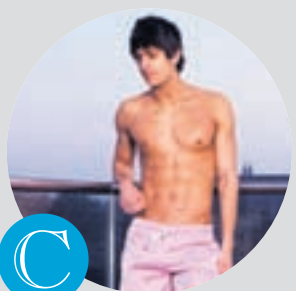




## OPINION

James Gardom discusses the end of secularisation in Britain

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## CULTURE

Lent already getting you down?

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## SPORT

Tanni Grey-Thompson on Lords, London and legacy

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# VARSITY

ESTD 1947

## Union election overshadowed by in-fighting

On the eve of voting, Palmer drops out against a backdrop of malpractice accusations

LYDIA ONYETT & JESSIE WALDMAN  
news editor & deputy news editor

The Cambridge Union elections for Michaelmas Term 2011 opened today, but some candidates seem more focused on bringing down their opponents than their own campaigns.

Returning Officers Joseph Sanderson and Kiki Winter have recently heard complaints from three candidates, each accusing their opponents of malpractice during the race for Michaelmas positions. The official reports are published on the Union's website.

A Returning Officer told *Varsity* that Julian Parmar's unexpected resignation from the electoral race yesterday came while he was being investigated for making unsubstantiated claims on his manifesto. However, according to the Officer this was not the reason for his sudden departure.

Parmar in turn brought a complaint against both fellow Presidential candidate Calum Macdonald and President-Elect Francesca Hill.

Parmar's complaint broadly accuses Hill and Macdonald of "conspiring together that Miss Hill breach the neutrality to which she is bound", apparently to push Macdonald – her partner – ahead in the electoral race.

The accusations against Hill and Macdonald claim that Hill suggested that Macdonald forward an email from the News Editor of *The Tab* to James Counsell. Parmar also objected to a seemingly innocuous statement from Macdonald stating 'he was trying to be careful which of the speakers he took credit for', apparently referring to his claims during his Presidential campaign.

Union reports note that Hill's advice to forward the email to Counsell was ill-judged, given his alleged opposition to Parmar's Presidential candidacy. The report suggests Counsell's objection was due to Parmar's failure to fulfill his duties as Speakers' Officer to a satisfactory standard last term: Counsell alleged that Parmar was primarily responsible for securing just two speakers for the Michaelmas 2010 Termcard.

These accusations may well cause members to question whether the

energy that electoral candidates are devoting to pursuing Malpractice Rulings might not be better directed to projects of tangible benefit to the Union membership.

In a statement on Thursday, Parmar said: "I have decided due to personal reasons that the Union would thrive better in the hands of someone else."

These allegations come just a week before Hill assumes her position as President of the Union. The Returning Officers have 'urged her to take more care over neutrality in future'.

However, speaking to *Varsity*, Hill commented: "The only investigations which overshadow elections are the ones in which someone is found guilty of inappropriate behaviour: the Returning Officers found everyone involved innocent."

Parmar's resignation leaves Macdonald as the sole candidate for the position and, unless he is defeated by RON, the next President of the Cambridge Union.

The Union election is the first to be held under new media guidelines that allow candidates to speak to the student press. Thus, Macdonald was able to comment: "Union elections can look quite bad with lots of 'official investigations' and 'guilty or not guilty verdicts', when in reality, candidates are simply ... checking to see if the others are playing by the rules."

The running for Speakers Officer has also seen candidates acting less than commendably. Sophie Odenthal and Arrash Yassae, the two candidates for Speakers Officer in Michaelmas Term, have both lodged formal complaints against each other, questioning the validity of their opponents' manifesto.

Miss Odenthal queried Mr Yassae's claims that he helped enlist over 400 members, and that he played an instrumental role in bringing Omid Djalili to the Union. Meanwhile, Mr Yassae complained that Miss Odenthal's assertion that she managed 'publicity crises' was untrue.

The consequence of these allegations was that both parties were declared on all accounts not guilty, calling into question whether the complaints were merely attempts to slander the competition.

Senate House lawn stormed in protest: "No ifs, no buts, no bursary cuts" (continued on page 3)





## EDITORIAL

So we come to university in order to get a degree; a degree for which we pay tuition fees, and tuition fees – as we are all too aware – are drastically on the up. The news pages of this term’s papers have been clustered with articles reporting cuts, protests, fees and petitions but there is more at stake than simply the cost of our education.

By refusing to acknowledge recommendations put forward to the Council to maintain bursaries at their current rate, the University is disallowing a significant proportion of its students the means to go beyond the academic grind – and this does not mean funding our Cindies habit. The resources available in Cambridge are above and beyond those of many other university towns and all within a cyclable distance. As students we are in the privileged position of having fantastic theatres and galleries on our door-step and enough speakers, sports events, societies and concerts to keep us in an extra-curricular whirl from dawn until dusk. One glance at CUSU’s compendious list of student societies is affirmation of this.

The unfortunate but inevitable truth of this, though, is that all these things cost money. It is all well and good that the University is offering to replace bursaries with fee waivers but not only are these not as generous to the tune of £400; it also means a reduction in the amount of ready money available to students while they are at university. Agreed, a fee waiver means that the students will not face quite such extortionate levels of debt as they might otherwise, but the point is this: the bursaries enable those who would otherwise not be able to afford it to do more than merely sleep, work and eat.

Cambridge can be a high-octane place. Cutting bursaries and replacing them with a fee waiver may appear to ‘balance out’ financially but from a broader perspective, it will deprive many students from engaging in aspects of Cambridge life outside of scholarship. No one should be prevented from becoming part of Cambridge’s rich cultural history. The degree we receive on graduation may be a golden ticket in life but the education we receive here should go beyond academia. The Vice Chancellor’s refusal to allow debate on this matter speaks volumes about his attitude to life beyond the library doors.



### EMAILS, LETTERS & TWEETS

#### NONCHALANT

Dear Editors,  
*Under this democratic system, if the President is elected with a 13.1 per cent turnout then that still counts. If students didn't want those people in those positions then they could have voted RON. In fact, I would highly encourage anyone to seriously consider RON as a candidate if it meant that they would take their options more seriously. If students really think that there's no point in CUSU then contest the existence of CUSU! Student politics is the one opportunity where the Big Society idea might actually be practically possible, because most people can afford the time and money of getting involved. However, people seem to have a nonchalant hostility towards their official representative body, that never manifests itself in action.*

**Taz Rasul**  
via website

#### DISTORTING THE PICTURE

Dear Editors,  
*If anyone wants to stop buying goods from the Israeli parts of the West Bank, you should feel free. But the idea of trying to force upon us - CUSU - the collective body of students is less OK. Especially when this is being done by portraying the facts completely incorrectly. We must move away from this "apartheid rhetoric". It is an insult to the history of the struggle of the South African people for freedom and a complete fallacy as to what is happening in Israel currently. The treatment of blacks in South Africa was appalling, and while it might not be a perfect situation in Israel, accessibility to justice, representation, Arab members of parliament and a free market are indicators that the situation does not reflect that of South African apartheid. The use of such emotive language and imagery, for example "ethnic cleansing" and "whites only transport" – although they create an attractive and flowing literary piece – do not reflect the reality. Personal boycotting makes sense. Feel free. But trying to force group of others by*

*distorting the picture and not providing the truth is an insult to the British public, to CUSU and the strength of democracy in our country.*

**Gideon Barth**  
via website

#### SLOWLY BUT SURELY

Dear Editors,  
*Esperanto hasn't yet gained the recognition it deserves. However, all things considered, it has actually done amazingly well. In just over 120 years, it has managed to grow from a drawing-board project with just one speaker in one country to a complete and living natural language with around 2,000,000 speakers in over 120 countries and a rich literature and cosmopolitan culture, with little or no official backing and even bouts of persecution. It hasn't taken the world by storm – yet – but it's slowly but surely moving in that direction, with the internet giving it a significant boost in recent years. I'm actually quite optimistic about its future, even if we have to wait a while to see it fulfilled.*

**Hilary Chapman**  
via website

#### OFFAL ENQUIRY

Dear Editors,  
*Are there any good places to eat offal in Cambridge?*

**Steve Tinney**  
via website

#### PLAYING GAMES

Dear Editors,  
*Where could I purchase a pack of the CUSU playing cards that were featured on the front page last week?*

**William Findley**  
via website

And the winner of a night's stay at the **Varsity Hotel** and month's membership of **Glassworks Spa and Gym** is....

**Zabeen Ahmed**, Clare College



## DIGITAL DIGEST



**VERIFIED**  
**What is going on with sex education in America?**  
Sex ed is big news in the American media – a country where one party is adamantly pro-life, and the top Google result for “Am I normal?” directs confused teens to a video reassuring them that, no, masturbation cannot turn you into a wolfman. David Wescott discusses.



**VETEMENTS**  
**Sex, Seduction, and Sensuality in Jacques Magazine**

Louise Benson laments the loss of the beautifully put-together erotic publications of the 1970s and the early 1980s, in which the sexually exciting did not necessarily correspond to the sexually explicit.



**VARSITECH**  
**How To Spoil The Web**

Internet’s all good right? Wrong. Varsitech gives you the lowdown of some potential web-spoiling scenarios. From Spam-spewing Zombie Computer Viruses to search engine tricksters, we’ve got you covered.

what would you do with 50,000 visits a week?

join the Varsity online team for Easter term! go to [www.varsity.co.uk/jobs](http://www.varsity.co.uk/jobs)

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# Tully takes title on huge turnout



TRISTAN DUNN  
political correspondent

Gerard Tully has been elected as the new president of CUSU after close to record turnout in this week’s sabbatical elections.

The Trinity Hall undergraduate was competing against Sam Wakeford, also from Trinity Hall, and Adam Booth from Robinson.

Under the Single Transferrable Vote system, Tully won in the final round with 1,635 votes – 500 more than his nearest contender Booth.

Turnout for the CUSU elections, which is often notoriously low, was 4,211 or approximately 23 per cent of the student population. This represents a substantial improvement on previous years and is the second highest on record.

Tully campaigned on a policy of “Right Experience, Bright Ideas” saying that he was committed to “fight for

and Undergraduate Development Officer last year.

Second-place Adam Booth campaigned for a “fighting student union”. His strong affiliation with the political left and Cambridge Defend Education – which he did not play down during his election campaign – is likely to have been a deciding factor in his loss.

Outgoing President, Rahul Mansigani, told *Varsity*: “I’m very pleased with the increased level of turnout and engagement with the CUSU Elections – something I was aiming for this year.

“All three Presidential candidates led excellent campaigns, and students were offered a genuine choice. Gerard will make an excellent President, and I look forward to handing over to him in July.”

The new Access officer is Taz Rasul, who already runs a website providing a free personal statement proofreading service to prospective Cambridge applicants.

Rasul faced criticism from TCS News Editor, James Burton, who described the website as “a very bad thing” during her election campaign. Despite this, she still managed to beat the three other contenders for the position.

The closest fought race was for Student Support Officer with the top three candidates in the first round being separated by a mere 9 votes. After the third round, Rosa O’Neill was elected to the position with 79 more votes than second-place Heidi Aho.

For the other positions, Harriett Flower was voted CUSU Coordinator. Morgan Wild and Ruth Graham, who both ran unopposed, were elected to Education Officer and Women’s Officer respectively.

students, not an ideology”.

Speaking to *Varsity*, Tully said: “I think on the back of near record turnout we can say that more and more students are thinking about CUSU and the work it does.

“However, CUSU could always do more, and I hope I can deliver on that. I stood on a platform of engagement – to me that means making sure students are not only aware of what’s going on, but have the tools and the knowhow to get involved themselves.”

Regarding the University’s refusal to hold a bursary debate Tully added, “obviously we are all very angry at the university’s decision not to allow a vote on the amending grace. I strongly support Rahul’s ongoing work and I hope they can be persuaded to follow their procedures and let the vote go ahead.”

Tully was also Vice-President of the Cambridge Union Society in Lent and Easter 2010, and was CUSU Secretary

## Hardened boozer or committed teetotaller? Varsity’s survey examines student attitudes to drink

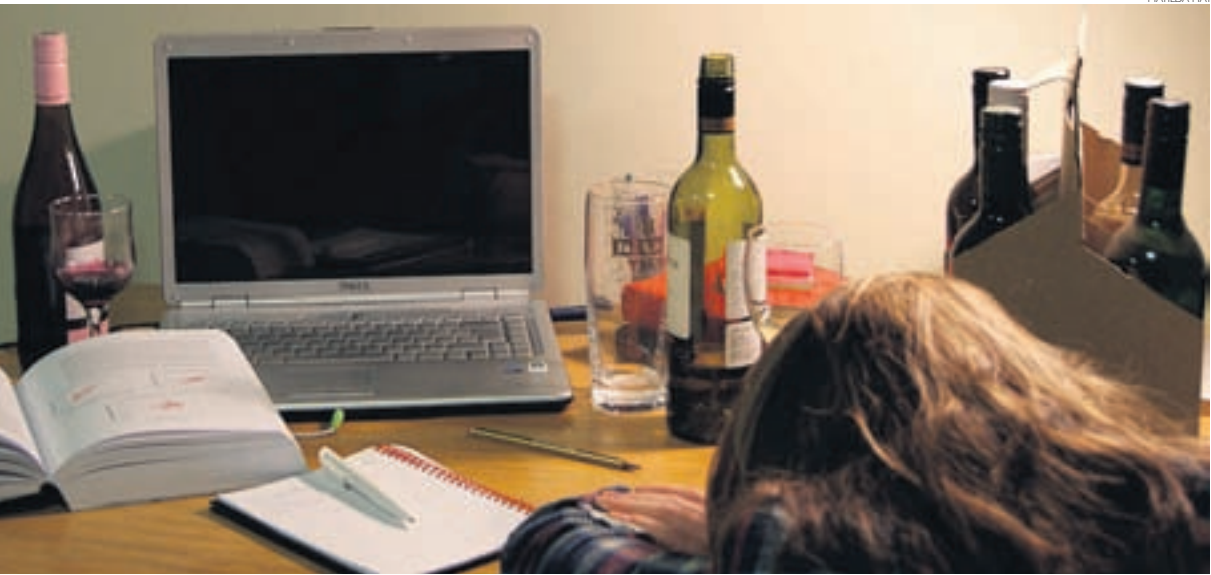
JESSIE WALDMAN  
deputy news editor

Having taken survey responses from 441 students at the University of Cambridge, our results show that whilst the majority of students do drink alcohol, 43 per cent of students who drink claim only to drink 1-7 units per week. This constitutes anything between half a pint and two large glasses of wine.

Meanwhile, 9 per cent of the students asked admitted to drinking over 30 units a week, which equates to around three bottles of wine. Wine was, unsurprisingly, elected by 45 percent of students as their most popular tippie. Beer came a close second, drunk most often by 30 per cent of voters.

*Varsity*’s survey showed that the most popular places to drink were college bars followed by formal hall, indicative of a drinking culture specific to Cambridge.

One student commented: “On my first day, the senior tutor remarked ‘Cambridge University runs on alcohol’.”



The overwhelming majority of students drink more during term time than at home, with less than 10 per cent saying that they consumed more alcohol when they were not at Cambridge.

Forgetting the pressures of work was given as the primary reason for this.

One student commented: “I drink far too much far too often. But Cambridge is stressful and many people are socially awkward without alcohol.” Another confessed: “It is very tempting when struggling with an essay in your room by yourself to allay anxieties with a drink. It usually gets the writing flowing, for a while.”

