girl called Ella) take on their first Clare Jazz gig, and are apparently guaranteed to get you up on your feet and dancing away. They are followed by The Mouse Outfit, a hip-hop group from Manchester, recently featured on the BBC's Introducing Weekender 2010 at Maida Vale studios.

Thursday March 11th

SCA Battle of the Bands:

SOUL TREE, 21.00 (£5/6)

Hosted by local STAR 107 radio, this battle between five local bands - The Joker and The Thief, We All Stare at the Moon, Wild Hope, KTP and Wolf Cub - promises to be bass-heavy and sweat soaked. Plus, you'll be helping to raise funds for the SCA.

Blueprint

FITZPATRICK HALL, QUEENS' COLLEGE, 23.00 (£6.50/8.50)

Following their legendary ADC gig, Blueprint return: bigger, better, back.



The Footlights Spring Revue

ADC THEATRE, FRI-SAT 19.45 (£7/9)

Pick of the week Theatre

Obscure comedy group put on minor Lent term show. If you haven't got a ticket, you'd better go and sleep with someone who does.

No Magic

ADC THEATRE, FRI-SAT 23.00 (£4/6)

Roses are red, violets are blue, I'm schizophrenic and so am I.

The Last Five Years

FITZPATRICK HALL, QUEENS' COLLEGE, FRI-SAT 19.45 (£5/7)

Marital breakdown to music.

Skylight

CORPUS PLAYROOM, FRI-SAT 19.00 (£5/6)

One of the finest plays of the 1990s kicks off with the arrival of an ex-lover bearing whisky. Tonight's going to be a tough night.

Cherry & Blossom: The Girls Can't Help It!

CORPUS PLAYROOM, FRI-SAT 21.30 (£5/6)

Whirl-wind tour of the jazz century, from flappers to sixties swingers, via garters, thighs, and a lot of student drool.

Boat

HOMERTON ORCHARD, SAT-TUE 20.00

Physical theatre and dance amongst the orchard trees. Chilly.

Julius Caesar

FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE AUDITORIUM, MON-TUE 19.00 (£4/6)

Replace the conventional toga for the business suit. Think of Thatcher and click your brogues together three times. Shakespeare's Rome is recast to the Tory party conference: worse hair, more moobs.

Annie Get Your Gun

ADC THEATRE, TUE-SAT 20TH MAR 19.45 (£6/8)

People buy your tickets. The Desert Eagle .50 of the ADC season arrives for its fortnight stint: big, shiny and finishing things off.

Frozen

ROBINSON COLLEGE AUDITORIUM, WED-FRI 20.00 (£4)

Bryony Lavery's tragedy of child abduction and murder comes to the Grange Road castle.

Arts

Ongoing Exhibitions

Netsuke: Japanese Art in Miniature

FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, 23 FEB - 30 MAY (FREE)

This small exhibition brings together 200 superb examples of netsuke – a form of miniature sculpture originating in 17th-century Japan. These often elaborately carved items were designed to function as 'toggles' for the silk cords upon which Japanese men strung their pipes, purses or writing implements.



Glitz and Glamour

CAMBRIDGE COUNTY AND FOLK MUSEUM, 25 FEB - 18 MAR (FREE)

Why not welcome some sparkle into a grey winter day by visiting this fun accessories exhibition? Featuring a range of accessories and adornments from the early Victorian era onwards. This exhibition is a must see for all you magpies out there!

The People's Portrait Exhibition

GIRTON COLLEGE, DAILY 14:00-16:00 (FREE)

Artists from the Royal Society of Portrait Painters bring their exciting and original collection of portrait photographs to Girton. Comprised of beautiful shots of ordinary people in everyday surroundings, it received universally strong reviews.

Darwin out of the Box

MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY, MON-FRI 10:00-16:45 (SAT 11:00-16:00) (FREE)

Participants from throughout the region entered the Vital Communities Big Draw workshops in October last year. Et voila, the fruits of their labour.

Talks & Events

Friday March 5th

Risk and (Human-induced) Climate Change

MILL LANE LECTURE ROOMS, 20.00 (£15)

Pick of the week Events Terrifying predictions of incomprehensibly destructive Armageddon-like scenes abound! Professor Bob Watson from the University of East Anglia - yes, that one, with all those emails that skeptics keep rabbiting on about - discusses possibilities for limiting the impact of our last few years of emissions.

Saturday March 6th

Seasonal Highlights Garden Tour

BOTANIC GARDENS, 11.00-12.00 (£6.50/7)

A one-hour tour of the Winter Garden led by an in-house expert. Cloudy with sunny patches, pensioners likely.

Monday March 8th

More than Love: Levinas and Rosenzweig from Eros to Ethics

SIR WILLIAM HARDY BUILDING, DOWNING SITE, ROOM 101, 12.30 (FREE)

Andrea Cooper, the Mainzer Visiting Fellow of New York University, presents this entry in the Gender Research Seminars series.

Lessons from the Obama Campaign: Making the Obama Digital Model Work in Politics and Beyond

CAMBRIDGE UNION, 18.30 (FREE)

Terrifying predictions of incomprehensibly destructive Obamageddon-like scenes abound! Joe Rospars, New Media Director for the Obama Presidential campaign, discusses the future of electioneering. Yes we bloody well can.

Wednesday March 10th

The Energy Efficient Cities Initiative

LT2, ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, INGLIS BUILDING, 17.00 (FREE)

The Engineering for a Low-Carbon Future series continues with the three founders of the Energy Efficient Cities Initiative, discussing energy consumption prediction models and how they can alter energy policy in the face of ever-expanding urban energy consumption.

Boxed In



Week 8: University Challenge

It's a cruel mockery of a Cambridge supervision. Two teams of four giddy undergrads pant to impress the über-supervisor that is Jeremy Paxman. They slather at the chops, baring the whites of their eyes, contending for a modicum of acknowledgement. Sweating in the silence of not knowing, contestants confer with the jerky terror of a gang of hunted voles.

Paxman is Cambridge's knightly alumnus. He's sexy and mostly courteous. He belongs to the court of the BBC. He quests for truth through the obnoxious questions printed on his inexhaustible cards, jousting through youth's ignorance of obscure and useless facts. Forget the cosy knitwear of your dithering Medieval English supervisor, The Pax's suits are chainmail grey and he would not make you a cup of tea in the event of a dissertation-related panic attack.

Logically, The Pax cannot know all of the answers to all of his questions. Yet his white quiff gusto as he tears through the rounds on Patagonian acrostics and weird national flags certainly suggests that the question cards aren't remotely necessary. He is a supreme giver of information, like a supercilious and underfed Buddha, his sharp nose and deeply furrowed brow imbuing topical information with gravity and a weird fatherly sex appeal.

The teams always recognise the lingering reputations of Oxbridge Colleges. King's had that guy with the flaming Mohican just to make sure everyone knows that King's students are socialists from state schools. They open their arms to exciting and anachronistic hair-dos. This week's episode featured a fellow from Jesus, Oxford, sweatily strung up in a too-big tux and bow-tie like a limpid nerd undertaker. I can't not mention last year's Oxford swotbox, Gail Trimble, best described as "an intellectual blitzkrieg". She won The Pax's mighty heart with machine gun buzzer fire and her no-make-up-unstraightened-hair-and-glasses UL dweller thing.

The show's not as much a quest for truth as a quest for smug luxuriating in obscure factoids. The Pax is from our own cold stone. It's all he knows.

CONNIE SCOZZARO

MUSIC



Nothing tastes as good as indie feels

A-thom-s for peace

Thom Yorke

CORN EXCHANGE

★★★★★

It's not every day that one of the most beloved, respected and exciting British musicians randomly announces a one-off gig in a town like Cambridge midway through recording a new album, but Thom Yorke is apparently one of them. Performing in benefit of good friend and Green Party parliamentary candidate Tony Juniper, Yorke lollops onstage, sporting a rangy beard. "Hiya," he murmurs, proceeding to play a near-perfect 19-song set that includes three new tracks, old favourites like 'Airbag', as well as rarely-played ones like 'I Froze Up'.

