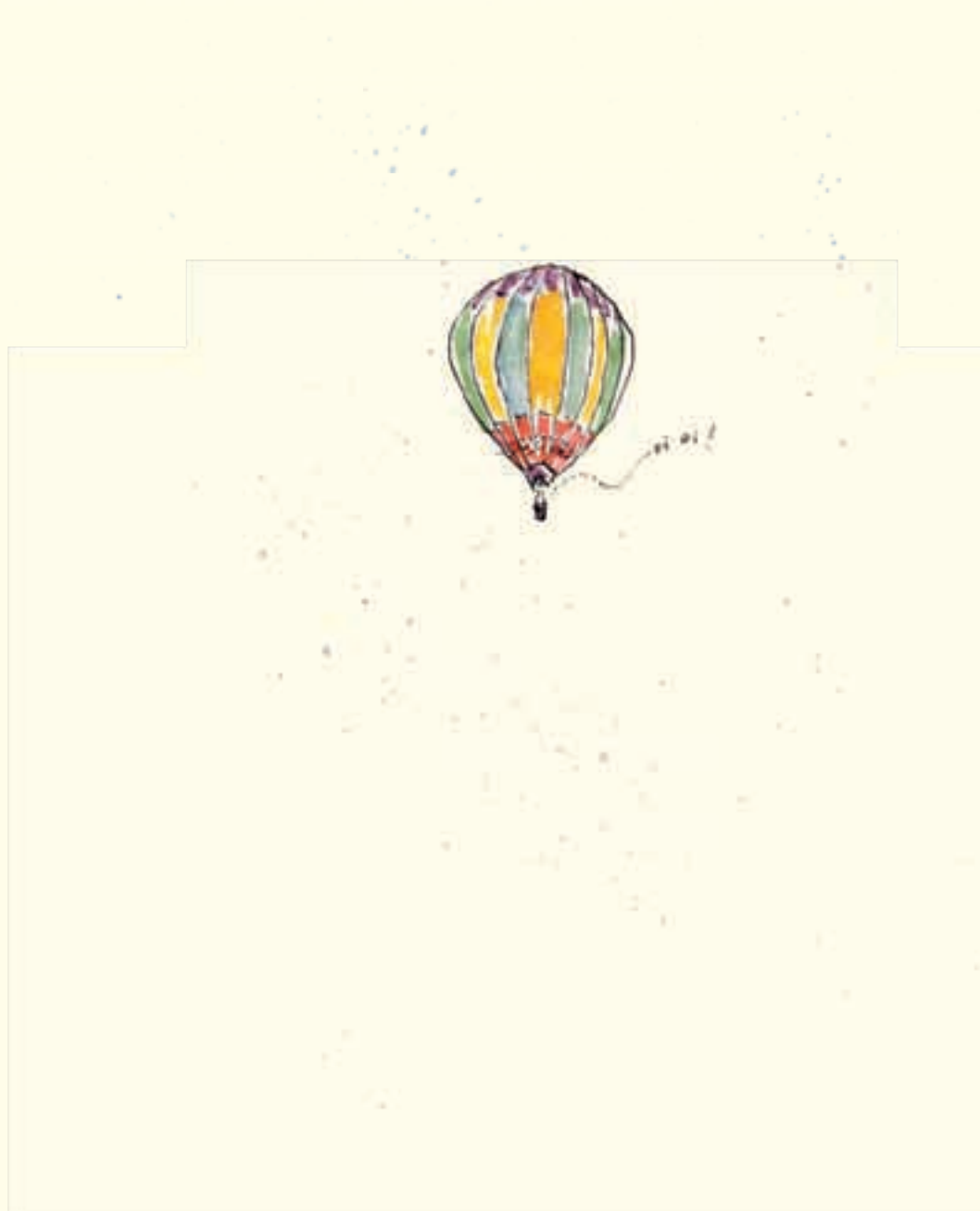


VARSITY

MAY WEEK 2008







Here is Summer

poems drawings stories photographs

T-Rex going home ferret wheels Cancun
Thomas De Quincey's London prostitutes
David Shrigley ice cream Paul Smith's fried
egg unseen Cambridge Minsk men Sark
scrambles tangerines Blogothèque accordions
on roofs cellos on punts Scroobius Pip Peggy
Sue and the Pirates' search for whiskey Jens
Lekman pilots Grobs Titanic incest fucking in
Californian accents Auntie Amy mix tape a
minha menina