Worryingly, 22 per cent of students who took the survey admitted regularly getting to drunk that they couldn’t remember what happened the next day. More shockingly still, 23 per cent students say that they have had, at some point in their lives, to seek medical attention from drinking.

Many suggest that excessive drinking is driven by drinking society culture, which

defends its actions with statements such as this one student: “Boozing is not big and its not grown up, but I tell you what, its bloody good fun. I love being a massive drinking society LAD.”

53 per cent of students say they know at least one student at Cambridge who they would define as having a drinking problem. Yet, in spite of this, only 28 per cent of the students say that they are worried about the long term effects of drinking.

Of the people who took the survey, 10 per cent said that they did not drink alcohol at all. When asked to give reasons, the majority stated this was due either to personal beliefs, or because they did not like the taste of alcohol.

Whilst some stated personal experiences of alcoholism, one student commented: “It is an incredibly expensive habit with very little positive effect for me. I don’t want to pretend to be happy for a few hours”. Another said they did not drink for “fear of irresponsible behaviour that might ensue were I to become intoxicated”.

ANDREW GRIFFIN  
deputy news editor

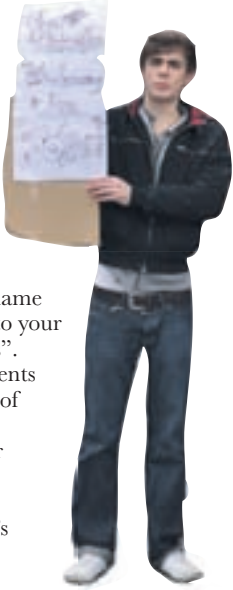
Student protestors stormed Senate House lawn yesterday in protest against the University’s decision to cut some bursaries by more than half, and the VC’s refusal to allow Regent House to debate the proposals. CUSU estimated around 800 people attended the protest.

The protest was organised with less than a day’s notice by CUSU after it emerged in yesterday’s *Reporter* that, despite having received over six times the necessary signatures, the University would refuse to listen to academics. Students marched around Market Square, and then returned to Great St Mary’s where the protest began. Despite objections by CUSU officers, protestors then pushed past proctors and security staff blocking entrance to the Senate House.

Protestors hammered on the doors of Senate House and shouted slogans such as

“Cambridge, Cambridge, shame on you; listen to your student’s views”.

Over 700 students signed a letter of protest, which expressed their ‘dismay and frustration’ at the University’s decision.



# JCRs in “latent sexism” charge

KIRSTY GRAY  
news correspondent

A *Varsity* investigation has revealed that recent JCR presidential elections have created a gender imbalance in positions of college leadership.

After a recent wave of JCR and CUSU presidential hustings, *Varsity* has discovered that men lead almost 80% of student college councils.

Of 28 Cambridge colleges that accept both male and female applicants, 22 of the JCR presidents are male, drawing into question whether there are inherent issues with female confidence or political popularity within the Cambridge student body.

Ruth Graham, the recently elected CUSU Women’s Officer told *Varsity* that she was “not surprised” by the figures:

“This trend is one which we see in wider society rather than being a problem specific to Cambridge. Clearly both national and student politics are not nearly as accessible to women as they should be.

Even when equal numbers of women are running, they often still don’t get chosen.

“I think this is a demonstration of latent sexism.

“I am fundamentally opposed to this idea of a ‘natural difference’ creating this situation where women are not running for political positions. We simply have to fight with concerted campaigns to change attitudes towards the ability of women to be really excellent politicians.”

This information has come to light following the announcement that the new CUSU president will once again be a man, whilst there is only one uncontested male set to run for presidency of the Union in Michaelmas term 2011.

So are women unpopular in presidential positions or do potential female candidates lack the confidence to run against male rivals?

One female JCR president contested inequality on both counts, having won over 70% of the vote against two male peers. She suggested to *Varsity* that it was more to do with biological preferences:

“I don’t think that females are particularly under-represented. Being JCR president is pretty much the only thing that I can manage with my studies, but I think that most girls might be more interested in doing lots of other things with smaller roles.”

But not all students agree. “People believe men are more capable simply because they are capable of showing more drive,” Rosa Sun, first-year medic, told *Varsity*.

Nevertheless, in the JCRs where men came out on top, there were only female candidates in 3 of the 14 presidential elections available for analysis. In many cases, men were uncontested.

Men are still very much wearing the trousers in student politics too – the four major political societies in Cambridge are all male-led.

The CUSU Women’s Campaign were unavailable to pass comment but, although there is a campaign to encourage women to apply to colleges with gender imbalance, the group does little to directly promote female participation in committees and societies.

Views on booze:

It’s either get pissed or do work; I choose to get pissed.

I have never seen the attraction of a society where your ‘objective’ is to regularly numb your brain to the point where you can’t walk or speak coherently.

The university should impose a tax on all alcohol served on university premises and students shouldn’t be allowed to take their own drink to Formals.

We’re the same as any other university. We are young and stupid; thank God!

Cambridge pushes you to alcohol.



## PRESS CUTTINGS

*The pick of the week's papers*

### A DISSERTATION STUDENT'S DISAPPEARING ACT

A 'missing' student at Oxford Brookes re-appeared last Sunday after it was discovered he had been writing his dissertation for the past three weeks. Friends who began a Facebook campaign to find the 22-year-old student have expressed their 'relief' that he has been found.

### RECOGNITION FOR LIBYA

France has become the first country to recognize the Libyan rebels as the official government. As pro-Gaddafi forces try to regain ground in the east, French President Nicolas Sarkozy has said he regards the National Libyan Council as Libya's "legitimate representatives".

### COLE ESCAPES PROSECUTION

Footballer Ashley Cole will not be prosecuted after shooting a man with an airgun at Chelsea's training ground in what he claims was an accident. Mr. Cowan, on a one-year work placement at the club, has made no formal complaint against the player, however the club has claimed it will take "appropriate action" to reprimand him.

### DALAI LAMA'S PLANS 'A TRICK'?

China have said that the Dalai Lama's plans to retire are nothing but 'a trick'. A spokeswoman from the Chinese foreign ministry said: "We think these are tricks to deceive the international community."

# "Francis was a super-genius"

Varsity correspondent Isobel Weinberg speaks to **Professor James Watson** about contemporary controversies, the discovery of the double helix and whether or not men really are better at science



MATILDA HAY

"The moment I saw the structure, I thought that, if it's right, I'm going to be famous for all my life," Professor James Watson tells an audience at Clare College. The lecture hall is so full that even the stairs and floor are crowded with spectators. A similarly large audience gathered to hear Professor Watson talk at the Cambridge Union last night. He was, it turns out, right about that structure.

The structure in question is the DNA molecule: the famous double helix, a beautiful twisting compilation of two interlocking strands with bonds strung between them like the rungs of a ladder, deduced by James Watson and Francis Crick in Cambridge in 1953. Their Nobel prize-winning discovery has become the stuff of scientific legend, perhaps the greatest change in biology since Darwin. For not only did it show the genetic structure, it also explained how genes are replicated: in short, how the essence of

life is stored and passed on.

As the DNA structure has become famous, so has the story behind its discovery. It is the tale of two youthful, brash and arrogant researchers who stole a problem that was not theirs to solve and left a tide of angry colleagues in their wake.

**"I never said anything to make friends... I said things because I thought they were right..."**

According to Watson, he was the enthusiast, driven by a teenage ambition to discover the nature of the gene. Crick was the brilliant theoretician, who needed Watson to convince him to focus on the DNA problem. "Francis [Crick] was the first person I could really speak to," Watson says. "Francis was really a super-genius.... I moved into the world of, you could say, ordinary geniuses and when I met Francis I saw a super-genius. That is, someone who really could focus on ideas."

They were united by a strong scientific curiosity, as well as by other incentives. "Francis and I are both running against God, and the reason we are running against God is that he doesn't exist! We wanted you to show that you could understand the world without God. It was a strong motivation."

Strong motivation was certainly needed, as their work was beset by complications from the beginning. Neither one was officially allowed to be researching DNA. And, by tackling the problem, they were violating an unwritten gentleman's agreement: Maurice Wilkins and Rosalind Franklin of King's College London had begun work on DNA first, and so it was 'their' question.

The breakthrough came when Watson saw a technical photograph made by Rosalind Franklin that, although Franklin had not realised it, gave the crucial parameters of DNA. "When we saw it [the solution] that Saturday morning, that was it," an 82-year old Watson tells me when we meet. "It was going from no knowledge to knowledge."

When they were awarded the Nobel prize, a decade later, Maurice Wilkins was included. But Rosalind Franklin was

by then dead and so ineligible for a prize not given posthumously. Watson has never managed to entirely silence critics who claim that she was hindered by a misogynistic scientific establishment. But Watson is unrepentant, claiming Franklin missed the implications of her own photograph. "Rosalind did not deserve the prize. Generally you don't get a Nobel prize for failing."

As well as Franklin, many others who worked with Watson and Crick found the pair hard to deal with. "They made a movie, years later," Watson says, "and I didn't like the movie, because the whole point of the movie was Francis and I were racing for a Nobel prize. Well, we weren't, we were racing to solve what we thought was an extremely important scientific problem."

"We knew that if you solved an important problem, there was a chance you'd get a job later... And I was thinking, [if I solve it] I won't have to go to North Dakota or something like that, because I never said anything to make friends. I said things because I thought they were right. If you follow that course of life, you don't have many friends."

Not making friends is a problem that has followed Watson throughout his life. After leaving Cambridge, he became Professor of Biology at Harvard and then Director of the prestigious Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. He has seemed unable to avoid controversy, attracting censure for his comments about genetic engineering – "People say it would be ter-

**"I never met a woman like Francis Crick, but I've never met a man like Francis Crick"**

rible if we made all girls pretty. I think it would be great" – and obesity – "Whenever you interview fat people, you feel bad, because you know you're not going to hire them".

"About once every three years I get into real trouble for saying something I think is just obviously true," he tells me gloomily. The culmination came in 2007, when he told a newspaper he was "inherently gloomy about the prospect of Africa" because "all our social policies are based

on the fact that their intelligence is the same as ours – whereas all the testing says not really." He was forced to resign from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory as a result.

When asked about this, he is cautious and hesitating, clearly making an effort to choose his words carefully. "I never intended to –," he pauses. "I don't remember making the statement... and didn't wish ever to be a public figure because that's not my field. I never wanted to make that statement and it got me into a lot of trouble."

**"I want to cure cancer within the next five years."**

But even when contrite, he is unable to prevent himself from speaking his mind. "We're supposed to say that everything is equal... that all cultures all equal. I don't think so!" he tells the Union audience.

"I think political correctness has gone too far," he tells me. "One of the big issues is: are you allowed to say there's a difference between men and women? And I think we should be, because there are some things women do better than men and vice versa."

What about saying that men do science better than women, I ask? More pauses, more hesitation. "All I can tell you is that one of my postdocs is now the first woman president of MIT so I have not discouraged women. I never met a woman like Francis Crick, but I've never met a man like Francis Crick."

When we turn to talking about the big questions in science, Watson becomes contemplative. "The big question was: what is genetic information? We came up with the answer... and then some people said science is done, this was the grand question and everything else would be rather trivial, but it wasn't true. The big question is how is information stored in the brain... and no one knows how to answer it."

Almost sixty years after his seminal discovery, his ambition seems unabated. "I want to cure cancer within the next five years."

Characteristically outrageous, it is hard to tell if he is joking or not. But later he grows serious. "I won't make it [a discovery]. My role now is to get people to do things that should be done. I got Francis to work on DNA, and it paid off."





LETTICE FRANKLIN'S



∞ This time last year I was writing about rhubarb for *The Cambridge Student*, and, to be precise, I was writing this:  
Oh my God, the sun has come out. And oh my God I cannot think about anything else. I cannot even think about food. I am one of those boring people that cannot help commenting on the weather. I think very very cold weather is a conversational godsend: "Hello person-whose-name-I-don't-know-but-who-was-sitting-right-opposite-me-in-the-library-when-I-accidentally-blasted-out-Billy-Joel-from-my-laptop... isn't it freezing?" and you're fine. Indisputable and universal observation made. Awkward silence avoided. This spring is even better.

∞ Obviously things have changed. I have been seduced by the glamorous fonts of *Varsity*, and the heady heights of a column. I am, I hope, slightly less cringe-inducingly keen to please with my conversational gambits in the Faculty Library. My music taste has become even more sophisticated and now involves solely Abba. But some things remain the same, and I was, this week, catapulted into ecstasies of joy by the eventual arrival of spring. Cycling along, as daffodils nod contentedly as one passes, the reflection of blue sky shimmers in the Cam, and the admittedly quite bleak Sidgwick Site concrete welcomes its first picnickers, Cambridge isn't a half bad place to be.

∞ ... And set to become even better for students at Christ's, with the announcement this week of a multi-million pound plan for a new library. The library, designed by Rick Mather Architects, will include window seats, an outdoor terrace with views of the Cambridge skyline, a cafe within a glass covered court AND, wait for it, a pressed flower room!

∞ It is perhaps no surprise that Prince Charles, sniffing spring in the air, felt the pull of his old Alma Mater. The Prince studied Archaeology and Anthropology, and then History at Trinity. I, a new-found royalist because of my immense love for Geoffrey Rush in

*The King's Speech*, have got a bit carried away with my research for this piece, and followed Charles's career in Cambridge pretty comprehensively. Old newsreel shows him arriving at Trinity, his face not fully-grown and slightly out of proportion with his pronounced nose and gawky smile, which he lets shine obligingly when a verrrrry dapper and dreamy third year boy shows him a special stained glass window commemorating his royal predecessors, when really, come on, we all know that he just wants to go and cry in a locked room. I have gazed fondly at photos of my little chap finding his feet, chilling in his room with ashtrays and pictures of boats artfully scattered to prove his masculine bravado, throwing himself into extra-curriculars, like any good fresher, and actually doing a lot fricking better than most good freshers and performing in Footlights reviews, spending most of the time ensconced in a dustbin, but still Footlights is Footlights, eh, riding his bike over Orgasm Bridge, his hands firmly and sensibly planted on the handlebars and his hair, as always, neatly combed... Before I stop swooning can I just tell you – because I think it is amazing – that Charles has a tea of boiled eggs and muffins between 4 and 5 every afternoon, for which the eggs must be boiled for exactly four minutes, and in an effort to ensure at least one is perfect, chefs boil seven eggs at a time. I am volunteering now to cut up Charles' soldiers, and to eat some of the six rejected eggs, when the tea hour strikes during his impending visit on Monday.

∞ I will, in the interest of fairness, also offer this service to Julian Assange, who comes to Cambridge the day after to speak at the Union. He will, no doubt, need some reassuring sustenance to prepare him for his first public speech in four months, the first since the decision was made to extradite him to Sweden for questioning in relation to sexual assault charges. Although in hindsight, maybe offering him my services is absolutely the last thing he needs.

∞ So yes, following in the footsteps of princes, worthy of incredibly influential whistleblowers' attention, it seems important to take stock, to look up at the (very occasionally) blue sky, around at the (pretty much) palaces we walk through, and remember that we will one day not have so many essays that we can't really breathe when we think about them, and will, like Prince Charles, make a day trip back to Cambridge, to wallow in remembering our (sort of/only in May week) carefree, spring sunshine-scattered, salad days.