Solo material from *The Eraser*, an almost frustratingly downbeat electronic record, is given an injection of warmth. Stripped down to bare vocals and piano, the album's title track turns into a melancholy

ballad. New material is rapturously welcomed. 'The Daily Mail', with lyrics like "we'll feed you to the hounds / to the *Daily Mail*", sounds like it could have stepped out of *Kid A*. On standout song 'Giving Up the Ghost', Yorke improvises with a sample pedal and loops drumbeats and his own vocal harmonies over and over, until the song reaches a tremendous, crashing crescendo.

It's not all smooth sailing, though. Yorke giggles every time he forgets the words to 'Weird Fishes / Arpeggi'; the audience forgivingly sings the lines for him. It's behind the piano that Yorke seems truly comfortable, eyes shut, face twisted. And what a voice – one of the most distinct and expressive voices of our generation. Stripped of album production, Yorke's incredible vocal range takes centre stage, dropping and rising into and out of deep wells of feeling. Cryptic lyrics like "the more I try to erase you, the more, the more..." are at once menacing and tender. It's not a voice that

wins fans easily, but it is tremendous live. The greatest vocal conceit Yorke pulls off is making a voice with huge technical strength and skill sound so delicate and fragile.

Yorke brought his set to a close with the glacial piano arpeggios gracing 'Like Spinning Plates', and a haunting performance of the painfully beautiful 'Videotape'. After 'Atoms For Peace', Yorke waves goodbye for what seems like the final time. But the lights stay low, the footstomping and applause of the crowd remain. Emerging, Yorke straps on the guitar: "This song is called 'True Love Waits'"; the announcement of the perennial Radiohead set-closer is greeted with sheer euphoria. "You might have to sing along, I tend to forget the fucking words" Yorke jokes, but he doesn't, and neither does the crowd. The gorgeous simplicity of the song, with no drum loops or sampling, just one man and a guitar, shines through. Simply put, a perfect end to an incredible set.

LAURIE TUFFREY & ZING TSJENG

Joanna Newsom

HAVE ONE ON ME

★★★★★



In my imagination, Joanna Newsom lives in an alpine forest eating honey and carving sonnets into tree trunks.

And so this album comes as a shock. Lyrically, Newsom's battered heart is worn unflinchingly on her sleeve, and you

discover that she is human - not elf - after all. She gets drunk, lonely, and imagines a "room gilded with the golden teeth of the women who loved you" and "a Bloody Mary seen in the mirror". The most innocent of images is tinged with a darkness that slopes just out of view.

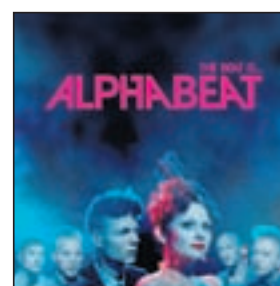
Francesconi's orchestration splices sparseness and intricacy – sneaking in a piano and quick scribble of strings in 'Easy' before making way for Newsom's vulnerable suggestion of being 'easy to keep'.

But 'Baby Birch' is the star, so much so that 'On A Good Day', a perfectly good song, sounds as mundane as mud after this melancholy lullaby has broken your heart. A week is not enough time to absorb this album, nor would I want it to be. LUCINDA HIGGIE

Alphabeat

THE BEAT IS...

★★★★★



Alphabeat deserves more success than it's had. Now on their second album, *The Beat Is...*, Alphabeat have reinvented themselves, trading in their tambourines for techno floorfillers, and shifting their focus to the 90s dance scene.

The Brian Jonestown Massacre

WHO KILLED SGT. PEPPER?

★★★★★



This catastrophic record from Anton Newcombe's psychedelic rockers starts as an unlistenable mess and gets progressively worse as the long hour of tripe goes on ... and on ... and on.

'Tempo 116.7' – a fittingly mundane opener – is a confused mish-mash of bhangra, trance and landscape rock that falls flat from the first sound of a synthesiser and doesn't recover from there. Still, this isn't quite the worst track on the album, that honour going to the majestically titled 'Let's Go F*****g Mental' which consists of constant repetition of the chant over sub-Kasabian loops. It's enough to send you crazy. Or stop you listening. You decide.

For those unlucky few who continue, there's more to come. Every now and then Newcombe strays (accidentally?) into the realm of coherence: from time to time we are treated to some rock 'n' roll and 'Tunger Hnifur' is almost a normal song which we are grateful for. The only 'normal song' on an album being the highlight is usually a bad sign.

Relocating to Iceland hasn't had a positive effect on BJM, their eleventh album being their weakest and most laughable to date. It's sprawling and amateurish, repetitive to the point of insanity and too often just plain boring. Still, I recommend 'Let's Go F*****g Mental' for research purposes, and some of the lyrics would make for great greetings cards: "I'll fucking kill you and everyone too, and I don't give a fuck about World War Two". DAN GRABINER

Whilst fans looking for another 'Fascination' may be disappointed, the daring transition works. *The Beat Is...* is a danceable, euphoric album, peppered with jumpy keyboard riffs and Stein's characteristically stellar vocals. 'The Spell' takes its melody from a Cut 'N' Move classic, whilst 'Heat Wave' sounds something like a distant cousin of David Guetta's 'When Love Takes Over'. And then there's 'DJ', quite possibly Alphabeat's biggest tune to date.

The album dips a little on 'Chess' and 'Q & A', the only slow numbers, but even these aren't bad and, if anything, provide some much needed time to breathe from all that dancing. Alphabeat have taken a risk with *The Beat Is...*, and it's paid off. For that, this album deserves to be massive.

JAMES KEMP

FILM

A good year?

Leap Year VUE ★★★★★

Leap Year is not quality filmmaking; it is, in fact, a little bit rubbish. It doesn't get close to the ambitious heights of some cinema fare but what it does give us isn't half bad either: an entertaining couple of hours. It fulfils its own modest rom-com brief down to the letter and despite my normal reservations about such mindless riffs concerning the power of 'true love', I have to admit that I was slightly taken by it.

Amy Adams has one of the more irritating, controlling characters to get to grips with in the form of Boston-bred Anna. Disappointed yet again by the failure of her boyfriend of four years, Jeremy, to go down on bended knee she decides to take a 'leap' of faith herself (if you can't cope with this gentle pun, this might not be the film for you) and propose to him. Of course though, we must remember that Anna is a relic of a more chivalrous age so she observes the old Irish folklore that there is only one day a woman can propose to a man: on a leap day. And there we have it, a perfect excuse for a haphazard journey across Ireland for a spot of character reformation with some obscene flirting along the way.

The script seems to try its

best to make you hate Anna but clearly it hadn't reckoned with quite how endearing Adams can be. Her Irish hunk of a love interest, Declan (Matthew Goode), is also charming as a welcome cynical anecdote to the layers of cheese that you can practically see melting through the script at its more tired moments. They enjoy a Mr. Darcy/Elizabeth Bennet style courtship that starts off all scowls and petty arguments and ends in some delightful banter about him washing her \$600 shoes. Oh those Irish, they know how to win a lassie's heart. The smultz is, inevitably, layered on thicker than an Essex girl's slap but redeeming moments come around often enough for that not to be a major sticking point. The romantic

comedy is known for its corny first kisses but having a drunken Irishman scream "Kiss the gal!" to our two leads is about as good as they get.