Oh dear. I went to one May Ball. Was it in Trinity (I was in Peterhouse)? I remember: my girlfriend coming from London and staying (illegally) in my digs opposite the Fitzwilliam Museum; not enough drink, not enough dope (we called it pot); undergraduates behaving as if they were adults from an earlier generation; undergraduates puking on the grass at dawn (not me); Georgie Flame and the Blue Flames; twisting; feeling obliged to stay much longer at the ball than we wanted because the tickets had been so exorbitantly expensive; during May Week feeling that I should be having the time of my life but wasn't. I entirely wasted my time at Cambridge, did badly in my exams (missed one altogether), scraped a degree and have felt vaguely uneasy ever since at the expense of spirit in a waste of shame...

Richard Eyre

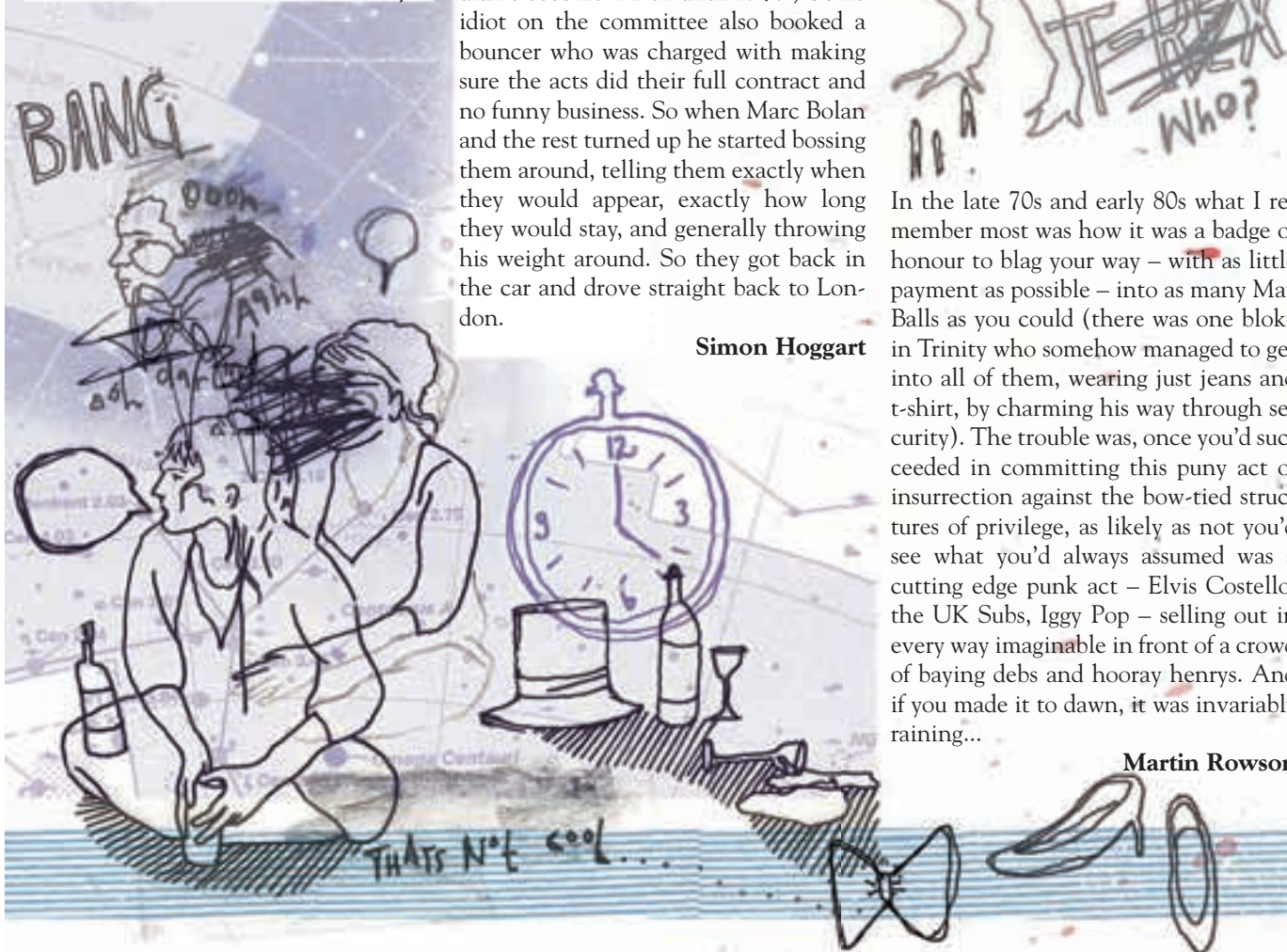
MAY WEEK MEMORIES

I was on the King's May Ball committee for 1968. We had booked some tremendous groups, including the up and coming Tyrannosaurus Rex (they'd had their first small hit the month before and didn't become T-Rex until 1970.) Some idiot on the committee also booked a bouncer who was charged with making sure the acts did their full contract and no funny business. So when Marc Bolan and the rest turned up he started bossing them around, telling them exactly when they would appear, exactly how long they would stay, and generally throwing his weight around. So they got back in the car and drove straight back to London.

Simon Hoggart

In the late 70s and early 80s what I remember most was how it was a badge of honour to blag your way – with as little payment as possible – into as many May Balls as you could (there was one bloke in Trinity who somehow managed to get into all of them, wearing just jeans and t-shirt, by charming his way through security). The trouble was, once you'd succeeded in committing this puny act of insurrection