GEORGE SHAPTER



"I joined Red Gate straight out of university. Now I'm running our largest business division, working with amazing people and getting to decide what we'll do next. Sometimes I have to pinch myself!"

**James Moore** Divisional Manager, SQL Tools

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## This House Believes...

*We're over-examined and under-taught*

### PROP.

Peter Richardson, first year,  
Peterhouse College

Any who have successfully cleared the obstacles that a British education throws in our way will know that we live in an age of rampant standardization.

You will remember stifling exam halls and impractical information stuffed into papers short and obscure enough to wean us off education for good; you might remember Pythagoras or Pliny, and a host of trivial facts about them with no application outside a college library; worse still, you might have fallen into Cambridge life without the understanding that the mere acquisition of facts does not constitute education.

New Labour has changed the meaning of education from a holistic transmission of key skills and social etiquette into the regurgitation of facts in a format so rigidly prescribed that it leaves no room for creativity.

Students are not nauseated seagulls, and Labour would have done well to appreciate it.

If we are not to become so, we must realize that inspiration and originality should form the bedrock of the civilized curriculum.

### OPP.

Laurie Martin, second year,  
Pembroke College

According to the recent faculty review, which has sent tremors throughout the English faculty, English students at Cambridge University are, apparently, over-taught.

Yes, you read that correctly.

Oddly enough, we're also under-examined. Pre-lims, a cursory gesture towards public examination, aren't externally marked. In fact, some colleges don't even run them. English and History are the only two subjects that don't have three years of University examinations.

As English students we've been told we get too much. And with all that pricey information we're being fed, we're not even getting tested on it!

So the motion is quashed? Not quite.

The review does not seem in any way illustrative of the experience of an English Undergraduate. The course we all do values esoteric, self-generated research. It certainly doesn't spoon-feed us. If we have a lot of hours, it's because what we all do is original, and important.

As English students we should fight against these proposals: core units and compulsory lectures would radically undercut the methods by which we study and appreciate literature.

# Competing for pennies

Two weeks ago, Cambridgeshire received what sounded like good news: it had been chosen to pilot the Government's scheme for 'participatory budgeting'. Described as "allowing local people to decide how public money is spent in their community", you'd be forgiven for thinking we might be able to make local priorities known.

But the budget is to be allocated within just one sector: services responding to violence against women and girls. Charities invited to compete include Cambridge Women's Aid, Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre, and Cambridge Women and Homelessness. The public will be entrusted with only £11,500, and no bid will receive more than £3000.

The scheme seems to be based more on TV than transparent democracy. At first, eight bids "will be shortlisted" (we have not been told by whom, or how). Then the people will choose which to fund, voting via text or just one physical venue for the whole county, Cambridge Central Library. How this poll will be publicised, and how, for example, multiple voting will be prevented, has not been made clear. However, even if this project didn't make a mockery out of democracy, it would still be an unacceptable way to fund services addressing violence against women.

This sector, both nationally and locally, has for decades campaigned tirelessly for its professional services and for the crimes it addresses to be taken seriously. It responds to such issues as domestic abuse, rape, child sexual abuse, prostitution, human trafficking, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour-based' violence. Misconceptions and myths about these issues are endemic in our society.

For instance, the overlap between sexual violence and domestic violence goes unnoticed (45% of rapes of adult women, identified in the British Crime Survey 2000, were perpetrated by the woman's

partner). The connection between prostitution and child sexual abuse is also little known: around half of women in prostitution have been sexually abused as children, and the average age to be brought into the industry is 13-14 (Paying the Price, 2004).

As a society, we are not specialists in these difficult and complex issues: asking us to choose between these closely interrelated charities is as absurd as voting on funding the Addenbrookes surgical team v. cancer care.

There are various pernicious and widespread myths: a recent survey found that one in three people believe that if a man rapes a woman who is wearing revealing clothing, she is to blame (Wake up to Rape, 2011). As a society we surround these crimes with immense shame and stigma, silencing women, and worsening our underestimation of the prevalence and effects of violence and abuse.

Rape is a subject for jokes and sensation-alist TV dramas, while most rapists never face a courtroom, let alone prison.

In the face of such attitudes to violence against women, how are these charities to appeal for votes? Are they expected to describe their work in gory detail, to 'sex it up' to attract attention? Will they minimise their involvement in those forms of abuse which attract less public sympathy?

The competitive aspect of this process is repellent for deeper reasons. Making women's charities fight amongst themselves creates division amongst services that work best together, and sabotages united campaigns to reduce gender-based violence, or to secure funding. Even before the cuts, the struggles this sector faced to obtain funding were sometimes overwhelming.

In 2007, Cambridge Rape Crisis

Centre closed due to a chronic lack of funding, only to be reopened by women students with help from other charities. National funding for Rape Crisis Centres is much lower than expected, and local funding for domestic violence services has not yet been secured as being free from the cuts. If the wider sector is to survive the current cuts, solidarity is crucial.

Real participatory budgeting has been happening for years. It involves giving communities genuine, transparent choice about more than a trifling £11,500, but only once core services meeting vital needs have been adequately funded.

Trying to implement it in this climate makes it nothing more than a fig leaf for the cutting of core services.

Choosing violence against women and girls for a tiny budget entrusted to the community simply exploits these issues for political points.

Facing the tragic but everyday reality of violence against women and girls is deeply unpopular. The work that these agencies do is desperately difficult, complex and needs-driven. They provide basic services of safety and support to only a fraction of the women and girls who need them.

These charities will be grateful for every penny which comes their way, but this is not the way to do it. Services meeting national needs require national strategy, with adequate, long-term, ring-fenced funding: anything less insults these women and trivialises the crimes which have been committed against them.

This farcical 'X-factor' scheme, making women's charities compete for pennies, goes beyond trivialising to voyeuristic and exploitative.

If you wish to feed back to the Home Office on your views about this pilot, there is a brief survey at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/KD5KHZC](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KD5KHZC).



ELEANOR CRAMER

*The 'X-Factor' politics that is making a mockery of women's suffering*

A recent survey found that one in three people believe that if a man rapes a woman who is wearing revealing clothing, she is to blame



# No peace without water

*Water supplies aren't just a drop in the ocean amidst the Arab-Israeli conflict*

JAMEEL ZAYED



Israel, a land flowing with milk and honey, but what about water? Many of us are strangers to the role water security has played in the conflict. However, put simply, Israel is thirsty, and has been since its establishment in 1948, when the British Mandate over Palestine expired.

In fact, back in 1919, the Zionist delegation at the League of Nations Peace Conference, Paris, said that the Golan Heights, Jordan Valley, and Lebanon's river Litani were "essential for the necessary economic foundation of the country".

The British mandate did not give them this, but through the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel gained exclusive control over the West Bank Mountain aquifer and the Sea of Galilee, which together provide Israel with 60 per cent of its freshwater supply today.

Ariel Sharon, the General in charge at the time, said, "while June 1967 is the official date that the Six-Day War began, in reality, it started two and a half years earlier, on the day Israel decided to act against the diversion of the Jordan River".

This 'diversion', was Syria and Jordan's response when Israel, in 1964, began withdrawing more than its agreed share from the Jordan River.

The Syrian Golan Heights, also occupied by Israel since 1967, supplies Israel's other lifeline, the Sea of Galilee, with 30 per cent of its water. Lebanon is the only country in the region with a water surplus, but during Israel's repeated military incursions in South Lebanon, it has made sure to destroy vast portions of the water infrastructure while driving out local communities.

As the last source of water lying outside 'the Jewish Homeland', all eyes are on Lebanon as Israel's next target, on its course towards the realisation of the Zionist dream of "having all of Palestine's headwaters within the Jewish Homeland".

So what lies beneath? Parts of the West Bank ascend up to 1000m above sea level, and underneath it is the Mountain Aquifer. Its primary basin is the Western Aquifer, which has the highest quality water. Around 90% of its recharge area lies within the West Bank territory, while its entire storage area lies downstream, in Israel, which uses 95 per cent of the water coming from this source. What's left for Palestinians in the West Bank varies, with 25 per cent of Palestinian villages having no connection to a water service. Gaza relies solely on the Coastal Aquifer, which due to over-extraction, is on the

brink.

Let us for a moment contemplate some 'facts on the ground': i) Palestinians only get a quarter of the water Israelis have access to; ii) the average Israeli consumes over six times more water than the average Palestinian; and iii) two thirds of Israel's water come from sources shared with the Palestinians, in some cases totally denying Palestinians access to the aquifers.

The problem is exacerbated by the access restrictions that Palestinians face, where they are boxed within 'security zones' separated by the Apartheid Wall, illegal Israeli settlements, and military checkpoints.

Israeli settlements, complete with swimming pools and well-watered lawns, are provided with subsidised water to encourage farming, along with computerised irrigation and distribution systems. In stark contrast, the Palestinian side is failing to meet even its basic domestic water needs.

The Israeli water company, Mekorot, responsible for the West Bank's water supply, closes the valves to Palestinian towns and villages when supplies are low during the summer, forcing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to buy water from Israel at inflated prices.

'The Roadmap' to peace? Each

major Israeli-Palestinian negotiation has failed to properly address the water issue, instead sidelining it to 'final status talks' that are yet to arrive.

The Israeli government continues to work on the integration of the entire West Bank water system into the larger Israeli network, a water supply system that cannot be split! The Apartheid Wall, supposedly built as a 'temporary security measure', actually encroaches deep within the occupied West Bank rather than on Israel's internationally-recognised 1948 border. The wall's route in fact follows the areas of high water yield, placing this precious resource conveniently on the Israeli side, giving Israel the lion's share.

With Israel suffering its worst water crisis in 80 years, the establishment of any independent Palestinian state has been said to be a 'non-negotiable item' on the basis of water security.

Any future Palestinian state would possess upstream rights to its own water resources, in addition to downstream rights coming from its border with Jordan, putting a future Israel under the thumb of its neighbours.

It's looking highly unlikely that Israel would ever risk such a compromise in the name of peace, and so, "no peace without water, no water without peace".

## End of Secularisation: James Gardom on why we might be in a minority in secular Britain

PRADEEPA SIVASANTHIRAN

the essay

A society is secular if religion is marginalised and privatised. The Secularisation Hypothesis is the notion that as societies democratise and industrialise they characteristically secularise. Most Western Europeans, and most people in Cambridge University believe this implicitly, partly because it corresponds to our experience.

I wish to argue that our experience is limited and atypical. Most of the rest of the world does things differently, and there is little evidence that Britain, France, Sweden or Switzerland represent the future religious landscape of the world.

A brief survey of five avowedly secular states is illuminating. The following are discussed in ascending order of size.

Turkey represents slightly over 1 per cent of the world's population. It was declared a secular state in 1924 with the abolition of the Caliphate and the forcible introduction of Western customs. It is a democracy, and it is rapidly industrialising, and both its democracy and its industrialisation have been closely connected with the election of a mildly Islamist party. Observers express real doubts as to whether the secular nature of Turkey will make it to a century.

Russia represents slightly over 2 per cent of the world's population. It was the centre of an atheist and persecuting USSR from 1917. This atheism was widely exported through the first half of the 20th century. Russian Orthodoxy is currently being used by the government to establish Russian national identity, with an extraordinary programme church building. (Its claims to be a democracy are contested)

The USA represents slightly more than 4.5 per cent of the world's population. It has a strong constitutional separation of Church and State. The significance of religion in presidential elections from the mid-twentieth century has steadily grown. It is a deeply

religious country, with a strong anti-religious minority. It has special significance as a key cultural "market leader". Pentecostalism, the fastest-growing Christian group in the second half of the twentieth century retains strong cultural links with the USA.

India represents over 17 per cent of the world's population. India became independent in 1947 with a secular constitution. It has been a democracy since that time, and is rapidly industrialising. It remains one of the most religious countries in the world, and the significance of Hinduism for political discourse and national identity is steadily increasing.

China represents almost 20 per cent of the world's population. It has been an atheist state since the revolution in 1949. Religion has been tightly controlled and often persecuted. It is currently undergoing significant religious revivals.

The Christian component of this is hard to measure because much of it is based around house churches which deliberately divide, rather than grow to a size that would need to register with the State. One estimate suggests that 10 per cent of the population (130 million people) may be Christian. Another observer suggests that China may have the largest Christian and Muslim communities in the world by 2050. (It is rapidly industrialising. Its claims to be a democracy are dubious. I have not heard it argued that it would be less religious if it were more democratic.)

Between them these five countries with secular constitutions represent 45 per cent of the world's population. They provide a very powerful counter argument to the secularisation hypothesis and should make us alert to the fact that our experience of living in an increasingly secular context is, for better or worse, unusual.

There are, perhaps, two reasons to believe that the European experience of pervasive secularity is not only atypical, but likely to be



temporary. Firstly, globalisation, and the increase of immigration mean that cultural influences go increasingly in two directions. A religious world has more capacity to dilute the secularity in Europe, in the end, than a secular Europe has capacity to dilute the religiousness of the world. Secondly, one of the enduring strengths of religion is its ability to provide social structures, and places to belong, in an increasingly anonymous culture. Religious communities often offer a sense of belonging and identity not dissimilar, in some ways, to our colleges. They fulfil what appears to be a

basic human need.

It is possible to argue that religion remains important in the world, and indeed that it may be becoming more important, without prejudging the question of whether this is a good thing. (My view is that good religion is a good thing, and bad religion is a bad thing.)

If you are sure that this country and the world will become a less religious place over the next 50 years, please allow your complacency (or anxiety) to be disturbed.

DR JAMES GARDOM IS DEAN OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, AND AN AFFILIATED LECTURER IN THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY.

It is possible to argue that religion remains important in the world, and indeed that it may be becoming more important





# Stage Politics

“Theatre should prompt us to ask questions of the world around us, and to seek change where things need to be changed.” Award-winning playwright **Laura Wade** talks to **Siobhán Forshaw** about politics, plays, and what it means to be ‘posh’

“I am sick to fucking death of poor people!” So concludes the tirade of Alistair, a member of the Riot Club, an exclusive, elitist, university dine-and-trash club around which *Posh*, the latest production from award-winning playwright Laura Wade, centres its drama. For the second time since its world premiere last year – commissioned to coincide with the general election – the play opened at the ADC before one of the only audiences in the world most likely to identify with the suggestions made by this incisive, biting funny satire. Laura Wade herself came to see the performance, and met with *Varsity* to discuss her admiration for the Oxbridge institutions, which she calls “great, glorious places where scholarship is valued without apology”; and her worries that they are becoming evermore inaccessible.