There is no pretending that *Leap Year* is a laugh-a-minute but there are several decent gags hidden amidst the predictable change of heart that young Anna goes through. The Irish stereotypes come in thick and fast (apparently the whole of Ireland is stocked purely by superstitious, Guinness-guzzling old men) but whilst some may find this offensive I had no such moral qualms. *Leap Year* certainly isn't the most original/hilarious/well-written film but if I don't choke on the sentiment at the end, it's a done a good enough job for me. KATIE ANDERSON



Capitalism: A Love Story ARTS PICTUREHOUSE ★★★★★

Capitalism: A Love Story is what you'd expect from a Michael Moore documentary. There are montages of terrible things happening with ironically upbeat backing soundtracks. There are lots and lots of shots of ordinary, hard working Americans crying. There are slow motion sequences of politicians doing quite innocuous things like walking down a corridor, or

talking, but in the context their very walking is made to seem fricking evil. But on the check-list of Moore standards there is also the clear explanation of pretty loathsome facts, like the huge number of American corporations who take out life insurance policies on their employees, making them more profitable dead than alive. There is moving coverage of a workers sit-in which eventually succeeds in winning its demands of a redundancy pay-out from Bank of America.

Finally and most importantly there is a sequence of Michael

Moore making an absolute fool of himself for giggles. For many critics this is the most divisive part of Moore documentaries – why is it necessary for the director of a documentary on the recession to stand outside the New York stock exchange with a megaphone demanding the money back "for the American people"? But I think it's bloody brilliant to see an irate fat man running around the Goldman Sachs building with yellow crime scene tape, pursued by amused security staff. Of course, it could be said that Moore is self-righteous, teenage and propagandist in his execution. He doesn't need to use heart-tugging string music every time a Sad Thing is on screen. But he doesn't make the vaguest pretence at being balanced and unbiased. He is the left wing equivalent of hysterical fear-mongers like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck.

This film is worth a look for its amusing account of what caused the economic crisis, and its broad-brush treatment of capitalist greed. Criticisms aplenty can be made of the Moore technique, but it's pretty difficult to make a film about economics which holds attention. That he can make it into a blockbuster is testament to Moore's agitprop genius. VICTORIA BEALE



Art & Literature

Netsuke: Japanese Art in Miniature FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM ★★★★★

The best moment in Spike Jonze's *Where the Wild Things Are* comes when the creature Carol introduces the child Max to his clay model of a densely populated island. Shot in slow motion, the model reveals an intricate network of cartoonish faces, not unlike those put before us in this naïvely intelligent exhibition. Netsuke is, practically speaking, a low-budget type of art, deeply attached to its social and material reality. Because traditional Japanese clothing doesn't include pockets, personal belongings are suspended on string and held in place by a netsuke toggle. For those cultivating the front of an elegant Japanese gentleman, an ornate ensemble of netsuke is apparently a tell-tale sign. Yet seen outside of Japan and recontextualised at an exhibition in Cambridge, these everyday objects are made strange for the viewer: netsuke are to be dressed with, not gazed at and subjected to analysis.

The truth is that some of these pieces are so filled with emotion and so ingenuously sculpted that they do deserve critical attention. As a starting point, one could approach this exhibition as having intensity of emotion as its primary subject. Nearly every netsuke, whether gawky child or gruseome beast, appears caught in the rush of a moodswing. That these feelings, and their visual brilliance, are embedded in essentially lifeless and tacky porcelain demonstrates how amateur technique needn't be limiting. There is too much of a tendency to value art for its delicacy and detail, a fussy conservatism which a modest show like this one helpfully evades. But our connection with this art can only go so far. On the one hand, we have a sympathetic experience with these netsuke; on the other they remain weirdly remote, the inanimate inhabitants of another culture altogether. ELIOT D'SILVA

Ross Sutherland THE SHOP ★★★★★

Introductions are important; they set the atmosphere for what's to follow. So when Ross Sutherland, critically acclaimed, published poet was preceded by a bunch of strangers, shuffling out to recite their work, it was difficult to greet the rest of the evening with much enthusiasm. These 'poets' had attended the writing workshop held before the main event and somehow managed to hijack the stage, distressing us with a series of awkward readings, made more so by the fact that they were unIntroduced and unexplained: just who were these people?

Well, there was the lady whose voice resembled the tone of those M&S adverts, ever, ever so softly breathing out her words as though staging a polite orgasm. When her second poem was about Tesco, we started to suspect that supermarkets were her thing. Then there was The List Man, who listed things about Even and Odd. And then there was Susie Cronin, whose name I bothered to retain because her luxurious Irish accent, unravelling tales of chilly countryside landscapes was the most sincere thing I'd heard all evening. Finally, finally, Sutherland appeared from nowhere, awakening us from our comatose states with a friendly, 'Hiya!' and launching in to a humorous introduction to his poetry. What a relief to hear something that didn't take itself too seriously, or fall into the trap of thinking all poetry Must Sound Profound. His univocalism, a poem composed of only one vowel was perfectly suited to performance and he even managed to pull off a Pac Man epic – in 3 cantos – which was actually rather beautiful. But it was cold, and it was late and Sutherland retreated after only four poems, his time and ours wasted by a whole lot of bad poetry. ZELJKA MAROSEVIC



Octopus with twisted tentacles

View from the Groundlings



Cambridge Theatre

The spires are alive with the cacophony of music. Shrug off the term and pick up a funky little stroll around town. If you dare to bounce past Queens’ Fitzpatrick Hall next week, shrill screams might unsettle your groove. Only Blueprint have the hype power to call a concert *Blueprint: Bigger. Better. Back.* and remain devastatingly appealing. Them and Bruce Willis, of course, who got away with *Die Hard 2: Die Harder*. Blueprint are student idols, up there with Obama and Che Guevara. Girls hypothesise Fuck, Marry, Throw Off A Cliff with the members. You cried when they sang *As Long As You Love Me* at 4am at your May Ball. Ed Stephenson’s friends might fine him with Backstreet Boys lyrics on swaps, but he’ll be the one dodging thongs come Thursday. I want it *that* way.

Anything they can do, big American musicals can potentially do better. The ADC Lent extravaganza spends a week catering to students and a week shocking OAPs and their grandchildren. *Annie Get Your Gun* won’t struggle with that, being in possession of large pistols, androgynous cowboy outfits, and rounds of sexual tension.

If that’s all too loud and frivolous for tender term-end ears, the kids at FitzTheatre are playing Joy Division and the Smiths. They’re putting on pinstriped suits and shoulder-pads, and they’re performing *Julius Caesar*. By Thatcher, is this a political play recast to the 1980s?! If we’re heading for a smorgasbord of the Tory Party Conference and Ancient Rome, keep your fingers crossed for Neil Hamilton in a toga.

In the first hollow post-music, talk always feels a little quirky. So to the ADC Lateshow; Jesse Armstrong judged Keith Akushie’s *Hostage* as the Harry Porter Prize Winner this year. A bankrobber and his three victims spend a night trapped in a tiny office, killing time with conversation. “It’ll wrestle you to the floor, and beat you up while you laugh” promises Armstrong. Frankly, I’d rather be confined with Blueprint.

ABIGAIL DEAN

Footlights Spring Revue

ADC MAINSHOW
★★★★★

My anticipation had been building for a good month in advance for this show. Last year’s Revue was brilliant. I had seen sketches by the writers, Owen, Fiddamen and Ashenden, at smokers, and laughed uncomfortably hard. *Good. Clean. Men.*, again incorporating the aforementioned trio, was my comedy highlight of last year, let alone the term. Rightfully, *People Watching* should’ve been the comedy highlight of my Cambridge life. Was it? Not quite. By quite a bit.

The concept – genuinely exciting. God is fed up with the idiocy of human kind and decides it’s time for an apocalypse. The first act is a series of sketches that illustrate this idiocy, introduced and occasionally narrated by the gloriously odd and wonderfully named William Seaward, the angel charged with recording and monitoring this behaviour. I hope Stephen Fry doesn’t need his voice back, because it suits Seaward’s eccentricity and faultless delivery rather well. He was the perfect opener to the show, although after a while you did start to notice that your laughter was more in response to the incongruous movements of his eyebrows rather than the lines. This became a general theme – the performers elevated their admittedly funny script to a hilarious one – and not something I was expecting to have to rely on. Don’t get me wrong, these men can write. There are some fantastic one-liners and



beautifully crafted concepts. But they really did have a bloody good cast, which ensured some of the more convoluted jokes still got a laugh, when, to be honest, they didn’t always deserve one.

