

VC Alison Richard made a Dame

Queen's Honours list recognises several senior Cambridge academics

JESSIE WALDMAN

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and two other leading Cambridge academics were among those commended in Saturday's Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Professor Alison Richard, who has worked as Vice-Chancellor for seven years and is the first woman to have held this position full-time, has been appointed Dame Commander of the British Empire (DBE) for services to Higher Education.

As an undergraduate, Richard studied Anthropology at Newnham College. She then went on to pursue an academic career, spending thirty years at Yale. During her time as Vice-Chancellor, Dame Richard has introduced needs-based bursaries, a key part of the ongoing challenge to widen access to Cambridge for students from poorer backgrounds.

She has emphasized the importance of Alumni in the future of the University, celebrating Cambridge's 800th anniversary by raising £1 billion in donations from past students.

Professor Athene Donald, another highly influential woman in Cambridge academia, was appointed Dame Commander of the British Empire (DBE) for services to Physics. As Deputy Head of the Cavendish

Laboratory and Director of the Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Initiative (WiSETI), Dame Donald has a specific interest in promoting women's careers in science. In 2009 she was awarded the L'Oreal/UNESCO Women in Science Award for Europe in recognition of her work in the field of protein aggregation and cellular biophysics. In 2006, on being appointed head of the Athena forum, she commented, "I hope [this] acts as an encouragement to young women thinking of pursuing scientific careers without giving up family life."

Professor Colin Humphries from Selwyn College gained a knighthood for services to science. Sir Colin is founder and director of the Cambridge Centre for Gallium Nitride. The

Centre is developing energy-efficient lighting which, if widely adopted, could potentially save the amount of energy equivalent to seven power stations. Using similar technology, he is also developing a new way to purify water and to kill hospital superbugs.

The Honours list does not only reward intellectual endeavours. Three women in Cambridgeshire received an OBE: Catherine Crawford, executive of the Metropolitan Police Authority, Former News reporter Susan Davies, and domestic abuse campaigner Gaynor Mears.



PAUL SMITH

May Ball season starts with a bang at Robinson

Celebrations for May Week began on Friday night with Robinson's spectacular firework display cringing out across the city. Elsewhere garden parties, dinners, balls and concerts have been springing into life. Queens' began its festivities on Friday with an outdoor cinema screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* projected onto the side of the Erasmus building, and carried on the party with its annual outdoor mega-bop, 'Bounce', last night. The Union, The Wyverns, and the Marguerites and Hippolytans all held their famous garden parties over the weekend, and there were other events and balls at Emmanuel, Hughes Hall, Downing and Murray Edwards. Festivities continue tonight with balls at Clare, Jesus and Trinity.

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Play your cards right with 40s classics



The Weekend's Ballsp5

Robinson May Ball, Hughes' Hall May Ball and Emmanuel June Event reviewed



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Classics blogger Mary Beard interviewed inside

Got a good picture? Email it to editor@varsity.co.uk



Volleyball at the Wyverns Garden Party



Bouncy castle fun at King's



The St Margaret Society of Queens' May Week concert



Punts on the Cam



Revellers at the Wyverns' Garden Party



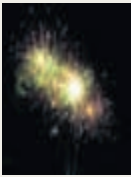
A piano on a pair of punts by King's was part of a fundraising event for Help the Heroes, a charity for wounded servicemen and women

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onpaper



Ball Reviewsp5

Our coverage of the Cambridge May Balls begins with Robinson's 'Folie d'une Nuit'. Find out what our reviewer thought inside.



Featuresp10-11

Read our interview with classics blog supremo Mary Beard, and peruse the Varsity May Week archives.



Reviewspl3

Maggi Hambling's 'The Wave' goes under the spotlight, along with the Footlights Tour Show.



Sportpl6

The World Cup has begun and so has Varsity's World Cuppers – check it out on the back page.

online



Secret Diary of a Ball-crasher

Love them or hate them, ballcrashers are a fact of life. Varsity condones nothing they divulge in this totally made-up blog.



Gaming

The E3 tradeshow in Los Angeles kicks off next week, and Varsity Online's gaming blog has a roundup of the highlights.

onTV



Fix up look Sharpe...

Stylish fella extraordinaire James Sharpe talks us through the Balls prep process, and warns of the Seven Deadly Sins...



vTV archives

The complete VarsiTV archives are available online. Missed the Cindies Stories finale?

Clare members warned about punting

College history of river accidents leads Senior Tutor to advise caution this week

LAURA VALE

Students at Clare College have been warned of the dangers of drinking near the Cam this May Week, after previous years' celebrations resulted in serious injuries.

In an email to students last week, Clare College Senior Tutor Dr Patricia Fara advised students to stay out of the river during post-exam festivities.

May Week, and the infamous Suicide Sunday in particular, is often celebrated with outdoor parties by the river and previous alcohol-fuelled antics have included jumping onto bridges from punts and throwing friends in.

The email stated: "I realise that to warn you about punting and the river may sound over-protective and boring, but during the last five years, two members of Clare have been in intensive care and nearly died after accidents on the river."

May Week drinking can often lead to trips to Addenbrooke's. In a *Varsity* survey published recently, one third of respondents said that they had injured themselves while drinking and the danger is particularly acute by the river.

In May 2006, a student at Clare College was seriously injured after falling onto a submerged punt pole. Clare College now bans access into the Cam from college property.



JULIA CAROLYN LICHNOVA

The river Cam contains several hidden hazards including submerged punt poles, shopping trolleys and bacteria

Dr Fara warned of the main dangers including sharp objects below the surface, such as old bicycles and supermarket trolleys, and infectious organisms that may cause fatal illness.

The email has received a mixed reaction in Clare College. One first year student, who is planning to go punting with family members this May Week said, "I don't mind swimming but I don't want to swim in the Cam!"

Another points out that receiving

the same email twice was surprising and mentions that it is not just students who jump in the river, "but also local kids".

Some students considered the warnings excessive. A third year Caius student commented, "Going in the river is an integral part of Cambridge celebrations. You just have to be careful where you jump in."

However, most students planned to heed the warning; a third year from Queens' said: "You don't want

to curb people's fun, but it's probably quite a sensible suggestion."

It is not just Cambridge students whose river-based adventures have made the news in recent years. In November 2009, members of King's College London Boat Club were seen jumping naked into the Cam during a mini-break called 'The Spy Who Ginned Me'.

Over in Oxford in 2005, forty people were injured after jumping in the River Cherwell in a tradition to mark May Day.

'Jokey' exam questions leave students baffled



CHARLOTTE RUNCIE

Students taking Tripos exams this term have expressed frustration after being faced with "bizarre" examination questions.

Cambridge has a reputation for quirky phrasing in the tests it sets students, but this year some of the questions have been seen as deliberately perverse.

The question "Why so many sperm?" was set in the essay paper for the Human Reproduction exam, which is a component of the Part 1B Medical Science Tripos.

Tom Morley, a second year medic from Queens', commented: "The question is probably trying to ask why, on average, the male ejaculate contains 30 million sperm despite the fact that only one is needed to fertilise an egg. But, given the wording, it could equally be trying to ask about the mechanisms of sperm production and why a male can produce so many sperm."

"The really frustrating thing is that a deliberately ambiguous, jokey question can usually be avoided if there are a large number of essay titles to choose from.

"In this exam, however, we had to write two essays out of five, and given that one was an essay about ethics (which many will have decided not to prepare at all), it is likely that lots of people were forced into having a go at a question that was essentially the examiners having a bit of a laugh."

Another male medical student, who wished to remain anonymous, said the question was "ambiguous and grammatically iffy. But funny."

It has been seen as so eccentric that some students have set up a Facebook group in its honour. The group had 154 members at the time of writing, which represents the majority of second-year medical students.

Most of the members had used the exam question as an excuse to post jokes on the wall of the group, but one frustrated medic simply wrote: "But WHHHYY!?"

Unpopular exam questions have not been limited to the Department of Medicine. Second year English students taking the compulsory Shakespeare Part I examination were posed the question: "Do Shakespeare's works hold any answers for the credit-crisis generation?"

One English student complained: "The question is asking you to speculate on how we should deal with the recession, which isn't really relevant

to English Literature."

But another second-year English student, Georgina Bryan, chose to answer the question in the exam. She said: "Taking it on will probably prove to have been either a great idea or an incredibly foolish one, but one hour into the exam and panicking, it seemed like a good gamble to take. At least I'll have avoided the dumping of pre-prepared answers which examiners continually warn against – and who's to say *Antony and Cleopatra* doesn't hold the answer to the credit crisis?"

Finance, trading and investment feature in several of Shakespeare's plays. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio the merchant says to Bassanio: "Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea; / Neither have I money nor commodity / To raise a present sum."

Such a statement could be seen as reminiscent of the insubstantial nature of modern stock trading.

Controversy over Cambridge exam questions last erupted in 2008, when lyrics from Amy Winehouse's song 'Love is a Losing Game' were used as part of a final year Practical Criticism exam question.

Third year English students were asked to compare the extract, along with other lyrics by Bob Dylan and Billie Holiday, with work by Sir Walter Raleigh.

News in Brief

Cambridge raises £1 billion

Cambridge has become the first university outside the United States to raise £1 billion in a fundraising campaign.

Thanks to the donations of more than 45,000 alumni, the amount has been achieved two years ahead of schedule, and does not include more than £250 million extra in pledged bequests.

University Vice-Chancellor Professor Alison Richard welcomed the funding, claiming that it would help to sustain the University's "international pre-eminence."

The money raised will be used to "encourage applicants regardless of their financial circumstances" as well as to fund new buildings for research and student accommodation, and attract new academic staff.

Union elections

Elections for the Cambridge Union Society Lent 2011 Committee will be held today.

Presidential candidates include King's JCR President, Juan Zober de Francisco, Lauren Davidson, current Executive Officer at the Union and Andy Li, Computer Scientist from Trinity College.