against the bow-tied structures of privilege, as likely as not you'd see what you'd always assumed was a cutting edge punk act – Elvis Costello, the UK Subs, Iggy Pop – selling out in every way imaginable in front of a crowd of baying debs and hooray henrys. And if you made it to dawn, it was invariably raining...

Martin Rowson



Adventure Story by Patrick Kingsley

Ahoy there: you're aboard the Titanic. It's sinking! What to do?

•page 3 Rearrange the deckchairs.

•page 9 Jump into a passing lifeboat.

The 2008 Peterhouse May Ball was always going to be a remarkable experience. From the moment the

altruistic college authorities announced they were raising the budget from 'twelve pounds' to 'a gazillion squid', the university was abuzz with questions – 'Is gazillion a real number?' 'Where are they going to find so many squid?' – and rumours flew from college to college – 'I heard the many-armed god Ganesh is going to greet guests at the gates!' 'I've heard the prophet Mohammed is headlining the World Tent!' 'I've heard everyone gets their own leper to keep!' All these things turned out to be true.

But it was a night of mixed experiences. Entertainment – indeed, survival! – was an hierarchical affair, and few were lucky enough to experience the ball's heady delights; there was villainy abroad. Signs of the sin to come began when guests received an email instructing them to produce a full academic record for inspection. Not suspecting anything would come of it, my date for the evening – a poor, beautiful girl who is much missed – freely admitted to having obtained a 2:2 in her first year. Her final high 2:1 clearly counted for nothing, as on her arrival the many-armed god Ganesh gave a subtle nod and a red-bespattered masked figure led her into a darkened side room with the legend 'Bursar' inscribed on the door. I have not seen her since.

I still hear the screams at night.