Raised in Sheffield and educated in Bristol, Laura is not a ‘posh’ girl. She joined the Royal Court Young Writers

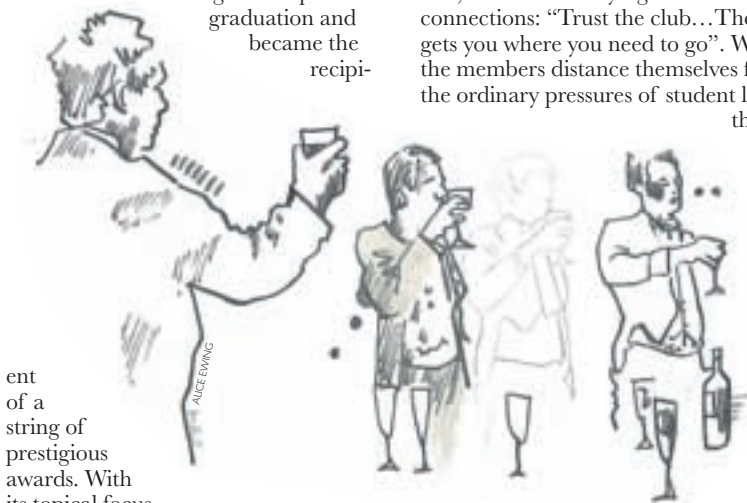
Programme post-graduation and became the recipient of a string of prestigious awards. With its topical focus on the ultra-privileged roots of our government, *Posh* has attracted wide scrutiny well beyond the theatre world. “Class is such a touchy

subject for the British especially at the moment, and it seemed to me that when *Posh* showed at the Royal Court, each member of the audience was seeing a different play – viewed through the prism of their own background, politics, and sense of their own place on that scale.” Politicians now find themselves relentlessly required to defend their privileged backgrounds, and seem equally required to be, as David Cameron insists, ‘desperately embarrassed’ about their participation in these old boys clubs. Laura feels no obligation towards those to whom the play unofficially refers: “People must take the play as they find it. It’s not my job to second-guess. Nor is it my job, when writing a group of fictional characters, to feel any responsibility to be fair.”

The Riot Club, overshadowed by past glories, is nervously commanded by James Leighton-Masters, who attracts the scorn of his companions when they discover him applying for a job via a conventional application process, rather than relying on inherited connections: “Trust the club... The club gets you where you need to go”. Whilst the members distance themselves from the ordinary pressures of student life, the



PHILLIP HOLIS



ent of a string of prestigious awards. With its topical focus on the ultra-privileged

roots of our government, *Posh* has attracted wide scrutiny well beyond the theatre world. “Class is such a touchy

weight of the past is heavy on their shoulders. Arrogant though they are, there is also a sense of the boys as

outsiders – uncomfortable and uneasy with the idea of their own wealth. This manifests itself in the rage purported by Alistair, and in the embarrassment of George. Despite their reprehensible actions, Laura finds her characters

“The need to bind oneself to a group – to the exclusion of other people – is prevalent in all parts of society. It’s what you do afterwards that counts.”

“charming, clever and funny”. She hopes that the play “gives the audience the opportunity to imagine what it’s like to be in the club, to feel that seductive sense of belonging, and therefore to feel in some way complicit in what happens inside the room.”

Does she believe these clubs to exist for any positive purpose at all? Should they be smoked out and disbanded? “The idea that ‘what happens at college stays at college’ is often mooted – that we all do silly things at university (what I call the boyish hijinks defence), and that the clubs are therefore harmless. But I think the play asks how possible it is to drop those attitudes later in life, and tries to place this behaviour in a wider social context. In a way, it’s not the clubs themselves that are the problem – after all, the need to bind oneself to a group, to the exclusion of other people, is prevalent in all parts of society – it’s what you do with the experience afterwards

that counts.” The implicit relevance to notorious dining clubs has once again invited comparisons between the Oxford Bullingdon and the Cambridge Pitt, who remain explicitly anxious about any association with their Oxford counterpart, who were once again recently embroiled in a timely piece of scandal involving the violence and destruction depicted in the play. When asked to respond in defence of their own establishments, both the Bullingdon and the Pitt refused, citing ‘juxtapositional damage’ as their excuse.

In a political world peopled by the products of these kinds of clubs, Laura emphasises the myth that the Cabinet achieved their positions purely through hard work and talent: “the privileges which shaped their earlier lives are demonstrably linked to where they ended up (and to the fact that a lot of other people didn’t end up there). If you’re born into money, then educated at Eton and Oxford, then you become a politician, you need a lot of imagination to think what it might be like for people who don’t have those privileges.” She has nothing against Eton, conceding that “it’s obviously a great school and it produced George Orwell, but shouldn’t people who come

out of it want to make it possible for more people to go there, not fewer?” This is, of course, the crucial and enduring question posed by *Posh*, which concluded its sell-out run at the ADC Theatre last month.

“I think theatre should absolutely interact with the real world - and its particular job is to do so through metaphor and the imagination. Plays should prompt the audience to ask questions of the world around them, and to seek to change things that need to be changed. But god save us from dry social commentary - it should never be boring.” And to the budding playwrights here in Cambridge, Laura offers sound and blunt advice: “Write. Write a lot. See as many plays as you can. Read plays and take them apart like a mechanic - work out how the playwright made that particular machine. Be humble and try really hard not to be a dick.”



## Laura Wade: A Timeline

- 1996** ○ First play, *Limbo*, produced at Sheffield Crucible Studio Theatre
- 2000** ○ *16 Winters* produced at Bristol Old Vic Basement Theatre
- 2003** ○ Adaptation of W.H. Davies’ *Young Emma* opened at the Finborough Theatre (where she later becomes Writer-in-Residence)
- 2005** ○ Wins Critics’ Circle award for most promising playwright thanks to *Colder Than Here* (Soho Theatre) and *Breathing Corpses* (Royal Court)
- 2007** ○ First radio play, *Otherkin*, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 30th August
- 2010** ○ *Posh* opens at the Royal Court
- 2011** ○ Work begins on the screenplay for *Posh*



# Cutlets for Culture

Food & Drink Editor **Andrew Tindall** discusses the importance of soul food

In any household, the kitchen and the meals produced there form as much of its foundation as bricks and mortar. With our return home for the holidays imminent, this could not ring more true – the prospect of a home-cooked meal is an exciting one, and I for one will not miss College catering. When I think of home, I am reminded of the sense of place and inclusion more than the physical attributes of the suburban semi my bank statements are sent to. This inclusion often revolves around meals, and it may seem sickeningly twee to think of the concept of home as being centred on food rather than the place in question. However, throughout culinary history, food has been a lynchpin of belonging and identity in otherwise cold surroundings.

For many in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the American Deep South was far from a welcoming place. Even after the passage of the thirteenth amendment, the legacy of slavery left an underclass of hundreds of thousands of black people who had systematically been denied their cultural heritage. Much modern African-American cuisine owes its roots to the harsh times when the kitchen provided what little was available - dishes such as turnip greens, hog jowls and pig's feet all feature leftovers from the plantation owner's table. Okra, a small vegetable in the mallow family, was supposedly smuggled over from Africa as seed caches in the ears of slaves and, despite resistance, became the signature ingredient in Louisiana Gumbo. Elements of Native American cuisine, the food of another dispossessed people, were also incorporated along with the saturated fats required by hard toil. Yet food is not merely fuel; these scraps were eventually transformed into staples of cultural identity. The laborious undertaking of putting heart and soul

into dinner created dishes that persist to this day and transcend the boundaries that created them. It is telling that fried chicken, born from slavery and segregation, is now marketed worldwide under the smiling gaze of a bearded white gentleman.

Whilst soul food dealt with the necessities of hard labour, other 'nomad' cuisines have evolved to incorporate religious obligations. Jewish cuisine emerged through the lengthy travels

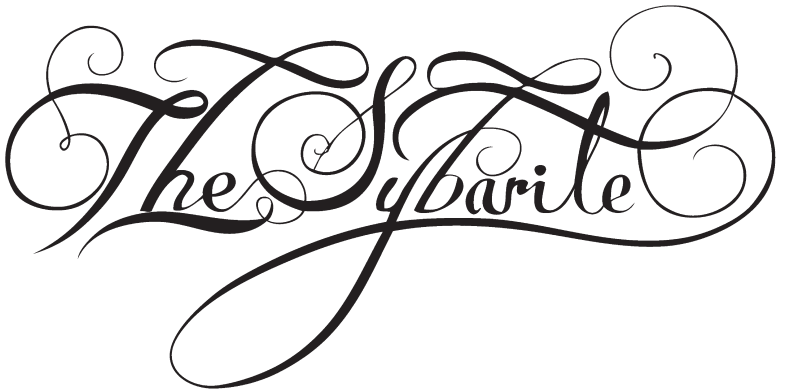
In many ways, Jamaican cuisine is as much a pidgin as the creole patois spoken on the trading crossroads

of the Jewish diaspora. One of the major obstacles for a Jewish cook in medieval and renaissance Europe, aside from segregation and forced expulsion, was the ubiquity of pork products in the kitchens of the time. This forced it to develop separately from other European cuisines. The search for an alternative cooking fat by French Jews through the fattening of geese produced foie gras as a by-product which was in turn adopted by French high society. Such an exchange of culinary ideas was far from a one-way street, with modern dishes such as perogi, borsht, kreplach and even bagels having been adopted by Ashkenazi Jews from Polish and Russian kitchens. Celebratory foods, however, developed in complete isolation due to the divergent religious holidays of Christian and Jewish traditions - challah, fried latkes and matzo ball soup are as much

emblems of Jewish culture as they are of cuisine.

Jamaican food was, for many Britons, the first taste of the 'exotic' alongside Indian food, following the influx of immigrants in the 1950s and 60s. Scotch Bonnets, allspice, fried plantains and callaloo would have seemed utterly alien to the British palate, yet have more familiar roots. Jamaican patties are a corruption of Cornish pasties and their forbearers. In many ways, Jamaican cuisine is as much a pidgin as the creole patois spoken on the trading crossroads. It rapidly incorporates influences from Indian and Chinese labourers with British, African and Native Arawak cooking alongside the rice, beans and salt fish typical of slave rations. The middle of the century saw imports of Afro-Caribbean and Indian food to Britain, demonstrating the importance of food as something that provides a sense of home in a foreign land; it becomes a centrepiece of cultural identity. The fact that these dishes have been embraced by the very communities who were originally hostile is a testament to the skill of the Jamaican and Bengali cooks.

Food is much more than the calories it contains, and the necessity and frequency of meals have marked them out as discrete units of cultural inheritance. With so much time devoted to its preparation and consumption, it seems only natural that it should be part of who we are. It can be easy to forget that food has history and importance, both within our lives and beyond them. The act of creating a dish for another person who you love, for no financial reparation, is the very definition of home and it is of no surprise that soul food is most prevalent amongst those who have been denied a place to call their own. Houses are buildings, yet homes are much more - they are family, memory and belonging.



*n. a person who is self-indulgent in their fondness for sensuous luxury*

Places don't just seem better when you're about to leave them – they are better. They seem better because we (misguidedly) apply ideas of scarcity value: things appear more valuable when you have less time in which to appreciate them. In a sense this is true, because if we value making memories of a place and the chances for doing that are limited it instils a sense of urgency. But it does not follow that things actually improve as we are about to leave them – their apparent scarcity just makes it seem that way. Yet, I think, the illusion is augmented by truth – things are often truly better in a place you are about to leave.

First, when an end is in sight, you can put up with stuff. The music played by the mad Bulgarian next door is muted by the thought that soon you will be out of here. Grievances and enmities are relieved of their import when you know that the less amenable of your fellows will imminently be eating your dust, and the consequences of your actions are limited too – if you make a mistake with social repercussions, you only have to deal with the fallout for so long. This is one explanation for the so-called 'gold rush', a phrase which describes a phenomenon I have yet to (passively and scientifically, of course) witness. Apparently, towards the end of their time at university third-year undergraduates go sex crazy. It happens, no doubt, for the same reason that people are horny on holiday – women (and men, for that matter) out of any long term social circle do not risk being known as slutty, and fears of commitment are dispelled by the knowledge of certain ending. As one is about to leave the consequences of the actions of others on you are diminished, and so are the consequences of your actions on them. It is a liberating lightness.

Yet it is a

lightness that can also be disabling, like trying to run in a dream. Having the end in mind when you act can make you feel that you have already reached it. If your actions have fewer consequences, they also lose permanency of meaning. Why bother throw yourself into your work now when you are leaving so soon? Why, in fact, begin any new endeavour? It is already too late. This is a psychology I frequently hear iterated. When you get caught by the anticipatory nostalgia of an ending, you sometimes can't help getting a strange feeling – the feeling that, in some ways, you have already left.

When we talk about a story in English, we talk about its "ending". I write 'in English' because in other languages – French for example – the relevant word is of a different character. "La fin" means "the end", a phrase that is used in English, but which is less common than the present participle form "ending" that French simply cannot create. "Ending" is a beautiful word in English, because it contains within it the sense of continued movement, of interminability, of the lie told by the word "end". One can always ask of a story 'what happened next?' – the endings given by authors are never final. There is always an extent to which they are arbitrary. The endings we experience are like that too. "Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell," writes Walter Benjamin, but until that point there are endings, not ends. As we begin to inhabit them, life is only going to seem – and truly to get – sweeter. Cambridge is never going to look, or to be, more perfect than when we leave it. It will never be more resonant, never be more written over with memory, and the tales that its street corners, courts and archways tell to us will never be more present – never sweeter – than they are now.

PETER LEGGATT

## The *Varsity* Poetry Competition

*Lent Term 2011*

This week saw our Arts mailbox overflow with extraordinary numbers of poems! *Varsity* thanks all who contributed, and is proud to present the 'unmistakeable winner', as judged by Robert Macfarlane, award-winning travel writer, literary critic and fellow of Emmanuel College.

*An excerpt from the winner:*

### Glossectomy

by Luke McMullan

the removal of the tongue—  
in your case, at the root.  
It is a late preventative measure  
for the poison of the mouth.

But, in your case, not  
so poisoned; more  
curtailed: between us, speech  
was always prophylactic.

My father tells me over the phone  
that you have been cut  
from ear to ear, and bear  
the scarred semblance of a smile.

Your consumption has been bypassed  
by feeding pipeline. It is digestion  
direct.  
It is a more efficient solution.  
It is the more humane solution.

I hang up, and learn new words for  
you:  
metastasis  
carcinoma  
tonsillar  
paraesthesia.

I wonder which small bioshock  
set off this chain reaction,  
this cell-concussion,  
and the sprouting of electric tendrils  
from your skin  
as if it has outspread its housing;  
and whether it began,  
say, in the lining of the cheek,  
or in the sublingual alcove?

*Did you enter?*

There will be an opportunity to read out your poems on the **12th March at Sidney Sussex College, Knox Shaw Room, 7pm.**

**READ THE REST OF 'GLOSSECTOMY' AND SEE THE RUNNERS UP & SHORTLIST AT [www.varsity.co.uk](http://www.varsity.co.uk)**



GEORGE SHAPTER



# Vintage Appeal

The vintage obsession is inescapable and has become one of the most powerful taste and trendsetters of our age, influencing everything from buildings to cupcakes.

**Zoe Large** considers what this fixation says about our society

Vintage is big business. No longer hidden in back streets, second-hand stores populate front lines to be embraced by the masses. Once their garish exteriors clashed awkwardly with the polished veneers of popular chains. Now you'd be forgiven for confusing the two, for high-street designers trawl through vintage catalogues to find inspiration for their mass-produced work. The trend doesn't stop at clothing. New housing estates are more likely to be filled with mock-Tudor structures than the high-rise blocks of the 1960s. Their interiors will probably be partitioned rather than open plan and, if the success of the late Laura Ashley is anything to go by, furnished with distressed wooden features, antique armchairs and floral-print fabrics.

Everywhere we look – from literature, to music, even food – we find a culture obsessed with the past. Antiquity has supplanted functionality as the prime determinant of value: a shift which speaks volumes about the post-modern condition. If the open design of modernist spaces reflected a revolutionary abolition of social division, our return to partitions indicates a nostalgia for stable tradition. Resenting the uncertainty brought about by the 'progress' of modernity, we cast a sentimental eye to the past. It's no coincidence that the hallmarks of 'vintage' (cupcakes, hair

ribbons, tea-dresses) playfully gesture back to the joys of childhood – viewed through the soft-focus lens of the post-modern culture-maker, bygone decades constitute just such a carefree realm.