Eventually, it seemed to fall into that old Cambridge comedy trap: an exercise in demonstrating the ability to string together the most random, intellectually telling and tenuous sentences in the most abstracted scenarios known to man. After two hours, you felt slightly overwhelmed for all the wrong reasons. It could’ve done with a fair few more punch lines, too. The brilliant set-ups felt a bit wasted when the actors left the stage without as much as a giggle. The second act presented a real opportunity to move away from this, and the reappearances of characters from previous scenarios were a

welcome stab at continuity. Archie’s crusade was thoroughly endearing, and although every member of the cast was brilliant, James Moran excelled even his performance in

“You felt slightly overwhelmed for all the wrong reasons.”

Armageddapocalypse 2: The Explosioning, as Uncle Malevolence. You’ll see what I mean.

I am writing as a critic, of course, and not as an audience member. I laughed quite a lot. Just not as much as I was expecting

to. This is not a Smoker, it is an ADC mainshow, and as such I was expecting something with a bit more cohesion and a bit less of the let’s-see-how-many-references-we-can-fit-into-the-joke jokes. With two hours to fill, however, I suppose we can allow some lee-way for a few duff sketches, which nevertheless usually contained at least one pleasing turn of phrase.

The Spring Revue is already sold out. For those of you who bought tickets – well done, you will have a great night. For those of you who didn’t – don’t worry, there’s more Footlights comedy coming next week in the form of Keith Akushie’s *Hostage*. You will be missing some flashes of genius, and, equally importantly, some actual juggling, but you won’t be missing a comedy highlight of Cambridge life.

KIRAN MILLWOOD-HARGRAVE

I was pleasantly surprised when I walked into the Corpus Playroom last night. A first-timer, my reaction was that the venue was charming and quirky, but the particular stage set-up for *Cherry and Blossom* made the place. The intimacy of that L-shaped room, the two audiences hidden from each other, created a perfect atmosphere for the production. On stage was a decadent Victorian chaise longue, two coffee tables crowded with half empty bottles of generic liquor, and a rusty gramophone. The lighting was colourful but subtle, and the stage smoked in shades of red and blue, playing off the furniture. Old-fashioned suitcases strewn with flowers and feathers littered the ground, and pinned on the wall above were five dresses, symbolising the shifting fashions from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Already an eclectic feast for the eyes, then, before

Cherry and Blossom



Cherry (Eve Rosato) and Blossom (Emily-Jane Swanson) appeared. I knew and loved most of the songs the girls selected to sing. To name a few: *Let’s Misbehave*, *Don’t Sit Under The Apple Tree* (a personal highlight), and *I Got Rhythm*. The songs had been cherry-picked to fit the theme of ‘moving through the decades’, with a selection of favourites from the 20s through to the 60s. Anything but “run-of-the-mill Broadway babies”, the duo were born entertainers; seductive and luscious in black and white lingerie (which, amusingly, seemed to last them throughout the five decades), they worked extremely well together, though at times their efforts at the nasal New ‘Yoick’ drawl turned somewhat Irish.

One of the most enjoyable and unique performances I’ve seen this year, you should catch them while you can in this venue’s intimacy, which suits them down to a T. Or an L, at least. NICK CHAPMAN

Is there life after love? Kyra is adamant there is; Tom is not so sure. Richard Keith’s moving production of David Hare’s *Skylight* explores the gulfs between people, questioning whether you can really know a person and whether it is possible to regain the past.

Years ago, Tom (Josh Higgott), a restaurant owner, and Kyra, (Katherine Press) his idealistic waitress, fell in love. Kyra moved in with his family, and they had an affair, right under his wife’s nose. Scandal: the secret explodes and Kyra walks out. Tom’s wife dies, and, distraught, he tries to force his way back into his lover’s life. It’s a gruelling dance of desire, each character attempting to confront the other with the tortured history of their separation - and come to terms with the past.

These still-passionate lovers electrify Hare’s witty script. Ironic asides blend seamlessly into belief-defining monologues. Higgott’s Tom is admirably straightforward in his pride at his success and his unashamed need for Kyra; his attempts to suppress arrogance

Skylight

CORPUS PLAYROOM
★★★★★

and admit his guilt dominate the stage. Higgott comes gut-wrenchingly close to breaking-point as he describes his wife’s bitterness. Press’s Kyra, however, is a little less nuanced, maintaining her tone of prim self-righteousness in what are meant to be her most moving scenes, and showing little sign of repressed love. Her enthusiasm for Tom’s son Edward (Chris Nelson) is refreshing - Nelson’s awkward adolescence adding an element of hope to this bleak play-but *Skylight* is a thing of tragedy, and Press does not quite pull it off.

Ostensibly, the script is class-struggle writ small. Kyra accuses Tom of being a “right-wing fucker” who treats people as objects. Tom sees Kyra as “embracing the people”. Yet despite several rather cringy political clichés, these characters manage to be more than mere symbols, and Keith’s production balances the sympathy nicely between them. Hare doesn’t offer any final judgements, and nor does this production; grounded in reality, it retains its tender and uncomfortable shade of grey throughout. RUTH HALKON

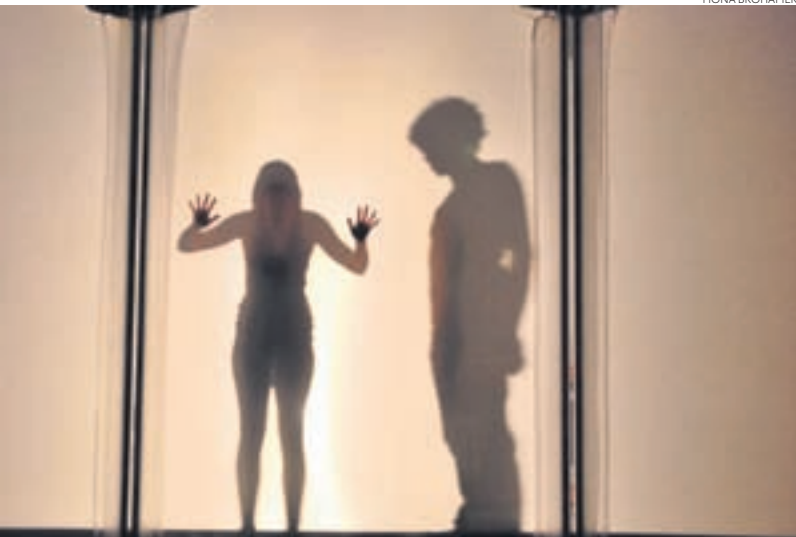
No Magic
ADC LATESHOW
★★★★★

Deary me, I thought I was going to see Paul Daniels last night. Instead, *No Magic* is a sort of physical theatre thing with a lot of dance, poetry, visual set-pieces, simulated sex acts and a giant spider. Boy, was there egg on my face! *No Magic* is written and directed by, and stars, in its lead role, Max Barton. Ego – oh wait, sorry, that should read ergo – ergo it may sound a little bit like an episode of *The Max Barton Show*. Actually though, it's not all his fault; *No Magic* was meant to have another chap in one of the roles, but he broke his elbow in rehearsal so Barton had to step in... and take, not his part, but the main part. No one saw Barton putting an extra coat of wax on the floor that day, did they?

Anyway, *No Magic* is the story of a chap called Harry, who is a rather unhappy kid because, as far as I can tell, the world isn't enough like it is in the Harry Potter books. God, the depravity. Harry grows

up and becomes a rather unhappy adult, until he earns a place at “the world's best university” – and no, I'm not going to say “agreed universally” after it, because they used that dodgy bloody couplet as a motif so many times last night, there were several points where I actually wished I had tinnitus.