The screams, however, were all but drowned out by the low-reverberating

drum of revelry. A drum, it seemed, which I too, with my moderate 2:1 was not permitted to beat. For I was led, by a figure in a blood-red mask with deep-flowing blond hair and a man's gait, through the revellers, the First-snatchers, to await my fate. 'Where are you taking me?' It was a fair question which received a mumbled response from a high-pitched voice: '...Ferris Wheel... Blind Man's Bluff...' was all I could make out. But I soon discovered my mistake, for awaiting me was not the pleasure trip of a Ferris Wheel, but a giant ferret wheel, in which I was to run, with countless others, a grotesque power-generator, powering the ball. 'No,' I said, 'uh, no no no no no.' Again, I thought it was a fair comment, but I was forced onto the wheel by a naked gentleman bearing a whip and dark shades, giving me no option but to run and run and keep a-running all night, going nowhere, as the blind man in the buff lashed and thrashed at all those poor, forgotten souls whose academic records weren't up to scratch.

From my position on the ferret wheel I could see much, and I watched in mingled awe and terror as this ball, this hell, unfolded in front of me. I watched as fair-haired young boys tarred and feathered the starving and pinned-tails-on-the-naked-and-wretched in the Arian Fairground, while cantering capitalists coupled with pirouetting paedophiles



in the Murderer's Masquerade, and I watched. I watched racist Morris-dancing 'thumping the ground to the right of me, and duelling fellows bleeding wine and shuff to the left of me, as the choir sang Hallelujah from the inside of an over-sized oyster shell, and we ran and ran and kept a-running all night, going nowhere, while our blind assailant assailed us and screamed, "Run, my pretties, run!", ululating like a pagan priestess, and my bow tie gradually loosened.

Five in the morning and it was time for the survivor's photograph. This year those who survived were few; fewer even than usual. Corpses lay strewn around the Deer Park, picked over by vultures, crawled over by lizards, and human traffickers hunted around for those with any trace of life left in them. But the hardcore were still drinking, stumbling around the bloodshed, kicking at still-twitching bodies with girlish laughter, as the sun rose over the impossible scene of carnage and affliction, piercing its dim smoke with her golden rays, gilding the pain. As I left the ball, a sadder and wiser man, there was only room in my head for one looped thought, rolling through my brain over and over again: 'If only the Peterhouse May Ball had never been allowed to happen.'

I still hear the screams at night.

Halford St Giles

On the fifth day, we stopped in Cancun. The choir sang at the Flamingo Resort in the morning (and got free brunch for it); in the afternoon

we did some madrigals poolside at the Golden Parnassus. We got an okay dinner out of that. Now, in our free hours, just me and Andrew sitting in his room that evening, at the two-star Grand Royal Lagoon, we could hear the chunking bellows of Steve's body in the toilet next door alternate puking up and shitting out what little he had left in him. Food poisoning had been lingering with Steve almost since the very second the plane touched down in Mexico City to begin the summer choir tour. Sticking to only bottled water and bananas did nothing for the counter-tenor.

But it was just me and Andrew in this room now. Everyone else seemed to have wandered out to the beach or into the town. He sat so close to me on the bed I felt like his sunburn, glowing with heat, would rub off, stick to me. Assigned one of the few rooms with a terrace overlooking the beach, Andrew struck lucky today. Through the thin glass doors that could've shattered if you even leaned on them, the long rattle of the ocean throwing its arms up on the shore and slowly being dragged away again. Over it, the hot sunset hung low and heavy, turning bruise-colored like a week-old contusion from

banging your shin on a desk.

Andrew's face had gotten shaggier as the tour went on. Unreliable running water at most of our stops and growing lethargy pressing on everyone from a heat so thick you could chew it, the likes of which most of the choir members had never known before, made these niceties of grooming fly out the window. Little blonde wisps were forming around his chin and corners of his thin pink lips that smelled of the Tarasco rum we were sipping, which he'd gotten in a tiny bodega yesterday. But his facial pubes were okay. I didn't mind. I would've minded on other people, but not him. At least he had to worry about shaving. All I could grow was a beard of spots. A fly in the room kept landing on my leg, a persistent tickling on the edge of feeling, no matter how much I shooed it away.