Candidates spoke at the Union Garden Party on Sunday encouraging members to come out and vote.

Results will be announced on Tuesday.

Butterflies prevent fraud

The wings of butterflies could soon change the security of paper money, making bank fraud a thing of the past.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge have discovered a way to mimic the composition of colours found on butterfly wings, which change under different lights and angles. If these complex reflections can be printed onto bank notes it would make it difficult for forgeries to be produced.

FITZBILLIES

52 Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1RG

FREE CHELSEA BUN

With every purchase over £2.00 in the shop

OR

FREE MORNING COFFEE/TEA

(9am-12pm)

With any cake or pastry in the restaurant

on presentation of this voucher
and proof of student status

Cambridge Spies



Gravel Pitt

Lovely party in the clit pub. Really very lovely.

But the evening kicked off rather early for one right honourable lady, who sent Lusty Etonian Number One back to her boudoir, brimming with promises and drowning in proposals, to await her return.

Before the night was through, however, she'd quickly acquired another suitor, Lusty Etonian Number Two, we shall call him.

Number Two was led, by hand, back to said dwelling for a love-in and told to make his own way up whilst our brazen lady freshened up. She promptly fell asleep atop her throne.

Etonians One and Two quickly became acquainted, however, and the right honourable lady was not really missed amidst the heat of the night.

LaserPest

The stamp of any memorable May Week evening is, without a doubt, an hour spent groping around in the dark - unstable, drunkenly violent and yet determined to carry on.

Laserquest is the unfailing 2am pick-me-up. Adolescent memories add to the fun. Until, that is, one Prince Charming, one true gentleman, decides that a dark corner of the battlefield is the most appropriate place to relieve himself. Slippery floor, yellow shore, accidents galore.

Mecca Me Laugh

Two houses of this university, both alike in dignity, standing and repute – the Cambridge University Footlights and the Arabic Society to be precise – forged exciting new relations last Friday evening.

At what can only be described as a crisis meeting in a well known theatre bar, an eminent comedian dished out some of his very best lines and proffered his services to one of Cambridge's eastern jewels. Five times a day? Not quite – but an impressive thrice in the ADC toilets isn't bad.

Exam results made available online before class lists

CUSU raises concern that the new system is still a source of anxiety

FIONA VICKERSTAFF

For the first time in 300 years the University of Cambridge has made exam results available online to students before displaying them publicly at Senate House.

Since the 18th century, students have discovered the results of their final examinations pinned to boards outside the Senate House. But pressure from some University groups has led to the tempering of this tradition due to fears that it is unnecessarily stressful for students.

Students are now able to access their results at 9am on the day that they are released before they are made public at 4.30pm in the traditional class lists.

The change follows a campaign by CUSU who branded the ritual as "humiliating". Ant Bagshaw, CUSU Education Officer, commented: "Posting the exam results is tradition for tradition's sake and there is no justification in it. The big stress is

other people finding out your exam results before you. There is a lot of student anxiety about it."

However, Mr Bagshaw has some reservations about the extent of the change. He said it was "better than the old system but we feel it is not enough. We are campaigning for a full 48 hours between results being sent to students and then being made public and are hoping this will be implemented next year. We also believe students should have the right to withdraw from class lists so their results do not get displayed publicly, but the University says this would be extremely time consuming."

It is still difficult for students to erase their name entirely from the class lists. Individuals must apply to their college in advance to request for their name to be removed, and permission is only granted in exceptional circumstances, such as mental illness. Moreover, some anxiety remains regarding the publication of results of the Mathematics Tripos which will continue to be read out

from the balcony of Senate House.

Professor John Rallison, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, is positive about the reform: "Changes have been implemented to try to ensure that those students who wish to do so can have access to their exam results before they are posted on the Senate House notice boards. This should enable tradition to stand, while giving students options on how they receive their results."

However, one student said: "There has really been no change. The problem was that other students are able to see your personal exam results outside Senate House and that is still going to happen. If you get a good grade it's fine for everyone to know about your success, but there's always the chance that you may not do so well. In that case, you want the results to be as private as possible."

TIM JOHNS



England flags banned

Cambridge Council restricts displays of St George's flags on Riverside homes

FIONA VICKERSTAFF

Residents of the Riverside area of Cambridge have been banned from flying the England flag throughout the World Cup as it could be deemed "offensive".

Atlantis Estates, property managers of St Bartholomew's Court, asked residents to take down their flags before the World Cup began, warning residents that flying the flag would breach their leasehold agreements. They also maintained, "It is considered that the flags are a nuisance and could be offensive to others."

Wherry Housing Association, who wrote the letter at the request of Atlantis Estates, allows flags to be flown in its other city properties.

They said, "We think this is ridiculous and we were reluctant to send the letter. We have streets we manage here in Arbury that are covered in England flags. Residents have put on a fantastic display of support for England."

One of the 80 residents of St Bartholomew's court, Bridie Lenagham, was

ordered to take down her England flag from her balcony before England's first World Cup game against the USA. She said: "I just think the whole thing is ridiculous. It's only for a couple of weeks. It's disappointing the company has done this."

Her flag has now been moved indoors and hangs in her window overlooking the River Cam.

Another resident ripped the letter from Wherry Housing Association in outrage. He said, "It's just totally pathetic. If you can't fly the flag during the World Cup then we might as well just give up. I don't know what this company is thinking. The flag is not offensive. That's like saying England is offensive."

Nevertheless, Andrew Strong, managing director of Atlantis Estates, remains loyal to the decision, "We have been trying to get that flag down for two or three weeks. This is not about offending other people but is part of the leasehold agreement which some residents have asked us to act on. If we were to allow this there are 80 or 90 flats that could have lots of different flags flying."

COLIN GREGORY PALMER



Professor sinks teeth into benefits of fake meat

HELEN PITTAM

A Cambridge scientist has claimed that the development of synthetic meat could help to slow down climate change.

In an essay entitled 'Culturing Meat For The Future: Anti-Death Versus Anti-Life', Caius Prof. Brian Ford claims that the mass production of animal muscle tissue would provide a healthier and more environmentally friendly alternative to conventional meat.

The renowned academic, also a TV and radio broadcaster, believes the current consumption of animal meat is unsustainable.

Livestock farming is responsible for a large amount of greenhouse emissions. Ford believes that the widespread acceptance of "cultured" meat would eliminate the need for most of the livestock population.

By producing the synthetic meat near urban areas and developing long-life products that wouldn't require refrigeration, the CO2 emitted through transport and electricity could also be reduced.

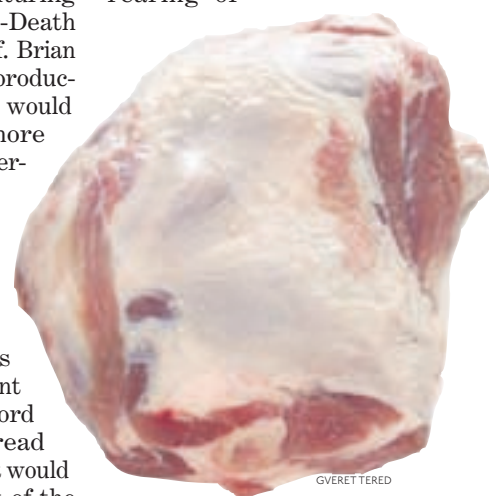
Fewer animals to feed would also mean fewer nitrate fertilisers, which can damage waterways by causing low levels of oxygen.

With the demand for agricultural land greatly reduced, Ford claims food for the entire world could be produced within an area the size of an industrial estate.

Prof. Ford also claims further benefits for the product. By reducing

fat and adding vital omega oils, he says that cultured meat could be a healthier addition to a balanced diet.

Vegans and vegetarians who restrict their diets for ethical reasons are expected to welcome the news. The process could eradicate controversial farming practices, including the rearing of



GVERETTERED

battery chickens.

Cultured meat is made by growing muscle cells in a laboratory; a method that many believe would be cheaper and more efficient than traditional farming.

But the reaction among Cambridge students has been less than positive. A first-year Historian, who is a vegetarian, said: "I don't eat meat, but that's mainly because I don't like its taste and texture. Prof. Ford's recommendations haven't convinced me."

No cultured meat has yet been produced for public consumption. Some scientists claim that the process is only in need of a commercial backer for it to become widely available.

Ball Reviews



PAUL SMITH

Delights aplenty in Paris after dark

40000

Number of jelly beans

2km

Total distance of electrical cabling used to wire the ball

1400

Number of guests

13

Number of committee members

20

Number of units of alcohol bought per person

Folie d'une Nuit

ROBINSON MAY BALL

★★★★★

What's a May Ball but some fireworks, a band and a chocolate fountain?

All these hallmarks of decadence exist at Robinson's annual May Week-launching shindig, but at £75 a ticket, these cost a snip of its wealthier competitors' equivalents. *Folie d'une Nuit* affirmed the college's reputation for hosting Cambridge's best value Ball, celebrating the end of a proud term where noted alumni of the red brick fortress have been elected Deputy Prime Minister and become engaged to Charlie Brooker.

Joining a queue snaking along Grange Road an hour before opening time, the wait was enlivened by a burlesque troupe of mademoiselles, complimenting ball-goers' attire in accents more Essex than Parisian. Once inside, though, the triumphant 'Paris After Dark' theme became apparent. Draped with red carpets and adorned by projected images of

the Eiffel Tower and the Moulin Rouge, the college resembled a Gallic wonderland, whose splendour only grew as the sun set.