A more tangible referent for the phenomenon can be found in the counter-culture of the late 1960s. Hippies once donned second-hand furs and army coats in an ostentatious display of anti-materialism – hence The Beatles' military uniforms on the cover of the

“Loss of faith in the future has brought the demise of innovation”

*Sgt. Pepper* album, or Lennon's NHS-style specs. Their protests rested upon an assumption that still underlies our obsession with retro – that vintage fabrics possess an authenticity lacked by their modern replacements. Yet hippy ideals couldn't jar more obviously with the mass-produced, 'vintage' style clothing now filling Primark's brown papers. What does it say about our culture when a mainstream industry thrives off

a style which set out to ridicule it?

The temptation is to chastise modern culture for its shallow understanding of the past. We seem to privilege style over meaning to the extent that imitations have become indistinct from originals – nowadays so-called 'vintage' items differ from antiques in that the latter possess a history, whilst the former might only appear to do so. The ironic outcome is thousands of modern businesses built upon the clever packaging of nostalgia. Their mass-produced simulacra bring vintage styles utterly out of context, hazily harking back to a fairytale past which never really existed. In our nostalgia we build lifestyles out of such empty images, ironically nurturing the capitalist foundations of modernity in the process.

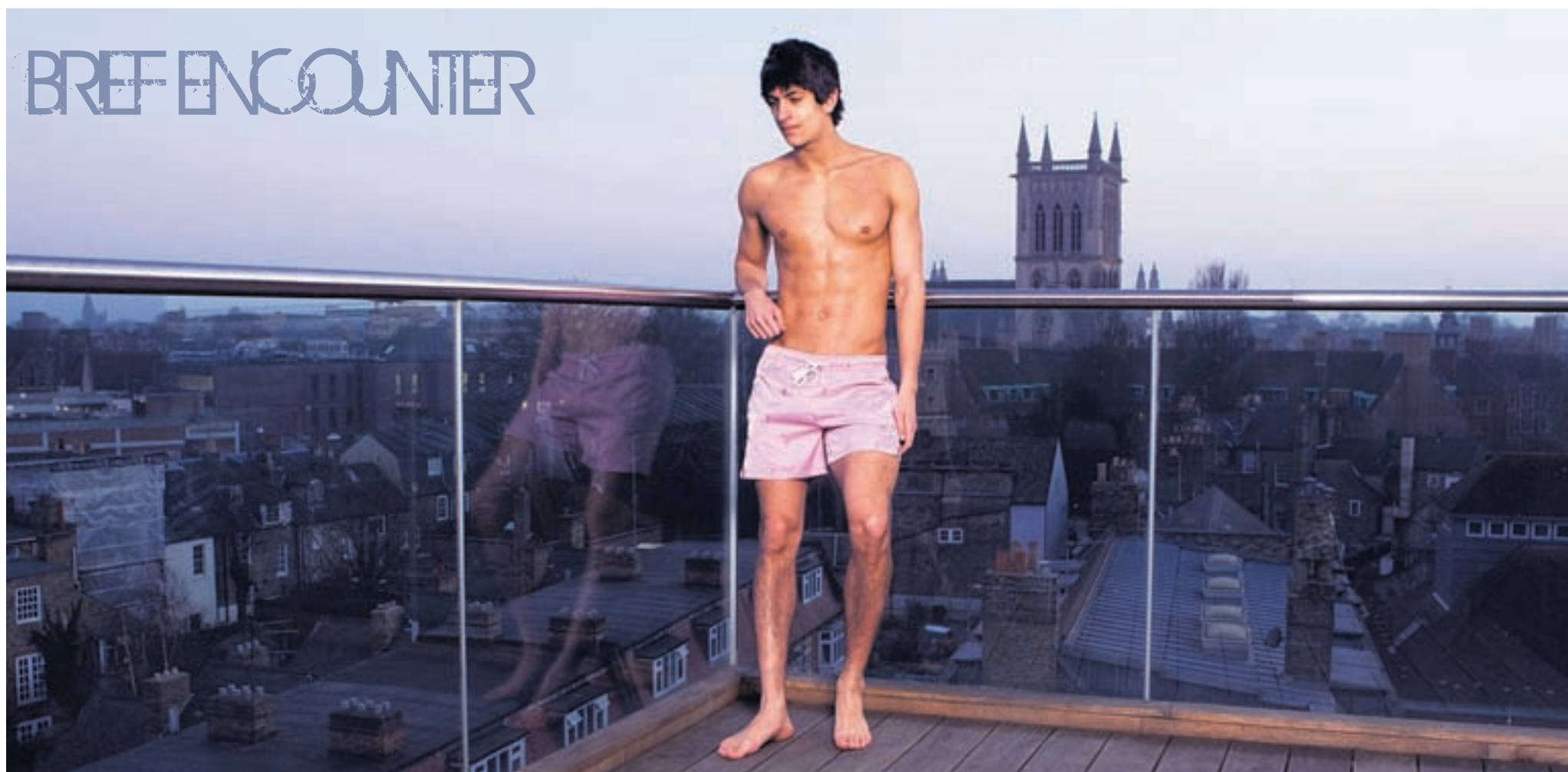
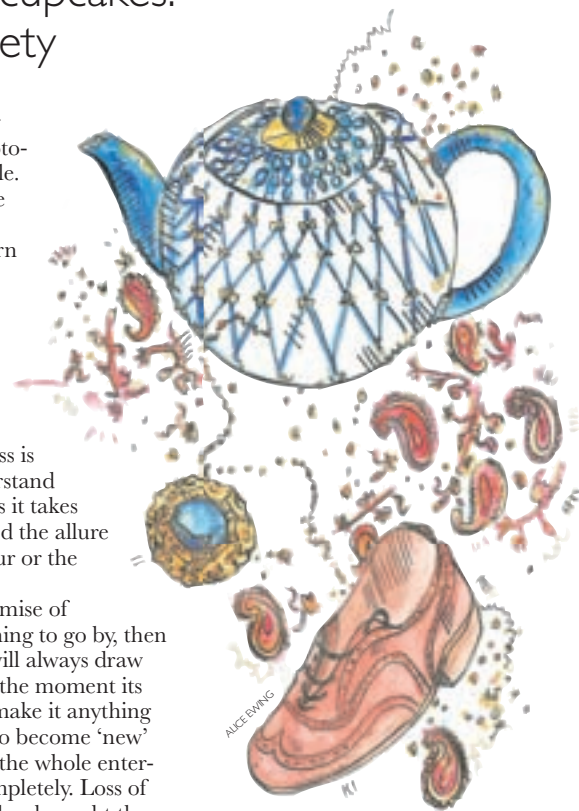
But while this gloomy prognosis holds true for Laura Ashley-style fashions, it fails to capture the essence of true contemporary second-hand style. Madonna certainly wasn't wallowing in mythical representations of the past when she masked herself in rags, ribbons and lace in the 1980s. In the language of post-modern theory (who said a degree in English Literature wasn't useful?), her style is the perfect example of what Jameson terms 'pastiche' – a resurrection of the past crucially marked out, in contrast, by ironic historical knowingness. This type of parody has become the distinguishing mark of post-modern art; Sherry Levine has become famous

for photographing other people's photographs, for example. Working under the same premise, the typical post-modern architect leaves Greek columns on the skyscraper. There's no place for misinformed nostalgia in these works – historical awareness is necessary to understand their genius, just as it takes irony to understand the allure of Jordache fake fur or the tawdry tea-dress.

If the unruly demise of 'Nu-Rave' is anything to go by, then post-modern art will always draw from the past. Yet the moment its followers tried to make it anything in its own right – to become 'new' rather than 'nu' – the whole enterprise fell apart completely. Loss of faith in the future has brought the demise of innovation, and the result is a culture that can only look backwards. The only real choice we have now is whether to do so through the glazed eyes of nostalgia, or with the wilful anarchy of the pasticheurs.

The latter option certainly puts 'vintage' to far more compelling use. It produces styles which can recognise and

exploit their own artificiality, humorously subverting all conventions of the past. But for all their celebratory spirit, we shouldn't forget that their irony still reflects a culture incapable of pure originality. If what we're truly looking for, in all this, is a sustainable escape from our own cultural epoch, then the real joke's on us.



**Director** Amrou Al-Kadhi, **Photographer** Josef James Pitt-Rashid, **Model** Nyma Sharifi, **Swimwear** Myo Swimwear, **Location** The Varsity Hotel Penthouse Suite



# Crossing the Gender Divide

Think you're well-informed about about transgenderism? Or have no idea what it means? *Varsity* explores three informed perspectives on the nuances of gender

## 'Living my life on other people's terms was too damaging'

When the barista in Caffè Nero asked me "What can I get you, madam?" I found myself sighing inside. With short hair, baggy jeans, and my breasts flattened against my chest by an elastic compression vest, I had hoped that people might use the correct title. I was unexpectedly delighted when my drink came back a minute or so later with "Here's your coffee, sir." Why do I make so much of this innocent mistake? Because I'm a transgendered guy; if you've never heard of one before, the only example I can think of in popular culture would be Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry*. We do exist!

I came out in November, and I've already fought a hard battle to be recognised as male. I currently look like an ambiguous mixture of male and female, so it's understandable that people get my pronouns wrong. It's best to have a sense of humour about getting "girded" – if I took umbrage on every occasion I would end up extremely cranky, but it is immensely important to me because the cost of coming out has been huge.

I couldn't possibly have gone on any longer pretending to be a girl: living my life on other people's terms was too damaging; but it has meant I have become estranged from my parents. I've also become the target of inappropriate questions about my anatomy from cis-gendered people who have been fortunate enough to be born into the right body. It will be a massive relief when I start a course of testosterone and will be able to introduce myself without it being assumed that my name must be short for Harriet.

I define as a transman or boi, but there are many gender identities, not all of them encompassed by 'male' or 'female', such as gender queer, neutrois, bigendered or gender-fluid. If you identify as male or female (as I do), it can be difficult to put yourself in the position of someone who identifies as both or neither, but some people do; and if you do, then there's nothing more problematic than being faced by an official document which insists that you choose one or the other. This is why CUSU LGBT has started the Think Outside The Box campaign: to address the issues of those who are not binary-gendered or who, like me, are in the process of transitioning from one gender to another.

It can be extremely difficult not to unconsciously assign a gender to someone, but next time you meet a new person, pause and ask yourself whether you really know what gender they are. The likelihood is that you don't, and some of us would be thrilled, rather than offended, that you asked.

HARRY HARRIS



## 'Understanding is everything'

ANTHONY WOODMAN,  
CUSU LGBT president

It's hard to deny that transgender issues are difficult. A striking number of really close friends who are well versed in L, G and B find themselves suddenly floored by the mention of anything T. It's not a question of bad will, they just find the whole thing bewildering and impenetrable. On a personal level, an ex-partner has now transitioned (changed gender) and whilst I quickly got used to it, I found that no matter how supportive I managed to be, empathising was just so, so difficult.

For me, this underscores the importance of understanding gender issues better. The fact that the majority of us

are fortunate enough to be comfortable with our biological gender puts the onus even more clearly on understanding those who are not. It at once makes it both more difficult and more urgent that we – as a collective, societal entity – are able to talk about it.

In this regard, I often feel that 'transphobia' is an unhelpful term since I do not think for a second that the majority of incidents involving incorrect pronouns and misunderstandings about toilets and dress codes are caused by a genuine ill will towards transgendered people. Perhaps I have an overly sunny

view of human nature, but I would like to believe that these are borne of awkwardness, confusion and the discomfort this entails, not an inherent malice. Understanding is everything.

It is equally worth observing just how under-informed we as a society are about transgenderism. Most estimates



put the number of intersex people at 1 in 1-2,000 and intersex is just one subset of transgenderism. There are tens of thousands of transgendered people in the UK alone; calling this a niche issue is simply incorrect.

To this end, CUSU LGBT will shortly be publishing a brief introduction to transgender issue as both an online and printed resource. It won't be full of jargon, instead it will be accessible and easy to understand. A better awareness, a better understanding benefits everyone. It makes an immeasurable difference to those who identify as somehow transgendered. But also, next time you meet a trans person, rather than mumbling the wrong thing and shuffling away feeling a tad embarrassed, you can be content in the knowledge that you've made someone else smile.

Pronoun discussions prove an easy object of scorn and ridicule. When news filtered through that during meetings at the occupation, those present discussed which pronouns (he/she/they...) they felt comfortable using, it induced a fairly predictable reaction amongst the student body.

This kind of reaction is indicative of a all too common attitude held towards gender issues. As a society we want to believe that such conversations are the product of self-importance; we want to disarm their radical potential by passing them off as minor and irrelevant.

But pronoun discussions, so readily the target of a particularly insipid and lazy philistinism, are not merely the self-indulgent practice of Left-wing groups. When we, as a society, consider our use of pronouns, we too readily obscure the debate with talk of 'pandering' to the demands of 'special interest' groups, rather than engaging with the nature of societal norms and their deployment in our everyday language.

The question raised by this debate is whether or not it 'matters' to have a linguistic category as a signifier of identity. The issues at stake here are fundamental to notions of self-identity, and our access to identifiable categories. That pronoun discussions are so easily ridiculed bares no reflection on the legitimacy of the debate, but more often illuminates the extent to which concepts of gender have become naturalised through everyday speech.

What we often fail to recognise is that language encodes an ideology; by

uncritically using an inherited grammar, we collude with a particular way of thinking about the world and our bodies.

To historicise the binary pronoun is to prize open its ideology, and to show how certain notions of sexuality and gender are encoded within them – notions that become naturalised through reiteration.

There has admittedly been a great deal of progress in pronoun use (though not without some resentment),

so that nowadays speakers and writers are far more sympathetic to their uses of these terms. 'S/he' is vastly more desirable to the patriarchal 'he', and has been adopted without too much complaint. But whilst 's/he' redresses the balance in favour of an excluded feminine category, this balance still very much reflects a tired and regressive concept of gender, and one that is as much exclusory as 'he' once was.

The terms of this debate remain stuck in a concept of 'essential' binary gender; a formation with which we're prescribed at birth that then acquires the appearance of an irrevocable naturalness through its reiteration in language. We must negotiate a new basis for representation that incorporates contemporary theories regarding gender, ones that dismiss the binary formation as a heteronormative fiction. This debate is an urgent one if we wish to live in a



## 'Gendered terms of definition are more than just words'

LAURIE MARTIN,  
opinion editor

society that truly recognises people of all genders and sexualities.

So what of the ridicule? It's very easy to claim blithely that our use of pronouns doesn't matter, that 'people know what you mean,' or that 'it isn't bad, it's just a word'. Roland Barthes had a good term for concepts like these: the "Unhealthy Sign". For Barthes, when a sign (a linguistic unit signifying a 'thing') becomes too naturalised, when it passes itself off as innocent and unchangeable, then it is at its most ideological and authoritarian. And let's face it: those who are most reticent to change are often the dominant, white, middle class males.

Alternatively, they might deftly subvert out argument, responding that, if we distrust pronoun categorisation so much, why would we want to accommodate marginalised groups within what we see as a staid, normative framework?