At university, Harry befriends two guys, Gabriel and Rich, and starts, in tandem with all the other male characters, a rather steamy affair with the local nymphette.



Two crucial rules for a musical: make it quick and make it slick. Break them and you've lost me. Rossini once said of Wagner that he had lovely moments, but awful quarters of an hour. Don't get the wrong idea, I'm not comparing *Gypsy* to Wagner - I wouldn't be as foolish - but the point is made: brief moments of colour and stretches of grey do not make a good musical.

Set during the desperate and fading hours of 1930s vaudeville, the story of sororal bonding and break-up was ploddingly clear, but not compelling, and though on occasion amusing, it became quite the chore readjusting to



Gypsy
CRIPPS COURT THEATRE,
MAGDALENE
★★★★★

the wild variations of on-stage talent. With all the charisma of a still-warm cadaver, Herbie the Love-Interest struggled to elicit any real appeal, followed in suit by June, the irascible child-star, who was more akin to Jimmy Krankie than Shirley Temple. One requires a healthy and loveable level of shamelessness to volunteer for musical theatre, but they lacked any particular charm in portraying classic musical characters. There was some reprieve, however, in the form of starlet Rose. She was vibrant. She was oddly endearing. She was wonderful, in fact. She could hold a note - this distinguished her from many of the vocalists who had perfected an unusual singing method, choosing to oscillate between notes instead of actually hitting them.

Still, after the first hour (of an eventual three), my attention was beginning to limp. Anything would do to divert it - the paint work in Cripps Court theatre could do with a touch up, and some of that lighting was a bit strange, too - whilst countless scenes blurred by, one lifeless tableau after another. The set was unremarkable, any chance of an imaginative transportation to the Great Depression era was stumped by a sparse backdrop; the stage-direction was linear, with all of the recycled gestures of a sixth form musical; and, for the most part, the vocals were tedious. Even the costumes, which certainly grasped the musical flair for colour, appeared poorly synchronised, although the GaGaesque lights emerging from one bodice did manage to raise a weary smile.

Who says vaudeville is dead? I do. RHYS JONES

Known only as “The Spider”, a vamp who catches her victims in her silken web, Abi Bennett's job was to pout around the stage and look pretty. Saying that, I'm not exactly sure the role stretched Bennet's acting talents; the characterisation was so one-dimensional it was a problem to natural science.

Sadly, both of Harry's parents die, and he soon starts to tire of clubbing with his friends and his carnal activities. In fact, he starts to become a bit of a guitar-playing



I ought to begin with a disclaimer. I'm not a musician, and at least some of the charm that opera seems to hold over me is dumb amazement at the sheer spectacle of it all. Fortunately, the Shadwell Opera's new production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is, even to the uninitiated, an innovative and beautifully conceived interpretation of a piece so familiar that it can sometimes seem overdone.

Directors Jack Furness and Imogen Tedbury have assembled an extremely talented group of musicians to present a production able to exploit every nuance of the piece. It is clear from the outset, Titania's fairy chorus opening like a crocus amidst deepening twilight, that the piece rewvels in the hazy woodland forces invited by both Britten and Shakespeare.

The cast does not disappoint, with Tom Verney presenting a somewhat surly Oberon, his enchanting countertenor often resounding from the back of the church, suggesting ethereal dominion over the wood. He is excellently partnered by Ssegewa-Ssekintu Kiwanuka's Puck, the opera's only spoken part, and one delivered with panache by this sometime MC. It is an overwhelmingly strong company, though Tristan Hambleton stands out as Bottom, giving a performance that manages to capture both bombast and bewilderment as he finds himself caught in the midst of faerie forces. His company is led by Edward de Minckwitz as Peter Quince, a strong bass voice that resonates throughout. Meanwhile, Matt Sandy is hilarious as Flute/Thisbe, striking a wonderfully camp note in an enormous floral dress.

recluse.

It's only when the mysterious Edward Catcher, who looks like Harry –but also doesn't look anything like Harry– starts stalking the university and committing the odd act of ultraviolence that all hell breaks loose. Now, do you think you can tell what's going to happen? Because I, for one, had a hunch.

Okay, so the plot of *No Magic* is a tad predictable, and the verse could benefit from a little bit of redrafting here and there, but there was a fair bit to commend. For one, it often looked stunning, not just good, but stunning. The set was backed with what looked like three upturned, lycra trampolines and when characters cast ghostly impressions on their reverse, the effect was genuinely awesome. Some physical tableau work was impressive too, as was the giant spider the ensemble made.

As a visual spectacle *No Magic* was, no doubt, absolutely buzzing with interesting ideas. However, with a script that was mired in cliché and lacked any sort of emotional maturity, it was always going to be an uneven night. Allakhazam.

NATHAN BROOKER

A Midsummer
Night's Dream
ST. GILES' CHURCH, THE CASTLE
★★★★★

The imposing space provided by St. Giles' church is used in a highly inventive fashion.

The orchestra sits behind the altar screen, suggesting a spatial delin-eation that crumbles as the piece



Incoming

Frozen

When I first saw *Frozen* in 2008, I was moved, surprised, disturbed, and, most importantly, provoked into considering a taboo topic. First performed at Birmingham Rep in 1998, and subsequently revived at the National and on Broadway, Bryony Lavery's play concerns reactions to the murder of a ten-year-old girl from different perspectives. The play begins with seemingly disconnected and isolated monologues from three characters: a mother, a paedophile serial killer, and an academic studying the criminal brain. A girl's abduction, never witnessed by the audience, is the act which initiates the intertwining of these three peoples' lives, and the play begins to transform from a series of atemporal and non-linear monologues to real-time dialogue.

With a total of 30 scenes spanning over 25 years, the play follows the characters as they change over time. Just when you think you're beginning to understand them, you're jumped ahead in time to discover new situations and, in part, new people: opinions and personality are transmuted by experiences. One of the challenges for a director is the episodic nature of the text, similar to Brecht's plays, which we are counter-ing by maintaining an ultra minimalist performance space, giving primacy to the words of the characters and ensuring the fluidity of the piece.

Another interesting and unique element of Lavery's text is her writing style. As you may have seen on our publicity posters, she writes prose lines in a poetry-like form, divid-ing her characters' speech over several lines to present naturalistically fragmented speech, as is normally heard in everyday conversation. Written in this way, the lines present a challenge to the actors, while also helping them,through the implicit guidance they give on delivery.

Still, it will always be the actual subject matter of *Frozen* which challenges actors and audiences considerably more than its form.

OLIVER O'SHEA

Oliver is directing The Brickhouse Theatre Company's 'Frozen' at Robinson Auditorium, 10-12 March.

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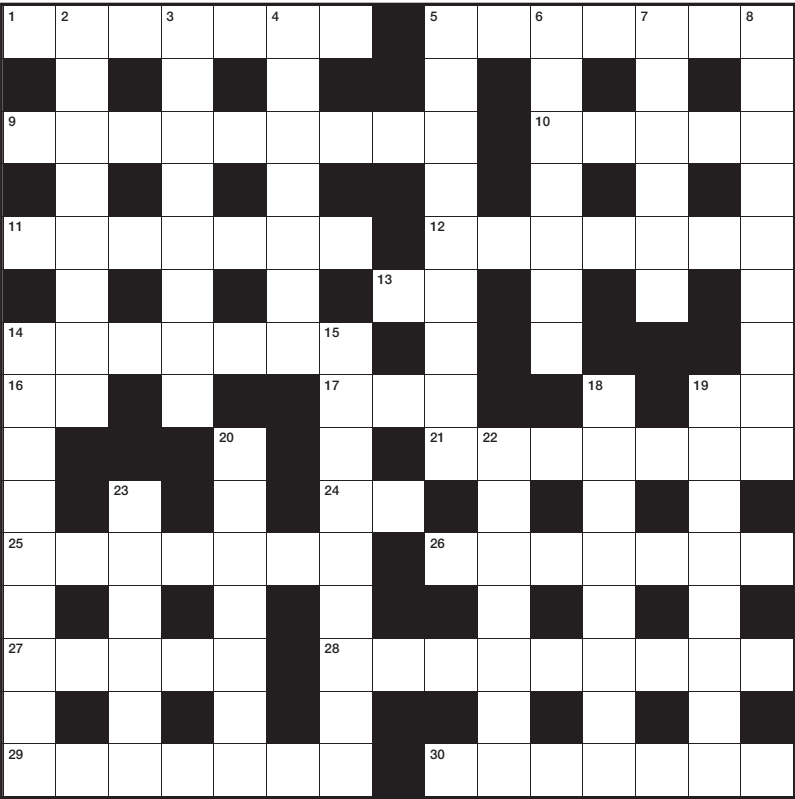
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Games & puzzles