The drinks and cuisine on offer were diverse, complementary to the French theme for enthusiastic foodies. Sure, sparkling wine, as opposed to champers, is an inevitable fixture at a budget Ball, but after a few glasses of the stuff, it hardly makes a difference. And not even the canteen-like surroundings of Robinson's Garden Restaurant, under the moniker of Le Restaurant du Jardin, could detract from the tastiness of the coq au vin, goats cheese wraps and tartiflette rebblechon being served. Outside, in the spectacularly lit garden, hog roasts, doughnuts and crepes were devoured. Les grenouilles and escargots were conspicuously absent in this Parisian night-world. On the other hand, drinks abounded. A venture into the trees was rewarded by an array of luridly coloured cocktails.

Following an exceptional fireworks display, *Où Est Le Swimming Pool* and *Two Door Cinema Club* played on the main stage. The highly-danceable indie

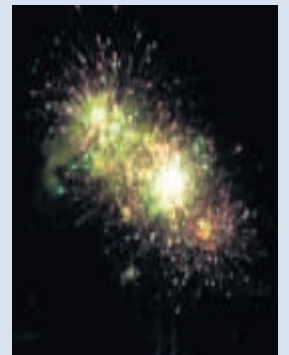
pop of the latter, signed to hip French label Kitsuné, made them a perfect choice of band. While Paris is renowned for its electronic music, Alex Metric proved no Daft Punk, despite his best attempts. The Radio One DJ disappointingly failed to fill the tent even to half-capacity during the traditional 'off-your-face-and-in-need-of-a-dance' 1 am slot.

Instead, King's EllaFunks fared better. The charms of Ella Jones and her saxophone-tooting men packed the tent out for their breakfast appearance, proving a fitting musical accompaniment to the energy-injecting pain au chocolat and coffee.

It was the abundance of options (underground silent disco, anyone?), impossible to cram into eight hours, which defined the Ball. Often the magic lay in the unexpected. News of an unfortunate urine-based incident couldn't detract from the appeal of the Laser Quest, and, after a couple of Pimms, a giddy stint on the ball pit-cum-bouncy castle resulted in another of the remarkable evening's countless highlights.

PAUL SMITH

Balls in Brief



Hughes Hall May Ball

★★★★★

Whilst Hughes Hall may lack the age and prestige of fellow colleges, the spirit of the college and the sense of pride among the students shone through as the ball kicked off May Week.

There were a few nuisances throughout the night, mainly in the lack of readily available food and the stilted pace between entertainment. However, the main acts were top class entertainment on a low budget. The CU Ceileadh band kicked off the night, followed by the amazing Selwyn Jazz Band, all leading up to the main act – a Lady Gaga tribute. Though Gaga was at times awkward, particularly with audience members, it was a fitting tribute and she proved to be thoroughly entertaining, filling the dance floor with guests.

Other attractions included a ferris wheel, a masseuse, free manicures courtesy of Marks and Spencer, as well as live owls (the mascot of Hughes) from the World Owl Trust. And of course, it had all the perks of a smaller ball – hardly any queues and no claustrophobia-inducing crowds on the dance floors.

COURTNEY WILKINSON

Emmanuel June Event

★★★★★

"Welcome to Hollywood!" The Emmanuel June Event was certainly a heady mix of movie decadence and silver screen entertainment. Revellers wandered through a subway, emerging into a 'behind-the-scenes' LA world, complete with giant film reel, huge city skylines and even Johnny Depp sinking in a pirate ship. The Ents team managed to cater for all tastes, The English summer didn't play along all the time, but the food injected a more summery vibe, keeping the hungry hordes happy, as did an almost baffling range of cocktails. After the unfortunate controversy over last year's theme, the empire certainly did strike back.

ALICE HANCOCK

Overrated



Sophie Dahl

What's so evil about Sophie Dahl? She's just a sub-standard Nigella Lawson, drifting apple-cheekedly around a mocked up country kitchen, pressing herself up against hot Agas, and putting her finger unnecessarily often into her mouth. That's all. And yet she represents a greater evil than even this – she is a prime example of that unchecked cultural plague: the multitasking model.

At least Tyra Banks has the good grace to make it clear she's a complete nutcase when she asks us to buy into her latest piece of self promotion. She makes no real attempt to align herself with her public; rather she stands triumphantly above us, glancing over the ever-expanding empire of her tepid film cameos and book deals, sternly reminding her myrmidons to 'smile with the eyes'. But not Sophie – no, she is desperate to be her audience's infuriatingly beautiful gal-pal. She presents herself to viewers of cookery series *The Delicious Miss Dahl* or readers of *Miss Dahl's Voluptuous Delights* (sadly a recipe book) as a trustworthy, slightly naughty acquaintance. The kind of perfect friend who pops round your house with a dusting of flour on her pert cleavage asking if you'd like a slice of freshly baked banana bread, and could you possibly read the manuscript for her coming-of-age 'novel'? Frankly Sophie, I'd rather bang my head repeatedly with the oven door than read your book – and it seems the public agree.

Lovely Sophie is an example of the consequences that come from being beautiful, fairly intelligent, and never having experienced a day of disappointment. The result? Her awful belief that anything she is remotely capable at, whether picking up a pen or using the toaster, must be transmitted to the public, celebrated, and glossily photographed. Sophie confuses being capable with being able. Sadly, her brand of cuddly, faux-bohemian lifestyle porn will continue to sell so long as self-hating yummy-mummies continue to offer a captive, clamouring audience.

VICTORIA BEALE

Comment

"It is disappointing that a politician nicknamed 'two brains' could label all students in such an obtuse manner."

TOM CHIGBO

David Willetts: student myth-maker

The foolish remarks made by the new universities minister merely perpetuate the ridiculous myth that all students are lazy, drunk, privileged, and a waste of public money



TOM CHIGBO

Last week, David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities, described students as "a burden on the taxpayer", due to the high cost of degrees and the student loan system. While Willetts is right to be thinking creatively about how to fund higher education, it is disappointing that a politician clever enough to have been nicknamed "two brains" could label students in such an obtuse manner. Frankly, his remarks undervalue the importance of higher and further education to our economy and the contribution of students to our society.

New NUS President, Aaron Porter, led the chorus of outraged students challenging Willetts' words, stating that students are

"the innovators, professionals and public servants that will drive the economic recovery of the UK". Porter is right to assert the economic benefit of higher education to the UK. Taken together, UK universities contribute an estimated £59 billion to the economy each year, after receiving only £10 billion in public funding, which amounts to 10% less public investment as a proportion of GDP than the OECD average.

Furthermore, in a global economy where skills and knowledge acquired at universities are needed to gain access to an increasing number of trades and professions, higher education is a crucial driver of social mobility. We need more, not fewer, people to go to university and the state owes it to our poorest and most deprived communities to continue supporting students through higher education. But while schools, hospitals, and other public services are vehemently defended from all corners of society, tertiary education continues to be deemed an optional indulgence too expensive for the public purse. This tragic situation relies on a number of misconceptions about universities as remote ivory towers and students as lazy, drunk, privileged

kids returning from "gap yahs" in Peru. During the General Election students in many constituencies were inexplicably forced to queue separately from "residents" on polling day. Later they were casually blamed by officials for the fact that hundreds of voters were turned away, unable to vote, at 10pm.

In reality, the debacle had much more to do with the poor planning, lack of resources and incompetence of officials who were quick to blame others. Whether it's applied to "chavs", immigrants, or bankers, scapegoating and stereotyping of this kind should always be unacceptable. However, with students making up a larger proportion of the UK than the populations of either Wales or Scotland, it is particularly worrying that cheap mischaracterisations abound. The reality differs greatly from the picture painted by Willetts. Most students hold full or part-time jobs alongside their studies. Their generally healthier lifestyles mean they rely less on the NHS

than the rest of the population. They make valuable contributions to their communities through academic pursuits, social activities and voluntary work. Their clubs, societies and students' unions are often standard bearers of community cohesion and support the vulnerable by providing a number of important services. Universities and their students must work together to promote this positive impact. The challenge in Cambridge is perhaps as great as anywhere in the UK, due to the historical divisions between "town" and "gown" and the physical separations between College and community.

However our ability to do this could have a huge impact on how higher education is funded and ultimately, how much students are made to pay. I have represented students for a year and seen their positive contributions to Cambridge. If Willetts disagrees with me, I am happy to introduce him to the amazing work of Cambridge students and convince him otherwise.



A man on Mars may mean life after earth

Necessity suggests we could head to the red planet. Greed will take us there



OLI MCFARLANE

Whoever you are, I can summarise your life in three words. Work. Play. Die. You may strut around the college ball like a big shot, but beyond this bubble you're a nothing. And in the context of the universe, you needn't bother existing. You and your Cambridge degree can't change anything.

But surely humanity as a whole has an aim? Is there a use for our accumulated knowledge? Universal healthcare, free movement of people and gross domestic product won't matter a jot at the time of the apocalypse.

Perhaps our fundamental aim, then, should be our most primal: survival. Settling other worlds is the ultimate means to achieve this, and Mars, with its similar gravity and comparatively hospitable conditions, is the first step. Obviously. We won't be shipping people to Mars to preserve our kind though. The settlers of the New World had no illusions of a grand purpose, they were escaping religious persecution. The first to go West across America did it to stake their claim on land. The Europeans in Australia were exiles. Humanity shares no

overarching vision and we don't care for each other very much – not as individuals; not as members of the human race.

No, we will go to Mars for its resources. Science thought it ludicrous to drill oil from the sea bed, right up until the point it became affordable. So when we can mine rare metals on Mars, we will. And without the vexations of wildlife or an indigenous population our plans would not be frustrated. Indeed, to the question: Is there life on Mars? We may offer a stout and jubilant reply: Nope.

It takes nine months to travel to Mars with current technology. Limited by the speed of light a message to Earth would take up to 20 minutes at times, any reply 40. Those transferring to Mars would be there to stay. These colonies will

of course be dependent on cargo drops from Earth, but not as a form of welfare or relief – rather, to make up the balance of trade. Tough and dangerous work will be well rewarded. Settlers emigrating to Martian outposts will form their own societies. Children born on Mars would have a life, a job, and no reason to return to Earth.