The answer is simple: pronoun categorisation may be a fiction, but it's an operative fiction. And we must provide access to that fiction to all groups of society.



**Women.** Unless you were asleep for most of Tuesday, (NOT likely – you're at Cambridge), you'd know that women are V Good.

**Pancakes** are great – so great we celebrated them on the same day as women this year.



Standing up for your university is great too. With the recent petition in the news, check out the *Arts & Humanities: Endangered Species?* talks by prominent academics, which were just put online

**Brian Cox's voice.** I mean, have you seen *Wonders of the Universe?* He may go on ridiculously expensive trips to explain arbitrary concepts such as 'the sun', or to hold up a photo of a faraway star which he could just as easily



do at home as in front of a gigantic crumbling glacier. But I'm with the glacier on this one – his voice definitely has the power to melt

**James Franco.** OK, so *Howl* is pretty cool, but cross-dressing as Marilyn Monroe at the Oscars and making Charlie Sheen jokes probably isn't – as a recent YouTube clip shows

What's even less cool is actually being **Charlie Sheen**. Though maybe it wouldn't be so bad, since he's 'bi-winning' his way through life with lots of pornstars and children. Check out *The Guardian's* 'Charlie Sheen v Muammar Gaddafi: Whose Line is it Anyway?' for a spooky comparison.



Everyone's making like Mark Zuckerberg in a favourite new procrastination technique, **fitsort.com**. Not only is it stopping us making use of any quality time in the library but it also bringing out our most superficial instincts. Let's just say, the worst invention since unsliced bread,.





## Stage Talk

SIOBHAN FORSHAW



Comedy was no laughing matter this week, as both the Footlights and the Medics Revues fell flat on their faces to unimpressed crowds. Dürrenmatt and Stoppard were also stonily received, with nought to offer but tiresome production failings and overdone meta-theatricality. As term limps doggedly on, our ever more grumpy reviewers trudge towards the theatres in the hope of one last burst of theatrical pyrotechny to burn out the end of term in some semblance of style.

Hoping to regain some of the credibility lost by last week's critically maligned main and late shows, the ADC Theatre presents *West Side Story*, which, with an ensemble cast and production team totalling almost a hundred, promises to be, if nothing else, a spectacle of Brobdingnagian proportions. Perhaps the greatest – certainly the best-known – musical ever written, this retelling of the Romeo and Juliet story has become a classic in its own right, and it remains to be seen whether this colossal team will pull off something original. Following last week's sell-out disappointment, the Footlights launch their final show of term; the 2011 Harry Porter Prize Winner *Anything But*, following the mainshow musical on Wednesday. Abi Tedder stars in this one-woman production as the hapless (and hopefully hilarious) Agnes, in a performance that Tim Key found 'big-hearted' and 'sumptuously funny'.

The Corpus Mainshow kicks off a national tour of *The Tempest*, directed by the ubiquitous Ben Blyth, and promising the nail-biting guarantee of an evening of 'entertainment suitable for all the family'. Beware all ye who criticise The Movement, for to incur its wrath is no short-lived penalty. It's exciting and encouraging to see some contemporary French theatre in Cambridge; Christopher Hampton's definitive translation of Yasmina Reza's *Life x 3* visits the Corpus Playroom, starting this Tuesday. Watch as this bizarre and turbulent drama, directed by Ellie Nunn, dismantles the social constructs of civilised behaviour around the dinner table.

Fresh company All In Theatre presents Kathryn Duffy's *Seize the Day* at The Junction this Monday evening: a pair of new comedies in two short acts that combines story telling, exciting and comical drama and physical theatre. Humour, pathos, vulnerability and frustration combine to make productions to empathise and entertain.

Sunday brings the inaugural Inter-University New Writing Festival, bringing together the universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Bristol and UCL – each with well-established reputations for dramatic excellence – to find out who really creates the best theatre. Each university performs a forty-minute, brand-new, student-written piece, and we hear that 'esteemed theatrical alumni' will be present to judge. How exciting.

## THEATRE

## Someone Who'll Watch Over Me

Corpus Lateshow  
(Tue 8th - Sat 12th March)

★★★★★

*Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* is a play you must see. The script is by turns funny, sad and consistently believable; the acting and production values in this Corpus Lateshow are amongst the best I've seen in Cambridge.

The action revolves around three characters – an Englishman, an Irishman and an American. The three meet as hostages in a Middle Eastern cell, and it is here the action unfolds. That is not to say that the play is not hugely entertaining – it is – but it is also challenging and at times disturbingly violent. For a play that could be accused

By turns, funny, sad  
and consistently  
believable

of riding on the back of the publicity of the hostage-taking of recent years, it is worth noting that it was written almost



twenty years ago; little seems to have changed.

Corpus is a tricky, limiting space – not all plays work here. *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* could not have been more perfect in the Playroom. There was little required in the way of set, and it was refreshing to see a play that worked with, rather than fought against, the bleakness of the space. The much-maligned central door provided the crux around which everything was arranged and was powerfully placed to induce the feelings of fear and potential danger that an entrance would bring for the characters. Credit should be

commentary, but surely unintentional). Madeleine Hammond as Dr von Zahnd occupied an armchair for the majority of her stage-time and such immobility rendered her descriptions of her insane patients and eccentric family tiresome. In the final scene (when she reveals her role in the physicists' entrapment) she was too bland in her portrayal of madness to move us. The rotating spotlight accounted for a large proportion of the atmosphere, as both Birmingham and Norman remained unreactive throughout. Mobius (Paul Adeyefa) was responsive and attentive, but couldn't inspire a sense of despair alone.

The lighting and sound were often the main creator of any atmosphere (though there were timing mishaps with sound and unsteady handling of the spotlight). In the love scene between Mobius and Nurse Monika (Olivia Vane) it was the gradual fading of the stage's lights and the use of an eerie orange sidelight that built the tension. The scene wanted fluidity and passion, and although Adeyefa handled a mixture of neutrality and intensity well (central to his role as a reluctant lover), Vane was too static for sufficient energy to be generated between them to create meaningful interaction. In addition to this, we never saw her face as she was constantly half-turned to the audience, and her voice was just too whiney to give the moment she proclaimed 'I love you' any gravitas.

Makes the mad  
house boring

Adeyefa was the anomaly in the standard of the acting (arguably this differential was the most dramatic thing in the performance). He was rigorous in his portrayal of a scientist, and captivating as a lunatic. His movements were assured, and he slowed his speech, restraining himself and refusing to rattle through his lines to fabricate dynamism. His madness was characterised by well-timed outbursts of rage, and never at the expense of clarity. In his final address to the audience he sat spot-lit in the armchair with an entrancing majesty, and gave the ending a fittingly sombre tone. Ultimately though, this could not carry such a cumbersome play successfully. *The Physicists* made the madhouse boring. **HELEN CAHILL**

## THEATRE

## The Physicists

Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens'  
(Tue 8th - Sat 12th March)

★★★☆☆

Almost half of the actors in Emma Seya and Charlie Bell's production of *The Physicists* are taking science degrees (a statistic informed by detailed self-descriptions of the cast in the programme). For a play heavy on theoretical and philosophical debate, it would surely benefit from the clarity of a scientific approach, and a sanatorium as the location of three murders could surely only lead to engaging stage action to frame it.

However, the weighty text was not



well handled. Performers lacked animation, making lengthy discussions of the moral responsibilities of genius scientists uninteresting. The script wasn't unmanageable in this respect, but Stephen Birmingham and Simon Norman (as physicists faking madness) needed more expressiveness in their monologues to communicate the concepts effectively. Failing this, the distinct theories became a homogenous mass, and the discussion became monotonous. Norman, as 'Einstein', rarely lifted his head, and under the pressure of the spotlight failed to have an impact. His characterisation of a physicist was disappointingly cliché. He came across as a geeky teenager, and this was indistinguishable from his interpretation of a madman (perhaps some astute social

## THEATRE

## The Fantastic Forceps

Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens'  
(Wed 9th - Sat 12th March)

★★★★★

I've never seen the appeal of a funny doctor. I prefer mine lifesaving, logical and at most sardonic over a whisky. The ability to write sketch shows is about as necessary to the medical profession as Harold Shipman – just as a playwright's ability to perform open heart surgery will hardly help him on to the West End. By its very nature, a Medic's Revue should not be funny. Even a Natsci would struggle to giggle at the idea of *The Fantastic Forceps*. All those medics laughing because their practical partner is acting like a tit could simply head down to Cindies at 1 o'clock on a Tuesday and see exactly the same thing – that is, if they weren't too busy constructing fortresses out of the textbooks that are their usual company of an evening. These were my thoughts on entry to the Fitzpatrick Hall at 11 tonight. At 1.30 am, most remained.

*The Fantastic Forceps* was funny, just not very much of it. The punchlines didn't really punch. I found the *Fantastic Four* theme that was supposed to draw the loose collection of sketches together silly but uninteresting. Superhero costumes do not guarantee a laugh, at least not to the more discerning. This is not to say I found the whole thing boring. That tall, gangly ginger guy doing a Gollum/Clegg impression was rather amusing, even original. The M & S remix of Rihanna's 'S & M' was not a



similarly engaging, and often superb, but did not always achieve the right level of intensity required to convey the simmering frustrations and violence that lay just beneath the tranquillity of Adam's personality. Akin to Kendrick, Harry Baker (as 'The Englishman', Michael) occasionally failed to attain the nuances necessary for create a fully credible character, but if there is one thing a year at Cambridge teaches people, it's how to possess an air of unjustified superiority, and this he did perfectly. All had stand-out moments – Adam's singing of *Amazing Grace*, Michael's tennis match, Edward's impressions – but it is their interaction that deserves most praise. The best way of describing this is that it was unselfish – a rare thing to find on a Cambridge stage.

All too often, productions at Corpus are pushed into the bracket of "Great play, shame about the use of space". In this case it was: "Brilliant play, shame about the poster". In a theatre environment as fickle as Cambridge's, decent publicity really is key – I would urge you to believe this reviewer's hype over that which the publicity team has created for them. A plea to would-be directors at Corpus, in the words of my much-harangued supervisor - 'More like this please!'

**KIRAN MILLWOOD-HARGRAVE**

whole lot different to three minutes with *The Lonely Island*, and the Sainsburys self-checkout gag was standard Cambridge student banter but worked well enough for me. One could appreciate the intelligence behind some sketches, even if they were about as cutting edge as *Springwatch*.

About as cutting  
edge as *Springwatch*

Perhaps I'm being harsh when I say that the cast were lively and likeable, but actors only in the most limited sense of the word. The best sketches were those rare occasions when the joke itself was on point. For example, the concept of a genuine pizza delivery boy turning up at a porno set to be chastised for his poor performance was in fitting with the generally crude theme of the evening, but nonetheless candy to the scientific baby that was the bulk of the audience, and me.

Others were greeted with silence. When the sketches got political (other than the Gollum example), they didn't quite manage to do so with any real style. The sketch about student sit-ins was predictable, and as derivative as the lazy voiceover commentaries we were commonly exposed to. I can't remember a great deal of the rest. The lasting impression was as if a rather strange, occasionally amusing doctor had been treating me, but he was still just a doctor when it came down to it.

**SAM GOULD**

POST YOUR  
COMMENTS AT

www.varsity.co.uk/reviews





## EXHIBITION

## Italian Etchings

Fitzwilliam Museum

★★★★★

There is a paradox about the tradition of Western classical oil painting. Its stubbornly tangible and unyieldingly smooth surfaces are more ‘real’-looking than anything any other world culture has produced and yet, the more ‘real’ they appear to be, the more the painter cannot be penetrated: artists seem to be forever hiding behind their depictions. Oil painting is like oratory, the true motivation of the artist hidden behind a swathe of rhetoric.

The artist has not had time to correct himself: his embarrassment is our fascination

ric. Oil paintings are there to convince the onlooker that the depicted scene is tangible and apparent – and beyond this, they solidify the social order into which they are inserted. They are designed to maintain the *status quo*.

I suppose I’m saying this because I’ve always been rather put off by oil paintings. They seem like the products of an alien world, products of an alien socio-political situation, and yet

popular culture hails them as ‘timeless’ masterpieces.

If the oil painting is a speech, then the print or drawing is a conversation. Psychological and motivational processes lying behind what an artist produces are much more plainly laid out. One can view the work in the process of its formation, a position from which the viewer can have much greater empathy with the artist. This empathy was something which I found in abundance with the printed etchings on offer at this exhibition at the Fitzwilliam.

Etching is a pretty simple process. The Fitz kindly provides an explanation of the procedure on a display at the end of the room. A wax ground is laid over a copper plate. This wax is then ‘etched’ into with a stylus. When this is finished, the plate is placed in a bath of acid, which then eats into the exposed copper, leaving the metal under the wax raised at its original level. From this plate a limited number of prints can be made.

In some works, one can witness how artists are getting to grips with the medium (some of these pictures are early examples of etching, the process of etched printmaking only being invented at the end of the 15th century). Beyond the left-hand border of Carracci’s ‘Saint Jerome in the Wilderness’ (c. 1591), one can see the scribbles of the etching needle as he tests the thickness of the wax – one can almost feel the nib’s process through the waxy ground. Seeing this informs the

interpretation of the image itself – lines are of such spontaneity that they almost seem ‘discovered’. Jerome’s foreshortened facial expression – the centre of the image – is odd and askance. Proportions are askew: limbs too big, hands too wide. But these things emphasise the emotive privacy of the picture. The single line that makes up the crown of Jerome’s head is the *only* line, the only possible line. Without it, the rest of the image would fall away: it is the pivot around which everything else turns.

Other prints in the exhibition have a similarly marvellous ‘wrongness’ to them. Passarotti’s ‘A Religious Ceremony’ (c. 1550) is an example. Here, figures appear squashed. They have been squeezed into the boundaries of the print – a character’s foot is



FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

misshapen, as if chewed by the ground; faces are incomplete and malformed. But this ‘wrongness’ is intriguing and revealing. The artist has not had time to correct himself and to cover his tracks: his embarrassment is our fascination.

In a glass case in the centre of the room there are some enormous books laid open. On one page is Piranesi’s conspicuous ‘Grotesque with Skeletons’ (1747-8). This is an image of a different era, the high Baroque – it is, from a modern point of view, bordering on kitsch. Psychologically grotesque, with its reclining skeleton and detail of almost pathological density, this is an image that looks forward to Romanticism.

Perhaps the most striking image for me, though, was Schedoni’s ‘The Holy Family’ (1600-07). Intimate, off-hand, private, it is lacking in the expected obscurantist formality which is typically associated with this subject. The family seems like a real family, psychologically real, rather than visually tangible. We are spying on them; there is no publicity and they do not ‘present’ themselves to us.

These prints show artists exercising private freedom in exquisite, short doses. Sometimes their images reveal all of their quibbles and faults. But it is not a kind of aesthetic *schadenfreude* that beguiles us (pleasure in draughtsmen’s failings) – rather it is seeing a purer form of expression from these artists. These are images that seem to escape the apparently mandatory expensive rhetoric of their age. **LAWRENCE DUNN**

## MUSIC

## Vessels

Haymakers

★★★★★

Vessels’s second studio album, *Helioscope*, comes after a three-year hiatus, and continues the UK post-rock tradition in fine style. Two giants of the scene, Mogwai and 65daysofstatic, both released records last year. However, unlike these bands, Vessels’s relative novelty has helped them escape the pressure, to produce yet another breathtaking, innovative album in a style which is somewhat self-limiting once a band’s effect racks and harmonic sensibilities have become entrenched. Whilst they employ all the delay-laden soundscapes and intense dynamic variations that define the genre, they nonetheless have several distinctive features. For instance, they record their albums live, thereby

avoiding the tendency of much post-rock to be so saturated with overdubs that live gigs are a disappointment. Indeed, the only disappointment I felt upon leaving this show was the brevity of their performance.