Varsity Crossword

NO. 524



- Across
1. Goat-like capering, wild and godless (7)

5. Sounding light-headed: press depart-ment on grass? (7)

9. Miss letters on the second, make threats (9)

10. Crab shuffles off first, without hesi-tating a bit (5)

11. Observing intently a bird with one leg (7)

12. Was at Torquay, got a bit lost and confused, took the eastern line around the world (7)

13. See 24.

14. Seek justice for a woman, we hear, like Grendel's mother (7)

16, 17, 19 Jostled line setter lacking the north has organ for perceiving wild bells exist...when my light is low (2,3,2)

21. Piles up in 6 down – smooth move, we hear! (7)

24,13, 23 down So we get the drinks! (4)

25. Confused op/ed invites us in to do God's work? (4, 3)

26. Expression of disgust on 6 down of surrounding filth (7)

27. In a day, Spanish capture one of Britain's former 28 (5)

28. Order to inferiors in sovereign ter-ritories (9)

29. By lake, mangled rye hides North Carolinan Henry, killer outside the law (7)

30, 23 down Rub feet and sob: the lot of a donkey, for example (5, 2, 6)

Down

2. Adept capture of middlemen by old four, indicating agent or source - in their language (8)

3. Instrument of torture on lease makes high cost for tenants of Edgeworth's castle (4-4)

4. Gnome (shorter than usual) gains inch with drug one proposed (7)

5. Friends dipping into the Aegean and starting training in Greek wrestling school (9)

6. Relative put two hundred and fifteen into this! (7)

7. Proust slept days: at night wakes up? (6)

8. Emo gets through vessels notwithstanding prohibitions (9)

14. Morning brothers! Is fish I hear of heavenly food? (9)

15. Came back to 'er in reply (9)

18. Kid strums strangely on these! (4, 4)

19. Bleat on, Carreras, in full rich voice! (3, 5)

20. Thud, bam, easy to slip in this! (3-4)

22. We hear rook's cry over the vine, like a crow? (7)

23. See 30 across.
- Crossword set by Cerdinga.

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.

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

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).

	8		28			
11					16	
			19			
16					4	
	3				17	
		4			7	
				4		
	21					
			9			

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.

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

Varsity SuperSports

Varsity Bio



Name: Dave Riley
Sport: Rugby
College: Hughes Hall
Height/Weight: 178cm/83kg

RESULTS:

Standing Jump: 228.8cm
Limbo: 100cm
Bag Throw: 386cm
100m: 11.75 secs
Bleep Test: Level 12.11

SuperSports Score: 28.898

Team Champions: Rugby

The results are finally in! After seven sports entered our competition to find the most demanding Univeristy sport, we've compiled the results and have discovered the overall SuperSport, as well as the individual athletes who stole the show.

The seventh and final sport that took our challenge was rowing, with Alex Ross and Anna Railton representing their sport in our concluding week.

As our tallest competitor, Ross certainly held an advantage in events like the Bag Throw and the 100m sprint, but was disadvantaged in the Limbo. The results reflected our expectations. Ross's superior strength meant he threw the bag over 6 metres, and his longer strides meant he also posted

an impressive 100m time.

However, the overall score for the Rowers did not challenge the phenomenal score posted in Week 2 by Rugby's partnership of Dave Riley and Anne Venner. As you may notice, the athletes who top the men's and women's leader board do not come from the winning overall sport.

The stand-out individuals are undoubtedly Ollie Salveson (Hockey) and Hannah Darcy (Modern Pentathlon), both placing in the top three of the majority of our events.

However, SuperSports aimed to

Sport Leader Board

SPORT	Competitors	SS SCORE
Rugby	Riley & Venner	25.604
Hockey	Salveson & Wiseman	24.327
Pentathlon	Dixon & Darcy	24.15
Lacrosse	Hall & Plant	23.78
Rowing	Ross & Railton	23.26
Boxing	Webb & Matthews	23.238
Football	Wolke & Murphy	22.998

discover which sport boasts the best overall performers. The combined score of the Rugby players is testament to the strength required to participate in their sport.

Individual Champions

Men's Champion



Name: Ollie Salveson
Sport: Hockey
College: St John's
Height/Weight: 175cm/74kg

SuperSports Score:
30.43

Women's Champion



Name: Hannah Darcy
Sport: Mod. Pentathlon
College: St Catz
Height/Weight: 160cm/55kg

SuperSports Score:
22.71

Varsity Bio



Name: Anne Venner
Sport: Rugby
College: New Hall
Height/Weight: 158cm/54kg

RESULTS:

Standing Jump: 180cm
Limbo: 100cm
Bag Throw: 226cm
100m: 15.15 secs
Bleep Test: Level 11.2

SuperSports Score: 21.31

Sport in Brief

Boat Race

The Cambridge line-up for the Boat Race has been announced, the biggest news coming in the disappointing revelation that Hardy Cubasch will not be available for April 3rd. However, in spite of this set back, the line-up looks promising.

Bow: Rob Weitemeyer
2: Fred Gill
3: Code Sternal
4: Peter McClland
5: George Nash
6: Deaglan McEachern
7: Derek Rasmussen
Stroke: Henry Pelly
Cox: Ted Randolph

A significant difference from last year's squads is the more level playing field in terms of team weights. Oxford's weight advantage from last year has been lost, leaving this year's race a far tighter contest.

At the weigh-in Cambridge's boat came in slightly heavier at a total of 760.4kg (119 stone, 10 lbs & 6 oz), whilst Oxford weighed 756.6kg (119 stone, 2 lbs).

Varsity Table Tennis

The Cambridge Table Tennis club rewrote the history books in their Varsity match, with both Men's teams beating Oxford 10-0, a feat not accomplished since records began.

Three tightly contested matches for the women's Table Tennis team resulted in narrow defeats which swung the overall outcome in Oxford's favour, 6-4. The other decisive results for the women were the two doubles matches, both resulting in a loss in the fifth game. Women's captain Nga Nguyen and Yudan Ren were involved in an enthralling match which eventually ended in an unbelievable 17-19 score.

Rugby

On Tuesday St John's showed their strength as they crushed Girton 50-0 in the opening thirty minutes of the game forcing the match to be cut short.

The teams didn't even make it to half time before Girton were forced to concede the match having let in a half century of points in only half an hour. This display of Johnian power is all the more impressive considering the fact that Girton are first division side.

Men	SS SCORE
Ollie Salveson	30.43
Alex Ross	29.39
Dave Riley	28.898
Chris Webb	28.64
Phil Hall	27.07
Max Wolke	26.723
Brad Dixon	25.54

In the men's competition Ollie Salveson, representing hockey, was the standout performer winning the limbo with an amazingly low 70cm and the Bleep Test with a score of 14. Ollie also came 2nd in the 100m, with a time of 12.1 secs, only beaten by Rugby's Dave Riley who ran a blistering 11.75.

Rower Alex Ross put up some stiff competition for the men's title. With his impressive height of 195cm and weight of 102kg Ross dominated the bag throwing event as his propelled the heavy bag 615cm.