Our descendants will live naturally on an engineered planet. Even biologically we are prepared, given that our body clock is eerily in sync with the Martian day that lasts just 40 minutes longer than ours. Our nature is to consume and to compete and we will not stop at Mars.

Mankind will survive, whether we are able to work together or not, whether we like each other or not. We have all the time in the universe.

Confidently incompetent

The public may always think it knows best, but our new Prime Minister would do well to reign in their worrying suspicion of competency. Sadly, his education policy suggests otherwise



WILL GHOSH

There's nothing more annoying than a lay-man who 'knows best'. What's particularly annoying about it is that almost everyone I've ever met is culpable, myself particularly so. Barely a day goes by when I don't fantasise about telling a trained professional in some remote and complicated field exactly how I feel he should be doing his job; when I don't strut around informing all who'll listen that I could do a better job than Emile Heskey if only Fabio would put me on the plane. The idea of competence is deeply unfashionable in a furiously enfranchised society. It is no longer possible to win an argument by asserting that I have a Ph.D in

this subject whereas you have half a GCSE; that I have worked in Whitehall for forty years, you first googled 'politics' last Tuesday.

This sometimes saddens me. I would sometimes like to say "I'm right, because I know more about this than you" or even "I agree with her because she knows more than me", but it's correct that I can't, usually.

One of the main criticisms of the 'amateur-who-knows-better' is that it is in principle very easy to learn facts, but much harder to understand systems; anyone can have a narrow knowledge, but not everyone can have a broad understanding. You may have an opinion on feet, but this does not make you a podiatrist. This feud is best illustrated in the Post Office queue: I would have no problem whatsoever explaining to the assistant how I might get what I need right now, but I'd be stumped if asked to come up with a system which could get everybody what they needed immediately.

That said, the reason 'competence' should remain a taboo, that lay-people should be allowed to express their annoying opinions freely and without prejudice is

because it is democratic. The theory is that everybody's narrow, self-centred opinions when combined and squashed into parliamentary form, should create a kind of meta-opinion, centred on the narrow self of the entire body of the franchise. This, of course, only works if everybody is actively enfranchised; lop a limb off the body politic and this system will no longer cater for them – not even in theory.

David Cameron and Michael Gove would do well to remember this before they push through their new 'Do-It-Yourself Schools' policy. In principle it sounds great: if everybody could work to create a school that was perfectly tailored to their child we might theoretically get a school system which worked for every child. But not everybody can.

The franchise only extends here to the sufficiently educated, or the sufficiently well off, or those with

enough security to give up a stable job for such a project. In other words, the middle classes; more specifically, pushy parents. Yes, some particular visionaries will, with no professional background, create systems for the universal good. Equally, some methods

that work for children from rich backgrounds also work for those from deprived homes. But let's not be under any illusion: most won't, most don't. As a rule, systems cater for those who create them. In basing his educational policy on DIY Schools, in allowing their existence at all, Cameron is in grave danger of creating anew a system that is well suited to the needs of the rich, and fails the disadvantaged.

Teaching professionals and Local Education Authorities – not parent pressure groups – are employed and trained to give the greatest educational benefit to the greatest number; that is the cornerstone of comprehensive education. Unless we can come up with a system in which everybody can genuinely contribute for the good of everybody, this is one area where the taboo of competence must be broken.

“Barely a day goes by when I don't strut around informing all who'll listen that I could do a better job than Emile Heskey”

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Julia Carolyn Lichnova gleans long-lost gems from the Varsity Archives, digging her way through the history of May Week – in print

So, after a rollercoaster ride of a mindboggling year, here you are in May Week. Those who have questioned its dubious title will have already dipped their toes in its history. And – let's face it – since its title is misleading to say

1952. “To a number of undergraduates, May Week is what Christmas was to Scrooge.” The cure to this middle-class malaise was May Weeks stories of old. Apparently, a rich St John's student once “turned his rooms into a sumptuous garden

front-page material, and trod the fine line between offending others and offending itself.

Writers of the sixties often took some of the most imaginative approaches to May Week. Quirky gatecrashing advice, such as “The ball-crashers' hands always get dirtier than the legitimate participants, so take a small polythene bag pack of Kleenex”, began to appear. While some journalists of this generation treasured May Week and its history, others treated it with disdain. “May Week is organised for people who like to think they're smarter, hipper, and more sophisticated than they are and since that's all of us, everybody has a good time,” bleats one such cynic. An article supposedly explaining The Bumps ends with a downhearted “You'll find things a lot easier when you buy a program”. Not much sixties spirit there, then.

Be that as it may – if you forgive the pun – these were very different times indeed. Back then, the best tea in Cambridge was at the Union, at 2s 6d. Back then, King's College, which now hosts the King's Affair every year, held one May Ball every two years. And back then, with flower power in full bloom, May Ball fashion advice was very à la mode – and put together with only the pleasure of the male undergraduate in mind. One proud headline boasts: “It doesn't matter what you wear, as long as He likes it!”, followed by a double-page spread of outfits He might like and why. Given that the female kind were so few and far between – a rare species found only at Newnham and Girton – *Varsity* would allot a special space on its back page to photographs of good-looking broads. Girls from outside Cambridge who were brought to May Balls were labelled ‘imported goods’. Despite this, some of the fashion editors' words of advice ring true even in this modern world: “Make-up,

hair-do, stockings – all those things you forgot during exams, or ignored the rest of the term, must now be put right,” they implore. And remember to “avoid bunched dresses, unless you're a beauty

CHASTITY belt required by Homerton girl for King's May Ball. Box 634.
THE EDITOR of “Varsity” will be grateful to anyone who can give him a job next year. Halliwell, St. Catharine's.

who'd look good in anything.” The dangers of the bunched dress: “They collect grass stains off the lawns, and break glasses, which could be dangerous.”

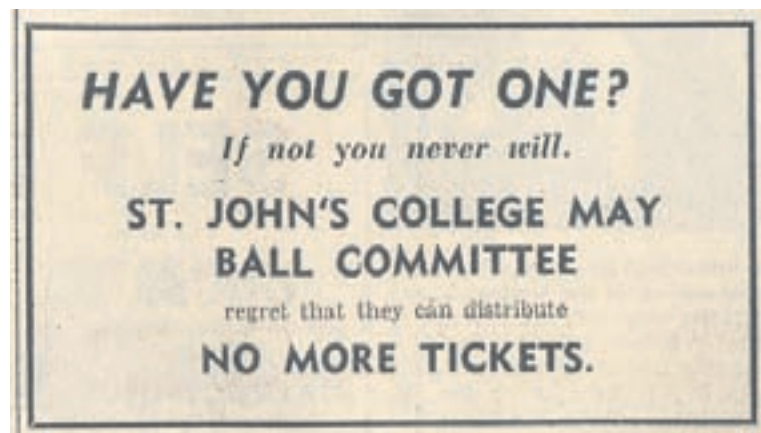
A pleasing bizzarerie of the 60s was the replacement of *Farcity* with an entertaining 8-page magazine, *May Week*, in which often not a single article related to

“Girls from outside Cambridge who were brought to May Balls were labelled ‘imported goods’.”

its title. Instead, the unsuspecting reader was presented with a cornucopia of agreeable factoids about organ rim trimming (“Cambridge colleges have long been strongholds of this demanding and highly specialised art”) and extended articles on flying saucers and bullfighting. A ‘Woman's Page’ gave girls advice on what to do when not ceding to patriarchal fashion trends, mostly consisting of throwing parties and cooking. This odd combination of the traditional and the unconventional clearly thrived, as epitomised by the following sentence. “The May Balls are the apogee of a Cambridge summer,” – coos a journalist who clearly expects the average reader to know that an apogee is a loose term for an apsis, the most far-away point from the Earth in an elliptical orbit – “... so if you are to compete, be the ultimate in female desirability.”

Later issues never quite prodded May Week from so many perspectives. Highlights include descriptions of duck racing and a guide to alcohols worthy of Withnail's Uncle Monty (“*Mayweek*, that major dome of vicarious pleasures announces again the scent of honey...”). From the mid-seventies to the late eighties *Varsity* merged with *STOP PRESS*, a radical student newspaper, and rarely covered May Week in detail. We know that there was, however, a tradition of punting to Grantchester for tea the morning after a ball. In 1972, the May Week edition of *Varsity* also made categorically no mention of any events but was printed entirely on pink paper. On the other hand, the 1992 paper punctiliously reviewed almost every ball. At Selwyn, it consisted of “no beer and lots of sweaty people sitting on the floor”, recommended only “for couples over 78”. Trinity had hot air balloon rides. Jesus Ball promised a hostess called Rosie, “the original sexagenarian raver”. St Catherine's Ball that year is, sadly, described only as “unfortunately, not a raunchy affair.”

Thus concludes my brief escapade into the realms of *Varsity* issues past. For dessert, perhaps you'd like to mull over King's students' attempts to launch Cambridge's first pirate radio station in May Week 1966. How about alternatives to May Balls – the Cambridge Midsummer Pop Festival of 1969, apparently “the greatest free pop extravaganza staged in Europe”, or the Alternative May Ball organised by the Corn Exchange in 1971? Perhaps dessert isn't necessary – we all knew the cherry on the cake of May Ball facts is that Peter Cook met his wife posing for a *Varsity* May Ball photoshoot. Or... did we?



the least, this is the case for most of us. Here instead are the May Week highlights which adorned Varsity issues of the past.