Footsteps pounded outside the door; someone yelled, which I recognized as Jack the bass. Jack with the knack, we said, since he had a knack for finding anything to fuck you up wherever he went. And sometimes this was good - on the second night we had fun with some pills he'd gotten off locals - and sometimes this was bad, as it sounded right now. Anything to fuck you up

could be anything. Or maybe it wasn't a bad trip; maybe he was just rippingly drunk. He had a knack for that too. I wanted to look out the door when I heard a thud like a sack of potatoes thrown to the ground, but Andrew didn't seem to notice. Tense jawed, he just stared out to the sea as the waves pulled down to low tide.

Then he poured a couple fingers more rum into his cup and quickly downed them. I watched him, his throat contracting with the gulps. He crumpled the cup and turned to see me staring at him. 'Look, I think I need a nap, Alex,' he mumbled suddenly. 'Sleep off the rum,' he smiled.

'I understand,' I said. He crawled under the starchy hotel blankets. I patted his big lump of a shoulder. 'Good.... night.'

'Good night.'

I walked onto his balcony. Our choir director was fighting with a Mexican man with a wrench on the patio below. He was shouting about our broken down bus, but the Mexican man shook his head and kept trying to say something the director wouldn't accept. I watched the sun almost finish setting. When I stepped back in, I saw Andrew had thrown up next to the bed. The thought to clean it up crossed my mind, but I just stepped through the room into the hallway.

Cathy Bueker

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

Cameron doesn't understand that kind of abbreviation and so you spend the next half-hour explaining the meaning of ROFL, LMAO and FAQ. He's suitably impressed by your knowledge of street lingo and offers you a scriptwriting position in his next film project. You win an Oscar® for Best Screenplay before spending a lifetime in Hollywood and becoming a major shareholder in AOLTimeWarner. Congrats.



This year, I've been banned from the family holiday. Well. I say 'family' holiday but my sister has been banned, too, and so we'll both spend

the hottest part of the summer in London. Summer is my favourite time of year, and the city – almost any city, but especially London – is my favourite place to spend it. Whereas a beach holiday is a heaving, shared experience, living in the city over July and August is deeply solitary. This is not quite as true in London or New York as it is in, say, Rome, where the city becomes literally deserted as the locals flee to the countryside to escape the heat. However, there is still a sense of emptiness, as Manhattanites will go to the Hamptons and Londoners will drift down to Brighton (or the more savvy to Southend).

This leaves the city dwellers, even if only for a few crucial days, with a playground in which everybody is too hot and tired to play. Central London and The City become no go areas, because of the sun reflecting and refracting off of the crystal maze of windows, and Lewisham

and Hackney – the inner city suburbs – become home to gangs of kids, their dogs leashed with burning metal chains, the rubber of their bicycle tires becoming gummy, and their torsos glistening with sweat, who form unpleasant gauntlets on key street corners. And thus, London becomes divided and individualised. Those with the energy or necessity to go out do so with some degree of trepidation. The key to defusing this tension, like a cigarette butt to dry grass, can come from a single remark or glance. A well-placed comment can set the whole top deck of a bus talking and laughing; given half the chance, people are glad to come out from inside themselves and engage with everyone else sharing the burden of the weather.

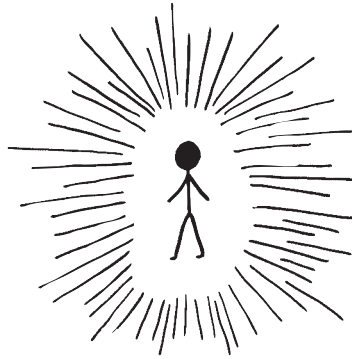
An awareness of the city's summer temperament is an intrinsic part of being a Londoner. The sixteenth century pamphleteer Thomas Dekker wrote of