Chris Webb, the Boxer, lost out on third place to Dave Riley; their final SuperSports scores were only separated by a fraction. Phil Hall posted some good scores but inconsistency over the events ruled him out.



You can watch videos of all the competitors by checking out:
www.varsitytv.co.uk

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ROWING

First and Third keep double headship in Bumps

Trinity men and women both named head of the river with Queens' M1 taking Blades

ALI MCLAREN

Despite the best efforts of both Downing M1 and W1, FaT managed to finish Head of the River in both the men's and women's divisions in Lent Bumps 2010. In furious hail on Saturday afternoon, Downing M1 ran it close, getting to canvas at Ditton, but just failing to bump. In contrast, the women's headship was less fiercely contested, though Downing W1 will surely be pleased with their overall progress up the bumps charts. Newnham Boat Club took the most Michell cup points (+36), with Jesus losing the most (-28.8).

In the Men's First Division, the top three all rowed over comfortably each day, leaving much of the attention on the boats lower in the division. Clare M1 took spoons away with them as they fell to 8th, with Queens' taking blades and moving up a huge six places. Fitzwilliam M1 managed to avoid spoons by rowing over on the last day with Robinson M1 bumping Churchill M1 behind them. Peterhouse M1 also moved significantly up the division. In the

Men's Second Division, hot tip for blades and the quickest crew in the division, Catz M1 were denied blades by Selwyn bumping Christ's, leaving them nothing to chase. Sidney M1 earned blades, whilst Downing M2 moved six places upwards in gaining their blades. In the Third and Fourth Divisions many crews earned their blades, whilst an even greater number gained the ignominy of spoons. Emmanuel M4 finished bottom of the Fourth Division, though their M3 fared somewhat better, moving up six places.

In the Women's First Division, Emma continued their slide down the bumps chart, though avoided spoons, with Christ's bumping them on Saturday to gain their blades. No crews other than Christ's bladed, and none spooned, though Newnham, Trinity Hall and Pembroke will be pleased with their upward progress, whilst LMBC will be concerned with their continued slide. The rumours of Jesus W1 staying off-Cam due to fear of embarrassment proved to have some basis in truth as they fell three places. The Women's Second Division proved a lot more eventful,

with Murray Edwards and Corpus earning blades, and Jesus W2, Fitzwilliam and Caius II spooning. In the Women's Third Division, Downing W2 moved up five places, but a row-over on the Friday cost them

blades, with Selwyn W2 spooning. Catz W2 and Emma W3 shared an odd sequence of events, with Emma bumping on Wednesday, both crews rowing over on Thursday, and Catz bumping back on Saturday.

Attention of the top crews will turn to the Head of the River race on the Tideway in one month, whilst the attention of the public will switch to the Boat Race on the Saturday April 3rd.



Queens' M1 who took blades and moved up an incredible six places

HOCKEY

Women crash out to Oxford in their Varsity Match

In a game that went to the final few minutes the Light Blues just lost out on a win

	CAMBRIDGE	2
	OXFORD	3

HELEN MORGAN REES

On Tuesday March 2nd the Women's Hockey Blues played their annual

Varsity match against Oxford. The result, a 3-2 loss, did not reflect an extremely high standard of hockey from Cambridge, which kept all the supporters highly entertained.

The match began dramatically with Oxford winning a short corner, which created a worryingly early opportunity for them to score. However, Cambridge were put at ease as the straight strike from Oxford

was skilfully saved by Vicky Evans. After a few further exciting minutes of play, Cambridge then also managed to win a short. This was brilliantly executed, but unfortunately the Light Blues failed to score as the ball was lifted above the backboard. The hit-out was then taken quickly by Oxford, and a valiant attempt to slow the progress of attack resulted in a temporary injury

for Sarah Baggs, who was replaced by Alice Ferguson. Oxford's passing sequence was ultimately successful, and although the first strike was competently saved by Vicky Evans, the rebound resulted in a goal. In true Cambridge spirit, the team did not remain down for long, and in a short time Jenny Hall had used her incredible skills to dodge the defenders and strike a beautiful goal to equalise.

In the wake of this confident come-back, there were several great passages of play from Cambridge, including an impressive run by the Captain up half the pitch, followed by an excellent cross to Jess Hume, who was in exactly the right place to receive it. Unfortunately this play was broken up by an effective tackle from Oxford, but the resulting counter-attack only gave Evans another chance to shine with a brilliant save, followed by an amazingly timed tackle and swift clearance by Rachel Barraclough.

Another highlight of the first half was a speedy break by Rebecca Langton up the right wing, which left the Oxford defenders far behind, and single-handedly gained considerable ground for Cambridge. Unfortunately this pressure from attack did not have the desired effect, as the Light Blues subsequently managed to score off another short just before half-time.

The second half began with a renewed energy and great

determination from Cambridge, who scored from a seemingly effortless slip under the arm within the first couple of minutes. This was the result of a particularly perceptive pass from Jess Hume into a space for Jenny Hall to run onto and take into the D. The first-rate passing continued, including some great sequences between Mel Addy, Charlotte Brearley and Jess Hume. There were also numerous hopeful attacks engineered by Rebecca Langton and Jenny Hall, whose speed up the wings was far superior to their opposition. In defence, there was some equally outstanding play including several crucial and well-judged tackles at the top of the D by Alice Ferguson, one-on-one channelling by Eleanor Wiseman, and a bravely executed aerial from Ruth Graham to Sarah Baggs at the sixteen-yard hit-out. At one point Ruth Graham also demonstrated some particularly admirable sportsmanship by handing back the opposition's stick after it flew out of their hands!

The game was closely fought till the end, and to say that Oxford's goal in the last five minutes was unlucky is an understatement. Jenny Hall was awarded player of the match, although each member of the team should be equally congratulated for their contribution. It is certainly safe to say Cambridge were robbed of a well-deserved victory, if not merely a draw, in the last five minutes of play.



Cambridge push up the pitch in a surging attack but their flowing hockey was not enough to clinch a win

Varsity Football: A squad preview

Vince Bennici takes a look at how things are shaping up for the Blues with the Varsity match less than a month away.

Coming towards the end of what looks to be a positive league and cup campaign, captain Michael Johnson and coach Che Wilson will soon have to sit down for a discussion that may well determine the outcome of the 126th Varsity match.

A whole host of players are in contention to make the squad that

travels to London and only Johnson and Wilson will be able to decide the fate of the lucky 16 men.

Some very difficult selection decisions await them, and in anticipation of the big game, *Varsity* takes a look at the likely candidates and picks its own starting-XI.



Subs Bench

Ellis, Peacock, Burrows, Hylands, Gotch

Players to watch

Mark Baxter: The pacey winger can operate to devastating effect on either wing.

James Day: Day's aerial ability will cause problems from set-pieces.

Goalkeepers



Stuart Ferguson

College: King's

Goalkeeper



Chris Ellis

College: Jesus

Goalkeeper

The experienced keeper has been a member of the Blues squad for four years, only receiving his opportunity with the firsts in last year's Varsity match. A composed figure between the sticks his distribution and concentration look certain to see him retain his starting position this year.

Another experienced goalkeeper, Ellis has been unable to dislodge Ferguson from the number 1 spot, taking the captaincy of the Falcons instead and proving himself to be a reliable figure. Likely to make the bench in case anything happens to Ferguson.

Defenders



Chris Maynard

College: St John's

Full-back



Mark Johnson

College: Girton

Full-back

Played mainly at left-back this season, Maynard can play on either flank; defensively reliable and always willing to bomb forward, his consistent form in the League puts him in contention to start come Varsity.

Little brother of captain, Michael Johnson, Mark has won his place in the squad purely on merit, the little full-back making the right side his own. He missed out last year but looks set to feature this year.