The paper was officially founded in 1947, and so we know that in the late forties, excited “fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles and aunts” came pouring into the city in May Week. However, this surely promising event was met with an ennui bordering on despondence. “Everyone finds it odious...”, mourns one writer in

– painting the ceiling blue and carpeting the floor with real turf which was duly watered each day”, a setup that lasted until the floor collapsed a week later. Despite the high entertainment value of this story, the '52 article concludes “May Week has lost its May Week touch”. Surely to combat this lapse in entertainment standards, *Varsity* published ‘*Farcity*.’ Self-subtitled ‘the degenerate newspaper’, this questionable publication came out every May Week in the late forties and early fifties. It turned the idea that some dons possessed a certain semblance to turtles into

GYPSIES
The greater demand than usual for Trinity tickets may have been due to the rumour that the Rolling Stones were appearing. Organiser Stephen Barron crushed this rumour. They are too expensive so we are going to have gypsies and people like that wandering around.

A few “Don'ts”: Don't take a coat or anything which would impede your instant escape. Don't give anyone your real name or college. Don't ever run away if a servant or porter appears (it looks so odd).



The Delightful Don

Mary Beard, Classics editor of the Times Literary Supplement, and author of the online blog, 'A Don's Life', talks to **Victoria Hermon** about Greek tragedy and May Week festivities

I was a little nervous about meeting Mrs Beard. Having been described as a 'staunch-feminist-classicist', a quick foray onto her Wikipedia profile confirmed this. Would I have anything in common with such a character; or would the interview fail after a stagnant ten minutes? My experience of feminism extends only so far as a few pieces of 'feminist' criticism for my Shakespeare exam; the most irritating of which critiqued imagined female characters in the tragedies. Aside from this, the only image my mind could conjure up was that she might ask me to burn my bra. Moreover, my grasp of Classics is somewhat limited. Having only studied Latin until I was 16, my knowledge can be encapsulated into a few sentences consisting of such over quoted phrases as 'Metella est Mater...Caecilius est in Horto'... I think that's right.

Fortunately, Mrs Beard's online blog, 'A Don's Life', is designed for people exactly like me. That is, with seriously stunted knowledge of the classical world. She intertwines stories from her day to day life as well as the news, with classical reference; ensuring that her readers are at once entertained and educated.

In spite of the blog's title, her entries are intended to dispel the stereotypical view of Cambridge academics as bumbling, port swilling fools, floating around in gardens or on punts. As she explained, she "would love to dine at high table every night... but I'm just too bloody busy."

Instead, the blog is about her everyday findings: reflections on her students, her subject and her work. A recent entry discusses her concerns for how best to prepare her Newnham finalists for their exams – she took them on a day trip to Paris. She's certainly not your typical DoS.

Despite her efforts however, criticism from the tabloids is unavoidable. She is often "utterly shocked at the press' reactions to the blog", for they seem intent on portraying her and her fellow 'dons' as "fusty old fools", and will amplify the tiniest throwaway remark to make their point.

Take for instance, the extensive coverage that her May 21st entry received. In an article which lamented a Britain in which Health and Safety has "gone mad", Mrs Beard discussed the refurbishment of the Classics Department. In what was, in reality, an insignificantly miniscule comment, Mrs Beard remarked that amongst the Greek lettering on the door, there was an English 'S'. The Nationals jumped at the opportunity to show "toffs getting it wrong." *The Telegraph* called it "embarrassing" and *The Mail* said the "blunder" was "humiliating", concluding that Aristotle is "all Greek to Cambridge Academics." "When things like this occur it can be irritating," she explains, but the positive results of her five-year-old blog far outweigh the negative.

Her career in journalism began when she found herself at home with two young children. (It is at this

point that the term 'women in the workplace' comes up – the beginning of a feminist rant?) "You'll see if you ever have children that as a mother you are left with a lot of free time... just never in the bulk amounts required for serious study... you will have twenty minutes here and there throughout the day." It was this "twenty minutes" that resulted in her beginning to write reviews for *The Times Literary Supplement (TLS)*. Soon enough, Mrs Beard became a regular on their pages and not too long after that she became the editor of the classics pages. "The way it happened was delightfully old-fashioned." She approached the outgoing editor to enquire who would be taking over, to be greeted with the news "Well Mary, we were rather hoping you would do it." And so it went from there. The blog itself also came around somewhat accidentally. After being approached by another national to pen one, she requested permission from her superiors. "Instead,

they offered me the opportunity to write one for *The Times*." "At first I was anxious about the whole idea of it," she explains, "The majority of blogs seem to be written by the sorts of people who phone in to late night television shows to rant about the chip on their shoulder."

For Beard however, the whole experience has been "immensely satisfying", and her cheery but realistic insights into Cambridge life have earned her the epithet 'the delightful Don'. The blog penetrates through the bubble to the outside world, something that ever since a four year spell lecturing at King's College London, she has realised is absolutely necessary. "I love Cambridge... but it is essential to remind yourself that there is an outside world, and to engage with it."

She has acquired a "keen group of regular followers" who

provide inspiration and recommendations for future pieces. On top of this, she often attracts attention from a much wider national and international audience. Thus, the opportunity to have a regular electronic blog, available to all, was undeniable; it allows for immediacy of discussion. "It's enjoyable to watch the ripples of your piece expand quickly across the international press, as other writers pick up what you have said and enter into discourse with you." Moreover, she has the "chance to educate readers on the wonders of the classical world", another reason why the online nature of her blog is

"The majority of blogs seem to be written by the sorts of people who phone in to late night television shows to rant about the chip on their shoulder."

so attractive to her. "In the printed press, if I wanted to write an article about Greek tragedy, I would have to spend at least half the page explaining its conventions. On a website, I can post a link, from which all the information my readers may need is just a click away." In this way, she explains, she is engaging her readers with ideas and traditions of which many would otherwise be unaware. So far, so good – no disarmingly feminist responses. I had also been instructed to probe her on May Week. Surely a famous liberal would have a lot to say about this? "My opinion on the matter is disappointingly conservative... even though I believe that the things I did post-exams were more interesting (she was an undergraduate at Newnham), I cannot blame the students for having the fun that they do, or at the intensity they elect to have it." That being said, she "would not want to find herself on King's Parade on a May Week morning."

Asked what she makes of tabloid coverage of the antics, Mrs Beard muses that "they don't have pictures of you all shitting yourselves in the UL for four weeks before exams. If they printed both sides of the story, it would make for far less sensationalist Hooray Henry coverage... and less of a nightmare for access." A surprisingly non-liberal opinion on it all then, or maybe she just remembers how soul-destroying a fourteen hour library session can be.



MARTHA RAWLINSON

View from the Groundlings



May Week Theatre

It's such a beautiful thing. All kinds of people united for a few select nights, watched by awe-stricken crowds. It's what we've all been awaiting for a long, long time. No, not the World Cup, you dolt. I meant May Week. May Week shows, to be precise. As this year appears to be something of a corker. Shakespeare unequivocally swamps the hearts and minds of our acting population once again, as we kick-start the week with the Mighty Players' performance of *Love's Labours Lost*, chez Selwyn. General bardiness continues with the BATS' eagerly awaited rendering of *Measure For Measure* at Queens', rounded off with a dose of *Henry IV* from the thespians at Clare.

But not to fear if quite frankly you couldn't give a monkey's tit about this Shakespeare bloke, whatever he's written. Given the array of other shows being put on round and about, all that glisters isn't Will's for the taking. At Corpus Playroom, we've got some exciting new writing from Ryan O'Sullivan in the shape of a loving tribute to Sod's law, *I Heart Louie Sandys*, which looks to be a quirkily promising antidote to the positively mammoth-scale productions on everywhere else. And of course, there is the *Footlights Tour Show* at the ADC, which will most definitely not be in blank verse. Or at least if it is, I'm sure they're trying to be funny about it. They were certainly funny about some other stuff.

However, we do like a bit of fuss and bother. So if it is spectacular shows you want, Emmanuel's *A Little Night Music* should be just the thing. We've even offered *She Stoops To Conquer*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, meaning there is even quaint olde worlde charm from whichever historical period of your preference. Which is great if, like myself, your theatrical tastes secretly run to mock-Tudor and the occasional frilly lace curtain.

And so I urge you to put down the remote control and head to the box office. Yes, I know there's a World Cup on. But – dare I say it? – in this day and age, there's also Sky Plus. AUGUSTINA DIAS

Good For You

ADC THEATRE
★★★★★

As I waited for the Footlights tour show to start, I was made acutely aware of the trials of being an English student. Sitting in the auditorium, I read the message emblazoned on the stage: Good For You. This, I knew, was the title of the show. I also knew I should have left it at that. Sadly, the borderline neurotic nature of the way I've come to read anything that vaguely resembles a text meant that I saw not one, but two readings: this show could be good for you in the same way as, say, lentils and blown-up pictures of celebrities' cellulite. Wholesome. Perhaps strangely reassuring. It could also mean that the performers themselves are good, i.e. funny, for you, i.e. the audience. Despite my pride at being capable of discerning such a multiplicity of meanings after several pre-show doses of Baileys, I also realised this set a weighty premise. Bit of an ambitious claim, isn't it? Presumptuous, even? Just as my session of rudimentary Practical Criticism was about to drive me completely nuts, out came the Footlights – and titular semantics aside, they were bloody funny.

The group performed new sketches touching on all aspects of life's craziness, from the repercussions of having a telepathic friend, to auditioning for a part in *Othello*: when all you really want to play is the mysterious and charismatic Dirk Lavender. On the way we're



“Goodf ory ou? Why yes. Most certainly.”

shown how to market Frink when you don't know what the hell it is and how to deal with off-the-rails cereal characters via being introduced to the coolest Maths teacher ever. The troupe moves rapidly from one sketch to the next, the best part being the way they evidently enjoy playing around with weird ideas and seeing where they will go; you get a real sense of them acting out a sketch and asking you as their audience:

“Okay, go with us on this one – what if...?” It's also interesting to see how each of the different Footlights brings their own comic viewpoint to the group, the final product being an amalgam of varied but nevertheless often surreally funny insights.