“the lustiest pride of summer”, when Parliament had finally gone on holiday and the Thames had shrunk in the heat. Thomas DeQuincey, too, paints a portrait of what can only be London in the summer in his book ‘Confessions of an Opium Eater’. Reading his account of nights spent sitting on a doorstep in Soho Square with a young prostitute, listening to a street organ, I can imagine them enjoying the moment under an August moon. There is still the sound of music in the summer streets, but it is now lilting reggae, played from a car or a back garden at two in the morning. And there is something comforting about walking home in the (only just) dark, to hear Toots and the Maytals emanating from the street parallel to yours. And there is something comforting about how tangible the city becomes. Suddenly, you can see the air, hanging yellow on the horizon. And you can taste it in your mouth. And you can smell it on a street corner in the evening. And it smells of grease, and petrol, and fresh grass cuttings.

Fred Rowson

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

It turns out he's only joking and the cast and crew laugh unabashedly whilst you are ejected from the studio by the AOLTimeWarner security guards. A decade later you're framed for the arson attack on Universal Studios. Coincidence?



GOD CHOSE ME
TO MAKE DECISIONS

Seven Questions for David Shrigley

1. The Desert Island Discs game. I'm changing it slightly. If you were sent to a desert island which five records, five books, and one luxury item would you take with you?

Records:

Velvet Underground- Andy Warhol
Neil Young- Harvest
The Fall- either Hex Enduction Hour
or better still a boxed set- Peel Sessions
perhaps
Dinosaur Jr- Where you been?
Boredoms- Super AR

Books:

A dictionary
Tristram Shandy
Don Quixote
An encyclopedia
An encyclopedia of football statistics

Why?

I assume these are the books that everybody would take

Luxury item:

My girlfriend or a guitar. Hmmm... Maybe a version of my girlfriend that would change into a guitar when I clicked my fingers. No, that's a bit weird, I'll just stick with my girlfriend.

2. What's the best thing about summer? Do you take a sketchbook on holiday with you? Have you ever discovered something really inspiring when you've been on holiday?

You sound like my hairdresser. I try not to take a sketchbook on holiday. Holidays are for reading. I think lying in the shade and reading all the books I didn't get around to reading is pretty inspiring.

3. When you are working, do you ever find yourself laughing/grimacing/crying at something you've drawn or made?

No. I chortle occasionally, but that's about it.

4. Is there anyone/thing you would love to collaborate with?

I'd like to write some songs for Albert Kuvezin who is a famous Tuvan throat singer.

5. Words are important. Would you write a book without drawings?

Some of the books I have done have a lot more text than image, so I guess it's quite possible.

6. Are animals important to your work? If so, why?

I guess they are important. I've never really thought about it. I like how different animals fit into the hierarchy of living things:

Humans
Whales
Dolphins
Horses
Dogs
Hedgehogs
Rats
Worms
Insects
Parasites
Parasites that live on insects, etc.

7. Have you got any upcoming exhibitions or books?

There is a new edition of my book GRIP coming out in September and I'm showing at Baltic in Gateshead in the same month.

David Shrigley is an artist who works in a variety of media. We overheard him talking to his hairdresser. Then he gave us this drawing.

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

• 'Yes of course it's a film set, you moron,' screams James Cameron from his little director's chair. How the Dickens are you going to smooze him?

• p16 Ignore Cameron and make a beeline for Jim Threapleton instead.

• p4 Mutter something lame like 'Er...sorry. LOL.'

'Rosa's not going to talk today because she's too hung over.' We're having a pint with bittersweet musical duo Peggy Sue and the Pirates.

Well, I say having a pint, but due to their recklessness last night it's only me and my co interviewer who are drinking. And I say Peggy Sue and the Pirates but across the table in this grimy pub down a Soho side street there is no one called Peggy Sue; and as far as I can tell there aren't any pirates either.