Dan Gwyther

College: Wolfson

Centre-back



James Day

College: Jesus

Centre-back

One of the best additions to the Blues squad, Gwyther has forged a formidable partnership with James Day in the centre of defence. It's hard to look past, or get past, those two. As well as a great reader of the game, Gwyther's composure on the ball allows Cambridge to build attacks from the back.

When pundits describe a player as "an old-fashioned centre-half" they may as well be talking about James Day. Day's physical presence, bravery, and aerial ability are great compliments to Gwyther's elegance. Invaluable at his end and a real threat at the other, don't be surprised if he pops up at the back post to score from a set-piece.

Max Little
College: Trinity
Full-back

The naturally left-footed full-back, and current Blues vice-captain, has missed most of the season through injury. Little was a regular last year, but may miss out this time.

Chris Peacock
College: Trinity
Full-back

Peacock has pushed his way into contention this season, playing regularly for both the Blues and Falcons. Able to play in the centre or at full-back he could make the bench.

Midfielders



Michael Johnson

College: Jesus

Centre-mid/Striker



Mark Baxter

College: Selwyn

Winger

This year's captain is already a three-time Blue; playing previously upfront, the abundance of attackers provides Johnson with the opportunity to drop into his favoured midfield role. Orchestrating the play, Johnson is both combative and skilful.

Arguably the side's best performer, Baxter's tight ball skills make him hard to dispossess and his turn of pace make him even harder to catch. He also provides the end product, a pretty prolific goal rate from midfield is matched by his assist record.



Paul Hartley

College: Fitzwilliam

Centre-mid



Eddie Burrows

College: Fitzwilliam

Centre-mid

A tireless worker, Hartley provides great coverage for the defence and has vision that matches his range of passing. By his own admission he should have contributed a few more goals from midfield, his early morning walks taking its toll on the pitch.

Finally got his Blues blazer after last year's Varsity appearance (not that you would have noticed considering how infrequently he wears it). Burrows would love to take part again but might struggle to remove Hartley and Johnson.



Ross Broadway

College: Caius

Centre-mid/Winger



Jack Hylands

College: Girton

Centre-mid

Broadway has done exceptionally well in his first year, regularly featuring for the Falcons as well as earning numerous call-ups to the first team. Also effective on the wings, Broadway could be in with a chance of making the bench.

There were rumblings that he should have been more involved in the first team last season. This year he's started to make his mark for the Blues. When on-form he can dictate play; time will tell if he's done enough to win a place in the squad.

Jamie Rutt
College: Trinity
Winger

Although not as direct or pacey as Baxter, last year's captain does possess a cultured left foot and is comfortable on either flank. He also has an eye for goal.

Max Wolke
College: Fitzwilliam
Winger

Max's hard work in training and fine performances for the Falcons have put him in contention. He provides width and could stand an outside chance of making the squad.

Strikers



Matt Stock

College: St Catz

Striker

Make no mistake this man WILL score. In his last Varsity match he picked up two goals and his scintillating form evince his clinical finishing. The question is not whether Stock will play, but who will play with him.



Matt Amos

College: Queens'

Striker

A drunken injury spoiled Amos' rigorous pre-season preparations. When he returned to action he had certainly lost the sharpness that made him a first team regular last season. Time, and perhaps Gardies, will be the biggest enemies for Amos' aspirations.



Chris Gotch

College: Trinity

Striker

Returning from his year abroad in Japan, Gotch sat out the majority of first term injured. Good form in the Christmas La Manga tour gives him a good chance of making the squad.



Danny Kerrigan

College: Fitzwilliam

Striker

The fresher capitalised on the injuries to key striking personnel at the start of the season to stake his claim for a starting jersey at the first year of asking.

The women's team have no luck against Oxford either

Hockeyp30



SPORT



Preview of the Varsity Football with all the player profiles

Footballp31

HOCKEY

Cambridge hurt in hockey Varsity match

Cambridge fail to recover from slow start as Oxford's well worked set pieces pay off

	CAMBRIDGE	1
	OXFORD	3

VARSITY SPORT

The 110th Men's Varsity Match saw Oxford overcome the Light Blues to claim the trophy, with a superior first half performance ultimately proving to be the difference between the two sides. Following a narrow last minute Oxford victory in the women's fixture, the defeat capped off a disappointing day for the Cambridge teams.

The game started at a fast tempo, as Oxford looked to deprive the Cambridge midfielders of time with their intense pressuring in the middle of the pitch. Oxford had the early impetus, as their forward players combined to threaten the Cambridge circle. Stalwart Dave Saunders, collecting his fourth Blue, and his central defensive partner, Simon Sampson, did well to snuff out many of the early Dark Blue attacks. Eventually, however, Cambridge succumbed to the Oxford pressure, and a barrage of Oxford short corners ensued. The first of these was squandered by the Oxford flicker, who failed to test Robinson in the Cambridge goal. The next attempt produced a fine save from the Light Blue goalkeeper, diving adeptly to his right-hand side to block the strike with his stick. It was, however, a case of third time lucky for Oxford, as the next corner was firmly dispatched into the corner of the goal to give them a 1-0 lead.

Cambridge attempted to put the Oxford defenders under pressure by stepping up the pitch, yet struggled to turn over the ball in doing so, and conceded another pair of corners from quick Oxford counter-offensives. The penalty corner specialist aimed the first of these at Cambridge's left-hand post, but Dave Madden's remarkable hand-eye co-ordination prevented Cambridge from conceding another goal as the top-corner-bound attempt was spectacularly blocked on the line by the defender's outstretched stick.



Cambridge struggle to retain possession in the centre of the park and subsequently fail to take control of the match

The Light Blues would not, however, be so fortunate with the next strike, which again found the corner of the goal to double Oxford's lead.

Cambridge finally started to find some joy in attack, with a quality through-ball from Chris Lee finding Stuart Jackson on the break. The Cambridge captain linked up well with Constantin Boye to create the Light Blues' first real scoring chance, though Boye's goal-bound flick was well deflected by the Oxford goalkeeper. Oxford's early lead had clearly given them a complacent air, which was not tolerated by the umpires, as a succession of their players were sin-binned for dissent and cynical challenges. In the dying minutes of the half, another Cambridge break found a way into the Oxford circle, with forward Paul

Hicks unlucky not to close the deficit with an effort from near the baseline.

Two goals down at half-time, the need for Cambridge to improve their ball retention and to put the Oxford players under pressure was clear. Cambridge enjoyed a period of dominance early in the half. The introduction of Nick Parkes, who had recovered from a broken finger, was key in providing additional strength and penetrative power to the Cambridge ranks, and the side's continuous pressure led to a series of Light Blue corners. Unfortunately, the Cambridge corner routine was not as effective as Oxford's and several chances came to nothing.

As the half progressed, the need to convert one of their chances became ever more apparent. As they

committed more players forward, Oxford were able to win another penalty corner on the counter. As the half was coming to a close Oxford extended their lead to 3-0 and the match was effectively over. There was still time for Cambridge to threaten Oxford's goal as Parkes fired a stinging reverse-stick effort narrowly over the crossbar, and in the last play of the game, Cambridge were able to score a consolation goal as Saunders converted a well-worked corner routine.

Though the result was not the desired one, and the disappointment of the Cambridge Blues was evident, the side will acknowledge a more clinical performance from their Oxford counterparts, and should take heart from their second

half improvement. As the season draws to a close, they will now hope to secure an unbeaten run-in in the East Premier League.

Summary	
Starting Line up (4-3-3):	
GK	Chris Robinson
LB	Dave Madden
CB	Simon Sampson
CB	Dave Saunders
RB	Adam Gordon
LM	Pete Mackenney
CM	Dave Bell
RM	Bastiaan Leerkotte
LF	Chris Lee
CF	Stuart Jackson (c)
RF	Dan Quarshie
Subs:	
Graeme Morrison, Nick Parkes, Rob Mahen, Constantine Boye, Paul Hicks	
Goalscorer:	
Dave Saunders	