The show's greatest advantage is that it's in a constant state of flux, the weaker sketches being eschewed in favour of the best ones over the show's run at the ADC. I'll be honest, not all of the sketches had me laughing hysterically; in fact quite a few in the first half seemed awkwardly written despite being well performed. I found myself predicting what the punch lines of many of the gags would be long before they actually

happened, which was sad, since I really wanted to like the sketches based the ideas behind them. If the work these performers are doing has one flaw, it is a tendency to go for the most obvious joke, even if the overarching idea is sharply intelligent.

However, there were sketches that were superbly written, timed and acted: my favourite was a situation in which a group of breathtakingly corrupt drug barons all share a secret that they don't want to tell each other. Hilariously awkward revelations ensue. I hope they keep this one in.

This show got me laughing and thinking in equal measure. So – good for you? Yes. AUGUSTINA DIAS

In the wood-panelled setting of Trinity's great hall, an assortment of students, alumni and fellows gathered last night to watch *Doing Philosophy*, an operetta directed by Bob Thomas. And to pretty much everyone's surprise they generally enjoyed themselves: this was in spite of the show's daft plot, which centres on a dean whose missing swan becomes a star philosophy fellow. We may as well leave it at that.

The singing was of mixed quality, though Michael Craddock in particular was outstanding, and the set was creaky – though the laughs kept coming at fairly regular intervals. References to Wittgenstein, Trinity statues and the economics and sexuality of early modern Silesian peasants were all crowd



Doing Philosophy

GREAT HALL, TRINITY COLLEGE
★★★★★

pleasers, which I suppose tells you more about the crowd than anything.

There were some dire moments: ruminations of post-modernism and linguistic philosophy were poorly received; set changes were overly-long and much of the acting was of a dubious standard.

The overall comic effect came not from the philosophical reflections, but from much baser kinds of gags: for all the show's learned allusions, it was a man prancing about on stage in a swan costume that got the biggest laugh of the night.

Watching *Doing Philosophy* was like going to an absurdly erudite end-of-the-pier show with a black-tie dress code, its main strength being its pantomime quality. The gigantic portrait of Henry VIII watched over the whole spectacle; I couldn't help but feel that he would have approved of this operetta's mixture of cheap gags and scholarly references. It was very hit and miss, but this was a performance that did not take itself seriously and so ultimately won me over. OLIVER CRAWFORD

Our heroine Gwendolen declares “in matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing.” So, on account of their ‘style’, the Lady Margaret Players were sure to pass muster from the outset. It is true, there are few plays better suited to college gardens than *The Importance of Being Earnest* but, staging the performance around a blossoming tree, this production really exploited all the opportunities. The atmosphere was flawlessly constructed. I entered the performance a wet puppy, damp and floundering, despite the myriad arrows and signs littered about for us incapables. But this kerfuffle swiftly dissolved in a complimentary glass of Pimms, the charming setting and the gaggles of gents drowning in blazers, starch and shoe polish. Whether the latter were planted or just the customary product of twenty-something Cambridge folk and the words ‘May’ and ‘Week’, we'll never know.

The play opened to Johnston's effortlessly playful Algie Moncrieff. Teasing Jack mercilessly, he

The Importance of Being Earnest

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE GARDENS
★★★★★

sauntered around the stage, perfectly capturing Wilde's trademark satirising wit. With Jack, there is always a

risk of overacting, leaving the audience with a tedious nineteenth-century Basil Fawlty, a painful Mr Bean even. But Mercer worked the character to a perfect degree of ‘inept’. Lady Bracknell too, cannot go without mention. Ball sustained her histrionic gestures, shrill intonation and obnoxious accent with full zeal throughout the performance. The result was that special sort of actress whose every appearance is eagerly awaited by the audience.

It is true that Wilde's exquisite one-liners guarantee a spattering of chuckles from any audience. But the special success of this production lay in the cast's ability, without exception, to inflate the characters whose caricature is so elemental to the comedy and to Wilde's comment on Victorian High Society – its impermeability, its conception of good manners and the very formality that compels our heroes to “go Bunburying”. AVANTIKA CHILKOTI

GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS: ★★★★★ TUMBLEWEED ★★★★★ FORCED RICTUS ★★★★★ NERVOUS TITTER ★★★★★ HEARTY CHUCKLE
★★★★★ OMGROFLMAOLOLZOR

Maggi Hambling: The Wave

FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM
★★★★★

Like people, Maggi Hambling's wave paintings are at once consoling or frustrating, brilliant or monotonous. Like people, they sometimes make no sense and sometimes make perfect sense; or they stop short in the middle of a gesture and drift away, leaving us alone for awhile in the exhibition to think about what just did or didn't happen. And, just as with people, there really is no escape from them: you feel that if you were to leave the Fitzwilliam's Mellon Gallery then you might soon enough re-encounter these deep horizons and rough tides in life. As the artist remarked in a recent interview with the Arts Desk, "I remember very distinctly walking into the sea and talking to it as if it were my friend." Whatever this nostalgic prattle signifies, it's true that the art here is framed in and issues from the painter's personal life spent in Suffolk and by the North Sea. This is the latest, generous showing of Hambling's almost biographical paintings and gives us a chance to stand back and examine what

she has been up to for the last ten years. It will probably please viewers who are satisfied by artistic extremes, but who might not have taken to Hambling because of the lack of modesty in her work with sculpture, characterized as it is by a more controversial, popular aesthetic. Yet there is certainly a lot of controversy visible upon the large canvases that form the majority of this exhibition, but it is a mannered kind, by which sharp bursts of energy fluctuate back into listless, watery droughts of thickly mixed paint. The result is engrossing, and allows isolated strokes of colour to possess a deliciousness that they could never have had out of context. In



MAGGI HAMBLING

many of these artworks a single flourish suddenly seems to irrigate a welter of dense debris and pounding surf placed at the centre of the composition. Perhaps the best, and least conventionally modern, thing about Hambling's work is that it is resolutely not whatever the viewer wishes to make of it, but what she wishes to make of it after the viewer has consented to play Hambling's game. One's emotional responses do not exhaust the paintings' impact but leave them intact and free to develop. Most pleasantly, instead of striving to elicit its audience's participation, *The Wave* actually compels it, foraging quietly upon one's senses and preconceptions. Specifically, the 2009

painting 'Midnight Wave' gives the feeling of night passing and of something intense happening, though it would be difficult to say precisely what is going on out at sea. But it is less a given event which interests Hambling than its way of happening, and the artist fixates upon the same natural image – slung so neatly between form and formlessness – turning her wave through different angles, shapes, sizes and shades of colour. Against any supposed distinction between art and nature we can posit Hambling's synthesizing, inclusive approach which sees no reason to give up either, and makes a virtue out of their indissoluble connection. By contrast, the neat displays of monotypes and photographs from the 1998 *You are the sea* series are hard to fully appreciate. Appearing as muted snapshots, these older works are perhaps less compatible with any notion of artistic freedom and spontaneity which we may now associate with Hambling. The addition of these pieces does not help the viewer to reach the conclusions about pictorial space that her paintings quite pointedly engage with. Taken as a small retrospective, however, there is little to regret about an exhibition as fresh and exuberant as this one. ELIOT D'SILVA

Cruise Collection



... on King's Parade

There is no better place for first impressions to flourish than the low stretch of wall lining King's Parade. The street is inhabited by punters in navy waistcoats offering a trip down the river, the big issue seller on the street corner, the fudge shop man with his wooden sign advertising 'free fudge' and the obligatory swarm of tourists who flock in magpie-awe around the glittering Corpus clock. A curious slab next to the bins reads: "High Maintenance Life". The words begin to transform the experience of the place. The students who pass by for the pleasure of the seated audience present a life that balances high aspirations with the manicured lawns of the colleges and trip into the realm of a "high maintenance" and daunting routine. Far away, Karl Lagerfeld's latest cruise collection for Chanel 2010-2011 banks on the decidedly casual tone of street-life as models, barefoot and buoyant in chiffon, glides down a quayside street in St Tropez. The audience sits under the red awnings of the Senequier patisserie and tea-room, taking time to admire and critique the dresses and their wearers as they approach a seafront blockade of photographers. The models, instead of waiting in the wings, stand in groups talking before taking a trip down the street-cum-runway. Granted this is the French Riviera frequented by Brigitte Bardot and the playboys who followed her, and not a cloudy city of spires and library tickets. She is succeeded this year by the likes of Georgia May Jagger straddling a gruffly shaved male model on the back of a Harley Davidson. If a similar glamour can be obtained here in Cambridge, then it would surely fit into the stretch of "high maintenance life" on King's Parade, where summertime insouciance translates into the floating maxi dresses and Breton stripes that accompany a perfect sunny day in the city. Although the hoard of photographers may appear more interested in their golden clock, there is nothing that can be compared to the satisfaction of an idle hour spent forming impressions whilst sat on the wall. DANIELLE DZUMAGA



CITY SEVENTEEN

The Junction was sparsely populated as City Seventeen took to the stage. Dressed in vintage military jackets and projecting an antique Soviet film, their image was as uncompromising as their music: a tidal swell of distortion shocked into sudden grooves by thunderbursts of drums. When they locked into a tense, up-tempo math-rock surge in their newer songs, they suddenly became more than the sum of their parts and sparkled with a distinct energy, bursting out of The Junction's impressive sound rig. The place started to fill up a bit towards nine o'clock. Being a charity gig, there wasn't your typical rock audience – more parents and children than greebos and stoners – and *The Irregulars* were well-suited to such a crowd. With sharp suits, pork-pie hats and a saxophone, their ska covers went down well with those old enough to have seen the Specials the first time round. There was ample middle-aged booty being shaken,