The Haymakers is a great little venue, but it does have a small stage, and their vast array of pedals, synths and keyboards filled the space to such an extent that there seemed little room for the band themselves. However they coped admirably, even managing to keep up their constant role-changes in such constrained circumstances. The



BART PETTMAN

four guitarists/bassists/synth players switched instruments at least between every song, and frequently during them. This seems to emphasise particularly clearly the post-rock shift from the lead guitarist or vocalist as the centre of attention, to the drummer being the focus whilst the other musicians provide a textured, complex sound in which no one member is dominant.

Their set was largely comprised of songs from their latest record (recorded and produced by the legendary John Congleton in Texas), and the inclusion of vocals (albeit in a typically mangled form) is a change of direction for the group. Whilst I’m not wild about this development, they haven’t gone as far as bands like Aereogramme who, whilst still being post-rock, exhibit a more formally structured, vocally based approach. Indeed, despite fewer time-signature changes than usual, Vessels sound as multi-layered and dynamic as ever, with varied, lyrically-accented drumming providing the backdrop for

beautifully interweaving loops, effects and synthesizers. ‘The Trap’ is an excellent demonstration of the subtle, building crescendos of harmonies and noise that make their melodic contribution to the genre so distinctive.

The gig ended with all four frontmen kneeling before their effects boards, gently tweaking a cacophony of static, distortion and glitchy loops until there was but one man and one loop remaining. This image of musicians prostrate before their pedals seemed both a suitable homage to the technology that has made the genre possible, and testimony to their skill in utilising it. Long may Vessels and post-rock prosper.

JOBANTHOMAS

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## COMEDY

## Stewart Lee

Corn Exchange

★★★★★

Until recently, I was only aware of Stewart Lee as a comedian who is liked by other people, the kind who sneer at just about everything anyone’s ever heard of, condemning it as being too mainstream. I would secretly like to be one of these people, because I have a sneaking feeling that they actually are cooler, cleverer and more original than me. I also hate myself for thinking this, and want to protest that comedy should be about what makes you laugh loudest, be it a Death Star canteen or that thing that everyone does while they’re hoovering. It was gratifying to find that this kind of deconstructive self-loathing was in fact pretty much the theme of Lee’s show at the Corn Exchange on Sunday night.

Watching the show uncomfortably

reminded me of reading annotated literary texts, with the commentary being forced upon you as you go. Opening with a crude joke about teenage pregnancy, Lee immediately cut off the laughter by classing it as a Frankie Boyle-type gag, since it “shows the requisite contempt for the vulnerable”. But Lee magnificently headed off any critics who, like me, were planning to class him as a bitter elitist. The centre-

deconstructive self-loathing was the theme of the show

piece of the evening was a protracted riff on Mock the Week (or, as Lee prefers to put it, Mock the Weak) star Russell Howard’s charity cycle ride, and the vast sums of money which he raised. The joke doubled back on itself, progressing from lambasting Howard for not doing more charity cycling, to a despair that by choosing to be an alternative comedian, Lee himself can

never equal his mainstream counterpart’s philanthropy. The latter segment was performed with no microphone, instead bellowed from the aisles, thus making the audience more uncomfortable about their previous easy laughter.

Lee seemed to mock the current trend for musical stand up by doing the last third of the show sitting with an unused guitar across his lap, on the basis that this makes an audience “more tolerant of poor material”. But again, he wrongfooted us – he actually sang two decent comedy songs at the end. One of them was derived from a routine about the Bullingdon Club circa 1986: the lefty Lee was there, and he recounted his meeting with David Cameron at length. As a lefty myself, I was again jerked out of my complacent laughter with Lee’s admission that the stories were all lies – “but the important thing is, they sound like they could be true”. By the end I was a little bit exhausted with examining my own lazy attitudes.

Stewart Lee is not for everyone – his low-register monotone and endless

miserable metacomedy will grate on some. But he has ditched the excesses of self-indulgent absurdism and repetition which characterised his recent work, and despite protestations to the contrary, churned out a rapid succession of actual jokes. I laughed heartily, furtively hoping that this now made me cool enough to get Stewart Lee.

FRED MAYNARD



ANDREW GRIFFIN

## Keeping It Reel

ALICE BOLLAND



Sex on film, so to speak, is a phenomenon in itself; unlike the earliest movies, when a three-second kiss was pretty much the sauciest you could hope for, now directors seem intent on being as shocking and innovative as possible, often resulting in footage that makes even the most hardened critic blush. In light of this, this week I’m offering a selection of the sexiest, steamiest, most sensual moments of cinematic history... enjoy.

## Vicky Christina Barcelona

It doesn’t get much hotter than this: a raunchy three-way relationship between the charming Javier Bardem, the slightly mental Penelope Cruz and the beautiful Scarlett Johansson. Woody Allen, true to form, keeps it all above board, tastefully exploring the ups and downs of bourgeois loving in the modern world.

## Some Like It Hot

Marilyn Monroe sizzles in this saucy comedy from director Billy Wilder about cross-dressing and sexual farce. Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis co-star, but it is the lovely Marilyn who steals the show, unashamedly seductive and sensual throughout.

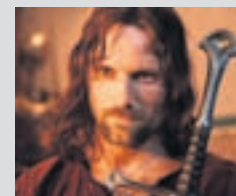


## Belle de Jour

The opening scene of Bunuel’s surrealist erotic masterpiece invites us into the sexual imaginings of Severine (Catherine Deneuve), a picture-perfect housewife who enjoys nothing more than the thought of her loving husband tying her to a tree, beating her and leaving her to be raped by his henchmen... who says romance is dead?

## Y Tu Mamá También

This saucy road-trip movie follows two best friends on an odyssey of self-discovery, travelling with an older woman whom they are both eagerly pursuing. It offers a strikingly honest portrayal of lust and sex; it also helps that Gael García Bernal is ludicrously attractive.



## Lord Of The Rings Trilogy

I couldn’t resist: there’s just something so ridiculously sexy about a hot man riding around on a horse with a sword, occasionally speaking Elven. It’s the swathy facial hair, it’s the piercing gaze, it’s the way he so defiantly opens those double doors – Aragorn, I am all yours.



This week's...



Theatre

Westside Story

**Tue 15th - Sat 26th March, 7.45pm**  
ADCTHEATRE (£6-£12)  
With a cast, crew and orchestra totalling almost 100, this week's ADC Mainshow promises to be, if nothing else, a gigantic affair. Impressive, ambitious; this classic musical tells the story of *Romeo and Juliet* against a backdrop of 1950s NYC.

The Tempest

**Tue 15th - Sat 19th March, 7pm**  
CORPUS PLAYROOM (£5)  
The Movement kick off their tour of 'The Tempest in Cambridge, promising "an evening of entertainment suitable for all the family" – one to bring the 'rents along to.

Life x 3

**Tue 15th - Sat 19th March, 9.30pm**  
CORPUS PLAYROOM (£5)  
Director Ellie Nunn presents Christopher Hampton's translation of Yasmina Reza's turbulent and catastrophic unravelling of civilised behaviour. One to watch.

Anything But

**Wed 16th - Sat 19th March, 11pm**  
ADCTHEATRE (£4-£6)  
This year's Harry Potter Prize Winner, Mark Fiddaman's play was judged by Tim Key, and is a Footlights first. A one-woman production, this promises to be a night of surprises – presumably amusing ones.

Inter-University New Writing Festival

**Sun 20th March, 7.45pm**  
ADCTHEATRE (£10-£12)  
Each university will perform a 40-minute, original student-written play on the evening, and contribute one of their esteemed theatrical alumnae to form the judging panel.



Film

Made In Dagenham

**Sun 13th March, 3pm & Wed 16th March, 11am**  
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE (£6.50-£8.50)  
In 1968 a group of female workers went on strike over unequal rates of pay. Their protest made national news and gave huge impetus to the campaign for equal rights. In celebration of International Women's Day, make sure you catch this 2010 classic.

Memento

**Tue 15th March, 6pm**  
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE (£6.50-£8.50)  
Leonard Shelby witnesses his wife's horrific murder, and consequently cannot form new memories. He goes to extraordinary lengths to remember important information, and attempts to unravel his wife's death. Director Christopher Nolan's clever twists and turns will have you on the edge of your seat.

Due Date

**Sun 13th March, 7pm & 10pm**  
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, PALMERSTON ROOM IN FISHER BUILDING (£3)  
High-strung father-to-be Peter Highman is forced to hitch a ride with aspiring actor Ethan Tremblay on a road trip in order to make it to his child's birth on time.

Chalet Girl

**Wed 16th - Thu 17th March**  
VUE  
VARIOUS SHOWINGS (£3)  
Girl is ace skateboarder and wants to try her hand on the snow. She meets a guy (who also happens to be her boss) and is torn between focusing on the competition and following her heart. We can all guess what happens, but Chalet Girl is sure to bring a bit of Spring romance to the end of term.



Exhibitions

Treasure Under Your Feet

**Tue 29th March - Sun 4th September**  
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM  
Six feet under does not mean loss: see treasures found deep in the ground which tell the story of East England from the Bronze Age to the Civil War.

Artists for Kettle's Yard

**Sat 19th March - Sun 8th May**  
KETTLE'S YARD  
Helena Almeida, Sir Anthony Caro, Edmund de Waal, Bridget Riley and Anthony Gormley amongst others have lent their works for this exhibition to raise money for a new educational wing at Kettle's yard. Definitely worth the small donation.

Picasso to Julie Mehretu: modern drawings from the British Museum collection

**Thu 7th October 2010 - Mon 25th April 2011**  
THE BRITISH MUSEUM (FREE)  
See the beautiful drawings for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and graphic works from Otto Dix to contemporary artist Julie Mehretu. A must.

Esprit et Vérité: Watteau and His Circle

**Sat 12th March - Sun 5th June**  
THE WALLACE COLLECTION  
Watteau who changed the face of French art. Jean de Jullienne who was one of the most important collectors of his time. An unparalleled opportunity to see not only the creations of Watteau but the masterpieces of Jullienne's collection.



Talks

Graham Crowley on Painting

**Mon 14th March, 2.30pm**  
TIZARD ROOM, CHURCHILL COLLEGE  
To coincide with his exhibition, 'Recent Paintings,' at Churchill College (5th - 25th March, 9am-5pm), Graham Crowley will be giving a lecture on painting.

Julian Assange

**Tue 15th March, 5pm**  
CAMBRIDGE UNION (FREE FOR MEMBERS)  
Founder and face of WikiLeaks, Assange is one of the most controversial figures in the world of media and is currently in the midst of a court battle. Incredibly, he has agreed to speak at the Union. This will be exceptionally popular and is strictly members-only, so arrive early to secure your seat.

This House Believes the Veil Empowers Women

**Thu 17th March, 7.30pm**  
CAMBRIDGE UNION (FREE FOR MEMBERS)  
Is the veil a symbol of oppression of women in today's society, or does it actually reveal their empowerment? Outgoing Union president Lauren Davidson joins David Aaronovitch, Krista Bremer and others to discuss this very question.

European Terracotta Sculpture

**Wed 16th March, 1.15pm**  
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM (FREE)  
Enjoy this free talk with Victoria Avery from the Department of Applied Arts, on the phenomenon of European terracotta sculptures.



Music

Choral Pilgrimage

**Fri 25th March, 7.30pm**  
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE CHAPEL (£10-£23)  
Harry Christophers and The Sixteen's UK tour celebrates the works of Tomás Luis de Victoria, marking the 400th anniversary of his death.

Contemporary Catz

**Fri 11th March, 6pm**  
ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE CHAPEL (£2)  
Check out the twentieth-century musical avant-garde with Bartok's 'Contrasts' and Steve Reich's famous 'Clapping Music', concluding with the second ever UK performance of Reich's 'Double Sextet' which combines pre-recorded and live chamber music.

The Whybirds

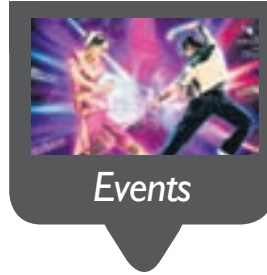
**Sat 12th March, 8pm**  
THE HAYMAKERS (£5)  
Hard-hitting rock'n'roll and alternative country music that takes itself seriously, from a critically acclaimed Bedford-based rock band.

CUMS I with Libor Pesek

**Sat 12th March, 8pm**  
WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL (£5)  
Czech music with Cambridge's top symphony orchestra and renowned conductor Libor Pesek. Including Smetana's overture to 'The Bartered Bride', Janacek's 'Taras Bulba' and Dvorak's 6th Symphony.

Hospitality

**Sat 12th March, 10pm-6am**  
THE JUNCTION (£15 ADVANCE)  
Nu:Tone album launch from the UK's favourite dnb label, also featuring Joker, London Elektricity, Emalkay, Jakes and Bar 9.



Events

Watersprite Film Festival

**Fri 11th - Sun 13th March**  
VARIOUS CAMBRIDGE LOCATIONS (FREE)  
Watersprite 2011 is the only free, student-led film festival in the UK, and will showcase films of all genres from young filmmakers from around the world. Featuring talks from Bill Nighy and Kevin Macdonald, amongst a variety of events and film showings, make sure you don't miss out – all events are free, but booking is recommended.  
[www.watersprite.org](http://www.watersprite.org)

Amnesty Freedom Festival

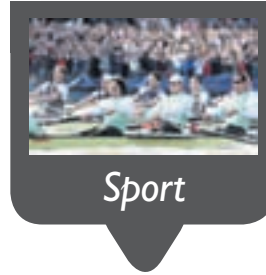
**Sat 12th March, 7.30pm**  
CAMBRIDGE UNION (£12.50 FOR MEMBERS, £17.50 FOR NON-MEMBERS)  
The Union will be transformed into a festival, "with over 5 hours of live music across 2 stages, starring signed festival regulars as well as local Cambridge talent, festival food, face painting, fairground games, fancy dress, free massages and much more."

Mastana

**Sat 12th March, 7pm**  
CORN EXCHANGE (£10-£15)  
Celebrating Asian culture, this event "brings together musicians, dancers, actors, orators, writers, artists, caterers, students, parents, and friends, culminating in a show that has evolved with Asia's dynamic culture, but has retained the same purpose from its start".

Ancient Greek and Roman Women

**Tue 15th March, 1pm**  
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM (FREE)  
In celebration of International Women's Day, enjoy this themed tour of the Museum's Greek and Roman galleries.



Sport

Cuppers Final

**Mon 14th March**  
GRANGE ROAD  
Fitz and Queens' will battle it out to be the Cuppers champions after having worked their way through to the finals at the expense of some of the pre-tournament favourites. It will be close.

Varsity Boxing

**Thurs 17th March**  
THE TROXY, LONDON  
After having suffered a fairly comprehensive defeat to the 'Town a few weeks ago, the Boxing Club will be looking to put things right with victory over bitter rivals Oxford. This will be the clubs' 104th time of meeting in the Varsity match but the desire to win will be as fresh as ever.