Charity Gig for DEC Haiti: City Seventeen, The Irregulars, Sugarbeat

THE JUNCTION
★★★★★

and even an incident of Per Una knicker-throwing. Despite such distractions, the band was tight and charismatic, and played an exhaustive set of 2-tone and Jamaican ska. By the time local covers band *Sugarbeat* came on, the place was packed, and most people were pretty drunk, which undoubtedly worked in their favour. The audience were trying their best, and I guess it isn't really fair to criticise a charitable concert, but at times it was like watching a school band try to thrash through some cover songs at the end-of-term concert. That said, they were fun to watch, and it seemed to be what people wanted to hear. As the concert came to a close and we spilled out into the clear Cambridge night, the amount of sweat on the audience was testament to their enjoyment, and any money raised for the DEC Haiti appeal can only be a good thing, even if the musical quality of the night was somewhat variable. ZYGMUNT DAY

The Hill Magazine Launch Party

CLEARANCE OUTLET
★★★★★

All those garden parties, house parties, room parties, maybe even corridor parties will surely leave you hankering for a change – what a relief, then, to find oneself at a launch party. Held in a clearance outlet, the evening promised free cocktails, live painting, an art exhibition and an interactive laser display, with the musical backdrop of a live electro set. Although the 'cocktails' turned out to be tropical juice mixed with vodka and the only way one could interact with the laser display was to stand in front of it, the atmosphere was warm and bubbly, like a cup of hot chocolate doing an art foundation. *The Hill*, founded last year by Pascale Porcheron and Andrew Spyrou, is the student magazine for the lateral thinker, and contains some of the most impressive illustration and photography work in Cambridge. As a pleasing

personal touch, each cover is individually customized, and an issue number is written on the first page (for all you future collectors). Behind the magazine is a strong creative team, combining the talents of Anglia Ruskin. One of the quirks of the evening was the unusual, but very welcome and refreshing amalgamation of students from the two universities. The best thing of all was, of course, that the entire happening was free. This magazine (which costs £3) is essentially a very accessible creative platform; sadly, it faces an uncertain future with the departure of its editors, both in their third year. One can only hope that a journal of quality and finesse exists to replace the magazine or, even better, that it will keep going: perhaps, *The Hill* is a mountain high enough. JULIA CAROLYN LICHNOVA



JULIA LICHNOVA

Varsity May Week Listings

Film

Sex and the City 2

VUE, DAILY 13:10, 16:15. WED & THUR 19:30

Widely slated new *SATC* film. The characters are as inconsistent as their air-brushing, and it has so far been rated the sixth worst film of this year on Rotten Tomatoes. All the same, still (sadly) a must-see.



Agora

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, MON 12:00, 18:15. TUE 15:40, THUR 12:00

Pick of the day Film

Spanish historical drama from director Alejandro Amenábar lands Rachel Weisz back in Egypt. A more serious antidote to the mind-numbing stupidity of *SATC 2*.

Music & Nightlife

Today

Saffron Walden Arts Festival

SAFFRON WALDEN, FROM JUNE 10TH TO JUNE 14TH 2010

Last day of Saffron Walden festival, for those desperate to escape the bubble a little early. Concerts, plays, street performances and workshops, most of which are free.

Every Monday Fat Poppadaddys

FEZ, UNTIL 3AM (£2/£4)

The first of Fat Poppadaddys's nights since seeing in its 12th glorious birthday in Cambridge last week.

Theatre

Today

She Stoops to Conquer

SIDNEY SUSSEX GREAT HALL, 15.00 (£4)

Pick of the day Theatre

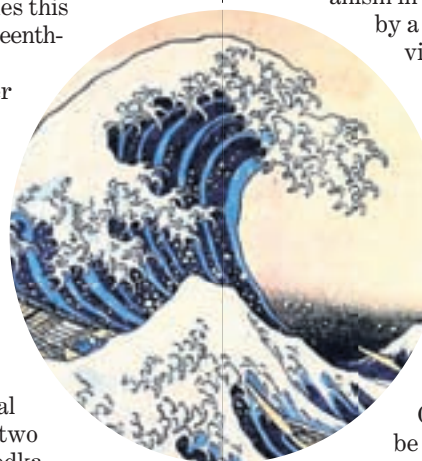
The New Arcadians Drama Society of Sidney Sussex tackles this eighteenth-

century Irish comedy by Oliver Goldsmith for one day only.

These Things Happen

VODKA REVOLUTIONS, 14.30 (£4)

A student-written and composed musical tragi-comedy in two acts staged in Vodka Revolutions. Complete with simulated oral sex, rhyming couplets and a tuba. Last of two performances.



Arts

Today

Symposium: Agnes Martin Between the Lines

LUCY CAVENDISH (£5/£10)

Scholars from London and New York discuss Agnes Martin's lesbianism in her art. Followed by a reception and viewing of the exhibition at Kettle's Yard.

Ongoing Exhibitions Gifts of the Ebb Tide

FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, UNTIL AUGUST 18TH (FREE)

Woodcut prints and books. In the serene Shiba Gallery, this will

be a beautiful alternative to a fry up, plus a chance to see Hokusai's 'Great Wave'.

Pick of the day Arts

Talks & Events

Today

What is feminism for?

LUCY CAVENDISH, 18.30-19.30 (£6)

Pick of the day Events

The annual Women's Word Festival at Lucy Cavendish this year sees Kat Banyard, persuasive and inspirational author of *The Equality Illusion*, talking about the sex industry, domestic violence, the widening pay gap, the state of modern feminism and the myths and taboos that surround it. This is a perfect, and vital, antidote for a weekend of jelly-wrestling and *Sex and the City*.

FCMS Garden Party

FITZWILLIAM COLLEGE, 14.00 (£4/£8)

With performances from the Fitzwilliam Chapel Choir, the Cambridge University Fitz Swing Band, The Fitz Barbershop and The Sirens, this promises to be a fizz-fueled musical extravaganza. Strawberries and Pimms as standard. Tickets available on the door.

TO HAVE SOMETHING LISTED ON THESE PAGES, E-MAIL LISTINGS@VARSITY.CO.UK BY NO LATER THAN 3PM ON DAY BEFORE PUBLICATION.

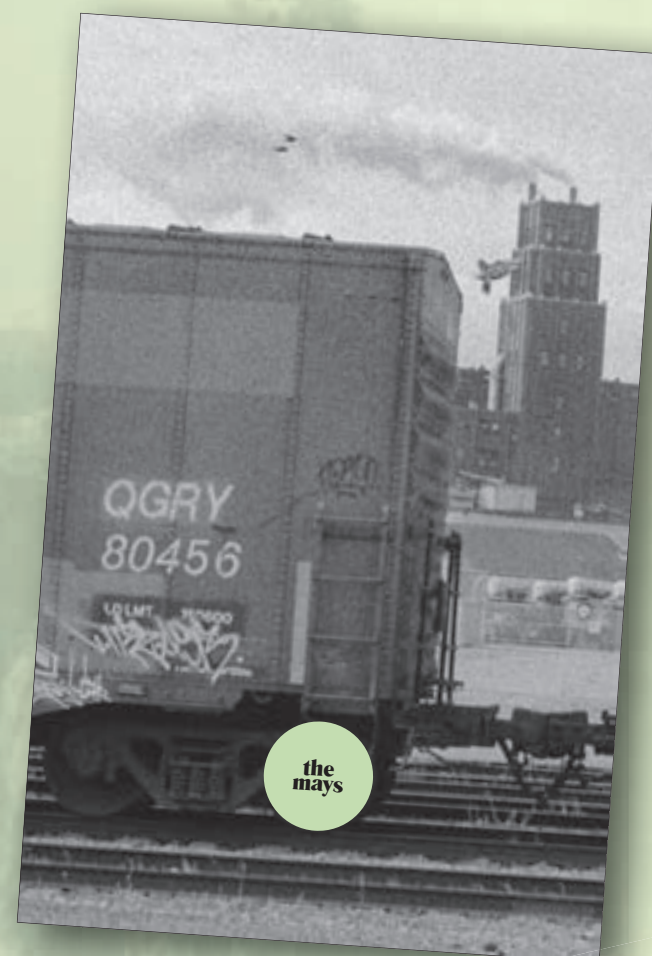
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OurTube

SEARCH:
Alejandro

10,000 views

Lady Gaga expresses her admiration for the gay community by pretending to have sex with them and eating a rosary. Also, rips off Madonna down to the gap in her teeth.

Best YouTube comment that was fuckin disgusting! shes just plain nasty i mean really. the video had nothing to do with a fricken spanish person

Worst YouTube comment i wish my name was alejandro. i would love this song even more.

Comedy Box

“Swearing”

Swearing is the spice of life. Most people think it’s nutmeg. It isn’t. It’s swearing. Nutmeg is bland in comparison. I want to be the first comic to shit on nutmeg; the seasoning undeniably needs taking down a peg. I find something like ‘fuck’ or ‘cumbucket’ always adds something to conversation, to comedy, to literature and it most definitely adds a certain je ne se qua to eulogies. It has to be done right of course. For example, someone recently told me to “literally” fuck off. I stood there for two hours trying to figure out what to do, by which time nunnery had closed.

Their weakest point must be “It shows a lack of vocabulary”. After which they always have the audacity to hurry me for a response: “Come on now, I’ve got leafleting to do” (no doubt for the BNP or Green Party or something). Now to the ‘lack of vocabulary’ argument, I invariably reply thus: “Language is a variegated abstraction, too diverse and multifarious on which to place your tortuously scrupulous and simply supererogatory constraints. To do so would abscond us all of society’s smorgasbord of etymological variation.

“So fuck off.”

By which time it is usually lights out at the orphanage. PHIL WANG

HOT

FREEDOM Garden parties, bonfires, bouncy castles – what’s not to love?

PIANOS IN PUNTS Ed Emery’s idea to punt a piano down the Cam on Suicide Sunday for Help for Heroes – can you Handel it?

JUMPSUITS Topshop likes them. Gok Wan likes them. Is this a good thing?