The Boat Race

**Sat 26th March, 5pm**  
THETHAMES  
The big one. Cambridge currently lead 80-75 overall in the Boat Race history. How they would love to extend that lead. Cambridge are taller, heavier and more experienced, as the weigh-in revealed. Also televised so there really is no excuse to miss this one.

Varsity Football

**Fri 6th May**  
KASSAM STADIUM, OXFORD  
Cambridge lost last year on penalties after a 1-1 draw. After this heartbreak, the Light Blues will be holding nothing back as they seek revenge. The side, captained by James Day, is a talented one and have been performing well this season, scoring plenty of goals. After the II's and III's won last weekend, they will want to make it a full house.

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# From bronze to Baroness

Baroness **Tanni Grey-Thompson** talks to **James Corcut** about Lords, London and legacy



MICHAEL DERRINGER

**T**anni Grey-Thompson was not an ordinary athlete. With eleven Paralympic track golds, six London marathons and over thirty world records to her name, she has proven herself one to be of the most talented and determined figures in athletics history. Twenty-three years after her first Olympic bronze in Seoul and four years after retirement, what are her own thoughts on these extraordinary feats?

"It was alright really."

She certainly doesn't dwell on the past. But then she is someone with far more to offer Britain than simply medals, something made clear by her appointment in the House of Lords as a crossbencher last year. At first glance this might seem an unusual progression for a sporting icon, but in her case it is a logical one. She did a politics degree at Loughborough university and was well aware of the levels of politics within sport during her previous career.

"[Sport] is never non-political. Out of any first career I could have had, being in sport was probably the best training for the career I have now."

And speaking to her, one gets a sense

"Of any first career I could have had, being in sport was probably the best training for the career I have now"

of the extent to which this must be true. She talks with great enthusiasm of the levels of detail into which she must go whilst working in the Lords, of the long hours and the job's complexity. The intensity of training which put herself through as an athlete has left its indelible mark upon her character and she has no intention of slowing down now.

But one of the goals on which remains most focused is to see that the best opportunities in sport are made available everywhere, starting with young people. Having reaped the benefits of Britain's sporting structure herself, she is convinced that this is how real social change can happen.

"I feel very passionately about school sport because that's where I started and it just gives young people such a positive start," she explains. "Girls who do

two hours of physical activity a week are less likely to be teenage mothers, they're less likely to be in abusive relationships; they're more likely to stay on at school, more likely to have career goals. And that's two hours a week – you can fundamentally change some of the things we've got wrong in the UK."

Medals are important, but Thompson believes that sport has a far more profound role to play, "whether that's tackling sexual health, violence, gun crime – there are lots of ways that sport can be used to change people's lives."

Given the nature of London's 2012 bid – to reach young people all around the world with the power of the games – this seems a particularly pertinent stance. Thompson herself is an ambassador for the project that has been putting this philosophy into practice, International Inspiration. The organisation was responsible for providing opportunities through sport to upwards of 7 million children in 15 countries over the course of 2010.

She has seen first hand the advances that are being made in places such as Jordan, where she has spoken with the parents of girls who "weren't allowed to do physical activity beyond the age of puberty" to teach them of the benefits that come with exercise.

"It's about changing attitudes," she says of her visits abroad, "but also it's about learning from them. I saw some amazingly good practice about integration, and I saw schools who had very poor facilities, who just had a bit of concrete or a bit of grass and they were able to do some amazingly creative things with a complete lack of equipment."

Having already seen such a bright outlook emerging from the the 2012 legacy it is no wonder that she is optimistic about the Olympic event itself. As Vice Chair of the Athletes' Committee, she has been central to its planning, ensuring that "the athletes are at the heart of it ... [they] have been a part of every single decision. If the athletes compete well, the spectators will enjoy it and it will be a good Games." Such a strong focus on the competitors, Thompson believes, will be unique to London.

And despite her involvement in so many aspects of the games, she is adamant that when it comes to July 2012 she will be happy spectating rather than competing. "There is not a bit of me that would want to go back and do it ever again," she says, "I loved it, it was the most important thing in my life for a huge amount of time. Every decision I made was based on me being really focused about being an athlete.

My wedding date was based around my competition schedule, the birth of my daughter was! But as an athlete, you can't go back."

It emerges just how much she gave to athletics during her astonishing career. She admits to having been worried about how it would feel not to compete at Beijing. But any anxieties were soon quashed and she gets "a real kick out of watching other people." This attitude is crucial to her ability to take on the many other challenges that she has now. She stipulates that it comes down to "not having any regrets."

"I think that 2012 will see a massive change in disability sport"

As for the future of British athletics, she is confident that success is imminent. She takes only a moment to consider whether or not Team GB will take a top three spot before giving an emphatic "yes". She says this not out of hope, but expectation. "I think they could. It's hard because you don't know what other countries are going to do," she explains, "what's important is that every sport is there doing its best and that we have lots of people winning gold. That would be cool."

These are not the words of someone who gets carried away. She knows when something is not at the level it should be. Despite being a key figure in improving the status and image of the Paralympics, she knows there is still work to be done and that London has a responsibility to make this happen. "There have been massive changes in the time that I've been involved. I think the difference is that London will raise the bar even higher. That's important in terms of the professionalism of the organisation and the athletes. I think that 2012 will see ... a massive change in disability sport."

For her this is so significant not just for the sport, but also for the perception of disabilities more generally: "It's about disabled people in society. Sport is a microcosm of it and if people watch disabled athletes compete, it helps them think differently about the rest of it."

Thompson seems to feel that there is a lot more at stake in these Olympics than there was at Beijing or even at any in which she raced. And whilst this impact will be far-reaching, it is in Britain that the show will take place. "It's an exciting time for the UK, it seems to have given the UK its confidence back."

## From the Commentary Box: Outlook bleak for entertaining England



RAMESH NATARAJAH  
cricket correspondent

England have been the team to watch at the 2011 Cricket World Cup. Not, I'm sure you will agree, purely for the quality of their cricket, but for the tension in each of their matches. The team were impressive in drawing with pre-tournament favourites India and narrowly defeating a strong South African outfit. Yet, against the supposed minnows, they only just sneaked to victory over the Netherlands and suffered the biggest shock in recent world cup history against Ireland.

But this is not simply a case of being dragged down to the standard of the opposition; quite simply England have yet to bat, bowl and field well in the same match. In matches played on a batsman's paradise in Bangalore England scored very well but their bowling attack proved impotent, most obviously when faced with the unbridled power of Kevin O'Brien during his 50-ball century. The fielding in that match against Ireland was disgraceful, well below the lofty standards this team have usually set.

Conversely, in the more bowler-friendly conditions of Chennai the batsmen struggled, posting a below-par 171, while the bowlers were superb to clinch victory over South Africa. The inability for either of the batting or bowling departments to excel when conditions are not in their favour – a true test of a player's ability – suggests that this team either lack players of the highest calibre or that certain players have that ability but have so far been unable to express it.

The reality is a combination of both. At the height of his powers Kevin Pietersen was able consistently to dictate or change the course of a limited-overs

game, but his decline has left England without a player who can truly strike fear into the opposing teams.

However, England have just won the Ashes in Australia for this first time since 1987 and are reigning World Twenty20 champions, which suggests that they possess players of some quality. Unfortunately of these established performers, two have suffered injury (Stuart Broad and Eoin Morgan), others have been uncharacteristically inconsistent (Graeme Swann and James Anderson) and Paul Collingwood is woefully out of form. Is

"The schedule has led to a break-down of bodies and minds"

it a coincidence that the players mentioned above have been playing almost continuously since the start of the Ashes tour on the 5th November? The schedule has led to a break down of bodies and minds. Furthermore, these problems of form and fitness have been compounded by a flawed selection policy that has, for example, left England without a genuine wicket-taking second spin option on subcontinental pitches that are low, slow and turning.

What can we hope for from the rest of the tournament? England have never won a 50-over world cup and have not reached the latter stages since 1992. The team showed impressive character against India and South Africa, but with key men weary and worn-out, and without a true star turn, I sadly doubt that we will see them return to a victory parade in Trafalgar Square come early April.

## Ice Hockey victory

CAMBRIDGE  
OXFORD

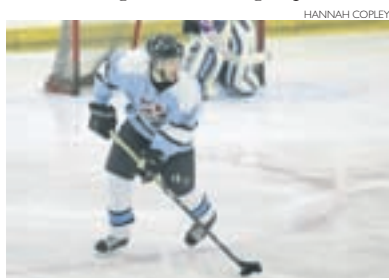
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MATT JONES  
ice hockey correspondent

The first Varsity Ice Hockey match was held in 1885 in St. Moritz, Switzerland. This year the it took place at Cambridge's training ground in Peterborough, giving the Light Blues the home advantage.

The first face-off was taken by Cambridge but Oxford countered immediately. The tone was set and the teams struggled to hold possession. The first attempt on goal came from Cambridge, which sailed across the goalmouth. The Dark Blues soon replied but the Cambridge goaltender held resolute.

Cambridge rattled the goalposts with



HANNAH CORLEY

several long range efforts and Oxford were denied repeatedly by the Cambridge goaltender. Then, 11 minutes into the first period, Richardson scored Cambridge's first, lofting the puck past the Oxford crease into the net.

Just 39 seconds into the start of the second period Richardson took his second for Cambridge. As the second period drew on, Oxford's frustration with Cambridge's defence grew, finally erupting in a penalty against the Oxford captain, number 17, Matt Alkaitis, following a goalmouth scuffle at the Cambridge end.

Cambridge took advantage of the powerplay, with Harris able to flick Cambridge's third goal past Oxford's goaltender from point blank range. With 2 minutes and 31 seconds of the period remaining Oxford notched their first point with the help of a boot. Their relief was short lived, though, as the Cambridge attackers linked up to put their fourth puck away in the dying moments of the second period.

The final period saw Oxford gamble in desperation, pulling the goaltender in the final minutes and replacing him with an outfield player. Harris made full use of Oxford's all or nothing tactics to round off the Cambridge victory, making the score 5-1 just before the buzzer.





“England has been the team to watch at the 2011 Cricket World Cup. Not purely for the quality of their cricket”

**Ramesh Nadarajah** on England's inconsistent performances at the Cricket World Cup, page 15



# Hockey women halt Oxford



MICHAEL DERRINGER

The men lose 5-2 but the Light Blue girls put up a fight ending in an unlucky 1-1 draw

BECCA LANGTON  
*hockey correspondent*

The sun was out and shining for the 111th Varsity Hockey matches at Southgate in London where the tension was palatable. Having not won a match since 2004, Cambridge Ladies were the out and out underdogs, but were nevertheless confident that this year the Light Blues would be taking the trophy home.

Taking the first push back Oxford made a bold move, striking the ball deep into the Cambridge half, only to be intercepted by fresher Charlie Banfield. Turning over possession, Cambridge began to put pressure on the Oxford D. Driving runs from winger Jess Sturgeon gave Suzie Stott the chance to fire at goal, but she was denied by the keeper.

Cambridge seemed to hold the pressure for the first 25 minutes but, perhaps nervous of really testing Oxford, were not as aggressive as the Dark Blues, who looked menacing on the break. Georgia Rawlinson was commanding at centre back for Oxford, her England experience on display as she displayed clever disguise and immaculate distribution. However, artful passing from centre-mid Hannah Rickman gave Cambridge

the opportunity to play around the back. After a series of penalty corners, Rachel Quick was unlucky to tip the ball past the near post.

But, a lapse in concentration left Cambridge vulnerable at a free hit just outside the D. Driving at the back line, Oxford slipped the ball just in front of keeper Vicky Evans and Oxford Player of the Match Sara Ffrench-Constant finished to put the Dark-Blues 1-0 ahead at half-time.

Cambridge came back determined to score, and following a stirring half time team talk by coach Chris Marriott, they began to make their mark. Becca Naylor was inspired at centre-back linking well with Abby Gibbs, whilst Sarah Lee's speed and quick footwork left Oxford high and dry. A green card was awarded to Becca Langton for a cynical lifted ball. However, this error was soon made up for when, taking the ball from a stranded Rawlinson, her searing cross from the top of the D missed the post and winger Lee by inches.

Cambridge's pressure finally paid off when Captain Kirsty Elder struck from a penalty corner to bury the ball at the far post. An ecstatic Cambridge continued to build on their pressure. Driving

runs from Vice-Captain and Cambridge Player of the Match Mel Addy were sensational. It was Oxford who were relieved to have escaped with a 1-1 draw when the final whistle went. Cambridge were disappointed to have missed out on a deserved win, but should be very happy to have denied Oxford victory for the first time in seven years.

“Cambridge were disappointed to have missed out on a deserved win”

In the Men's Blues match there was a display of exciting, pacy, and exceptionally skilful hockey. The match was tight from the first whistle, with both teams threatening on goal. But Oxford took the lead, firing from the top of the D in a well worked penalty corner. It was not long however before Cambridge came back, a series of well placed passes

within the Oxford 25 gave Salveson the opportunity to shoot on goal, but he was denied on the line by a Dark Blue foot. A penalty stroke was awarded. Stuart Jackson took the opportunity to roll on and send the keeper the wrong way, showing a cool head to place the ball confidently just inside the right post.

With the scores level, Cambridge might have taken the opportunity to press for the lead but had two penalty corners given against them. They conceded twice to a clinical Oxford routine and went 3-1 down. The deficit was worsened with a goal from open play that saw the score line at 4-1 to Oxford at half time.

The second-half was full of end to end hockey. Cambridge looked like they might return to contend for an unexpected win when Jackson finished his second from a corner, however, this was not to be. Taking a brutal blow to the hand, Rupert Allison continued to play on despite broken bones, and increasingly stretched at the back, Cambridge conceded a fifth goal before time was out. Man of the match was Nicholas Parkes for his commanding play through the midfield.

## SPORT IN BRIEF

*A round up of the week's sport*

JUDO WOMEN DEFEAT OXFORD BUT MEN LOSE

Cambridge Women claimed victory for the first time in nine years, whilst the City, Men's A and B teams fought excellently but were narrowly defeated.

Oxford Women came to Cambridge having won the previous eight consecutive Varsity Matches. However, Cambridge captain Anna Baxter quickly demonstrated Cambridge's aim to end this draught, defeating her opponent with a pin.

This victory is a huge success for Cambridge Women, who bring back the sake-bowl trophy to Cambridge.

Club President Robert Blackburn said: 'It was a brilliant day. Special congratulations go to the Cambridge Women. Defeating Oxford for the first time in nine years was a massive achievement..'

FITZ DEFEAT SELWYN TO SECURE SEMIFINAL AGAINST PEMBROKE IN CUPPERS

Fitz beat Pembroke 2-1 in their semifinal match to secure their place in the Cuppers final this year. Paul Hartley and captain Vince Bennici scored the crucial goals that give them the chance to take home the glory this year and cap an exciting cup run with glory.

Queens', meanwhile, won their semifinal with Churchill convincingly, with a final score of 4-1. Sam Bowker notched a hat-trick, including two penalties, in a game that ended up being fairly comfortable for Queens' who will look to stop First Division Fitz from taking the cup victory.

## Sport Tube

Search: Cole shot intern rifle practice



We all know saw that Barcelona were a little quick to go to ground on Tuesday, to say the least. But this is an example of when it is prudent to hit the deck quickly.