JUNIOR APPRENTICE Zoe’s just like marmalade: you either think she’s a massive bitch, or you think she’s a massive bitch.

HAVING TO DO THINGS Let’s face it – no-one actually wants to.

CORPUS CRABS Boatie catches crab. Flies out of boat. Idiot.

ROBERT GREEN Couldn’t catch crabs in a brothel.

NOT

Cocktail of the Day

May Cup

The precursor to Pimms, Cups are traditional English punches. For those of us who weren’t lucky enough to get tickets to John’s Ball, this one is ideal for quaffing on a punt with fireworks going off overhead.

Recipe

- 1 shot of Gin
- 1 shot of Vermouth Bianco (Martini Bianco will do the job)
- ½ a shot of Cointreau
- Some chilled Champagne/Cava
- Angostura bitters, if you can get hold of it
- An orange to garnish

Mix the gin, vermouth, cointreau and a couple of drops of angostura (if you have it) in the bottom of a champagne flute, and then add the fizz for a truly decadent drink – or if decadence isn’t your thing, you can replace the bubbly with lemonade or ginger beer. Cut a wedge of orange to decorate the glass, sit back, and enjoy. TOM MICHAELIS

MIXTAPES

Mixtape

“Let’s Crash a May Ball”

1. DMX – Party Up
OMG. Chesney Hawkes is playing Homerton. But we don’t have a ticket? Let’s crash it.

2. Bob Dylan – Knockin’ On Heaven’s Door
The mission’s underway, but your mate catches his fly on a barbed wire fence and has to go to Addenbrookes.

3. The Clash – I Fought The Law
A threatening bouncer chases you with a torch. You hide up a tree until the coast is clear.

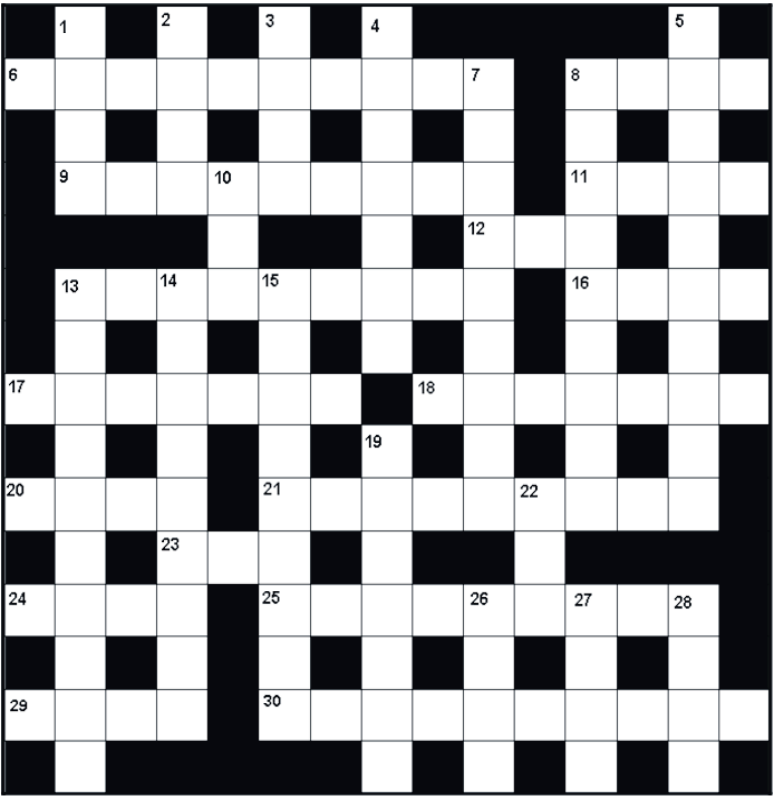
4. Rage Against the Machine – Killing in the Name Of
You meet Two Door Cinema Club smoking outside the entrance. They’ve finished playing and cheekily give you their writsbands. You’re in.

5. Beastie Boys – Fight For Your Right to Part
Just as Chesney starts ‘The One And Only’, you’re spotted, ejected and billed for £200. Next year you will not be defeated. PAUL SMITH

Games & puzzles

Varsity Crossword

NO. 526



Across

6. Hesitation in selection. (10)
8. Teletubby with shock for traditional character. (4)
9. Precious stone under layer of rock, we need a plan. (9)
11. I pulled out of groin for places to drink. (4)

12. Feathered snake? (3)
13. Group of twenty allows jewellery. (9)
16. Cooked rare rump. (4)
17. An easy criticism to make of drugs and hard liquor? (3,4)
18. He is high up in Islam and makes the big calls. (7)
20. Drug hideout is heaven. (4)
21. Porridge left with nasty gin is difficult to get through. (9)

23. Eat messy meal. (3)
24. Convention around poem. (4)
25. Work surfaces are first in the charts. (9)
29. An American bumhole. (4)
30. Photograph fire breather and carnivorous plant. (10)

Down

1. The emphasis is on America. (4)
2. Close orifice after first noise. (4)
3. Toff is tightly holding clenched hand. (4)
4. Wife beater chant gets permit. (7)
5. Abstaining during ball. (10)
7. Idiot is paralyzed on rowing boat apparently. (9)
8. They are continually shooting starts. (9)
10. Car turns a corner. (3)
13. Sniffer dog – search after bodily fluid. (10)
14. Those missing are delivered into a bee’s mess. (9)
15. Stretches the Spanish on bill.
19. Insect! Deal with pet hate. (7)
22. Allow rental. (3)
26. Finishes the last bits. (4)
27. Some orange, purple and lilac gem. (4)
28. Point tops up. (4)

Crossword set by Dr Awkward.

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.

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

The Varsity Scribblepad

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	21			
		15					
		21					
	9	19				20	6
14			11				
			24		12		
16				9			
		16					
		15					

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.

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

SPORT

MAY BUMPS

Champions retain Bumps title



Rowers race past a bumper crowd at The Plough pub

MOLLY BECK

May Bumps started this year with weather reminiscent of its sister race in Lent, yet the rain was not the only similarity between these busy boatie weeks. At the top of the men's divisions, First and Third retained headship for the third consecutive year, maintaining their strong performance as Head of the River from the bumps earlier this year. Whilst First and Third dominated the river, Caius looked set to row over each day, following their success in Lents, but as the sun appeared on Saturday, they were bumped by the steadily rising Pembroke crew.

Competition was tough at the top of the men's crews, with only First and Third obtaining blades along with their 'Double Headship', in spite of the bumps made by Pembroke, St Catherine's and King's, each rising three places for their efforts. Other crews did not enjoy the same good fortune, however, with Clare collecting spoons once again this year, following their descent in Lent, whilst Churchill also finished four places lower.

In the women's divisions, Pembroke celebrated a similar victory to the leading men's crew, pushing away from the other boats to retain the Headship three years in a row. They managed to resist the outstanding advances made by Downing on the first day, who overbumped Jesus to rise three places in the charts, a feat rarely seen in the first divisions, posing a threat to the Pembroke's supremacy on the water. The women's races were especially exciting lower down in this division, as carnage on the river on Friday afternoon led to a re-row of just two boats, Churchill and King's. Despite King's strong start, they were unable to bump the pink stern of Churchill who gained several boat lengths on the Reach.

Following behind Downing, Christ's was the only other W1 crew other than Pembroke to receive blades, overtaking Emmanuel on the final day to become third overall. Jesus saw the greatest fall from glory this week, never recovering from Downing's overbump and obtaining spoons as they descended six places in the first division, although Girton were also unable to withstand the

pressure, finally bumped to spoons by Queens' on the last day.

Whilst there was little movement between the first and second divisions, the lower leagues saw greater changes, with Christ's

from M6. The most exciting crew to watch was arguably Caius III, overtaking nine other boats in their bumps campaign and achieving two overbumps on their way into the third division.

Among the women's crews, both Newnham II and Clare Hall received blades and places in the next division up, W2 and W3 respectively. Christ's success was not limited to the women's first division, displaying a particularly impressive standard throughout their three women's crews, with each receiving blades. Christ's II and III both rose six places, as Friday saw Christ's II overbump St Edmunds and Christ's III finished the week by crushing King's II's hope of blades, forcing them back to their starting position this year.

After three years of success with the Headship, both First and Third and Pembroke have demonstrated their power and technique, representing the highest level of college rowing. But with the strength of both Pembroke's M1 and Downing's W1 bumping through the boats behind them, the stage is set for a fierce battle in the year ahead.

1376
The number of rowers in total

172
The number of boats competing

1.5
Boat lengths between each boat at the start

World Cuppers



Those bloody horns. How is anyone supposed to enjoy a game when it sounds like a giant bee has got stuck in the stadium announcer?

I'm in a bad mood already this World Cup as my team didn't even make it. I'm Welsh. we haven't qualified since 1958 and that was only due to a military coup in Indonesia which meant that Wales took their place in the play-off against Israel.

So, as usual, I'm supporting England. And as I entered Spoons on Saturday night, I was taken in again by it all.

There was a strange something in the air. Normally if I embraced a stranger in there on a Saturday night I'd soon be receiving a sharp right hook to the jaw. So as I waited after Gerrard's goal for the inevitable, nothing happened. Amazing.

But after that early euphoria, I was soon reminded what supporting England means.

They say that watching England is like riding a rollercoaster. Well, rollercoasters are meant to be fun, watching England is simply excruciating. Think Barry Island rather than Space Mountain.

But at least we know it's like that. Who can say they were honestly surprised by Green's mistake in the first half? If he'd been studying videos of James, Carson and Robinson then he probably thought that was the way to perform at international level.

But I did enjoy the Heskey baiting. We're great at that sport. It is now seven goals in 58 appearances and I genuinely believe that if I were to play up front 58 times for England then, with the inevitable excellent ball service, I would score at least seven goals. And I sometimes turn out for Robinson seconds. JOSHUA GAMES