In fact, Peggy Sue and the Pirates are Rosa and Katy, two girls from Sussex University with beautiful voices. 'It's a pretty rubbish name,' they say, and they may have to change it to avoid being sued by Pete and the Pirates. But they like 'and the' and as English students they particularly enjoy the alliteration. Their music is deceptively simple: two voices, some sad, witty lyrics, a guitar they call 'the stud', some drums and a melodica. They've already released the single 'Television' and plan to release four more. They're not yet signed, but they have played at venues across the country and abroad and last year they toured with Kate Nash. Rosa has left university, and following the successes of the past year, Katy is about to take a

year out from studying in order to dedicate more time to Peggy Sue.

Alliteration aside, the best proof of their skill as wordsmiths is in their lyrics. In 'Superman' they have their hero exclaim: 'And all I really want is to have the right to wear my pants underneath my tights.' Katy tells us she made up the song one day when Rosa arrived four hours late to her house. She 'sort of stole the idea from Seth from the OC who wrote a dissertation on Superman's melancholy or something. But, you know, he didn't write a song about it and he didn't talk about tights.' They don't plan to release 'Superman'. 'There's a danger with releasing anything based on a joke', Rosa explains. But 'it is a really good song,' she admits. 'Am I allowed to say that?'

A smell of raw sewage wafts over from somewhere and Rosa looks as though she might puke. To take her mind off it we ask about their best and worst gigs. 'The Oxford ball was the worst gig ever,' they agree, to our amusement. 'Five people watched us; everyone else just



talked and ate. We played in 'the little girls' room' where they wouldn't serve us whiskey, only vodka. We had to go to the 'boys' room' to get some, and there were just lots of men in smoking jackets.' But when I watch them later that evening in Soho, they are received rapturously. The crowd is silenced, in awe of the perfect harmonies coming from these giggling girls and their childish instruments. If they ever make it to a Cambridge ball, be sure to receive them better.

If, like us, you've fallen a little bit in love with Peggy Sue and the Pirates, listen to: 'Superman', 'Spare Parts', and 'New Song'.

Liz Eirlys Chenevix

After removing the whoopee cushion that Paul Smith had placed on my chair, I look up to see the fashion designer eyeing my bright purple, green and orange plastic carrier bag.

I assume he is not impressed. But as he prepares to leave he asks 'Can I borrow that? The graphics and the colours are fantastic!' I freely part with the motley carrier bag that had contained revision notes and a browning banana. He forages in his coat pocket, produces a plastic fried egg, and waves it by way of farewell. Weeks later a package arrives at my house containing a white T-shirt for me. On the front is the image of my forgotten carrier bag which, *American Beauty* jokes aside, is strangely beautiful.

Smith finds inspiration in the incongruous and overlooked and thrives on being able to surprise people. The distinctive neon pink architecture of his LA shop was created because he felt that, in a city in which very few people walk, he needed to make something outrageously eye-catching. No two Paul Smith shops are the same, but even if you have been to only one, or pressed your nose flat against the window like a starving Dickens character at Christmas time, there's one thing you'll definitely notice: they look nothing like shops.

Entering Westbourne House, the flagship shop in London's Notting Hill, it seems plausible that Smith might actually live there, and has simply allowed his attic to fall in. The various contents - tin robots, bootleg Bob Dylan records, faded photographs and plastic bubble-guns - settle themselves on the shop floor in the pleasingly unarranged arrangement of a Dadaist collage. Sometimes the designer's own head even buoys up

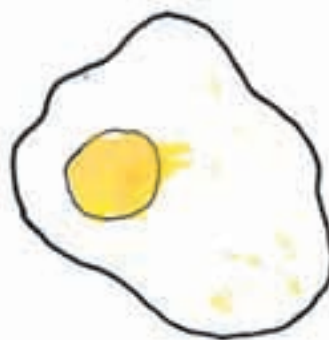
from beneath the counter to serve the customers.

The surprise certainly adds to the Old Curiosity Shop aspect. Unfortunately someone clever has already beaten me to comparing Smith's shops to living in a Joseph Cornell box. When we talk about his recent project, No. 9 Albemarle Street, Smith's furniture and curiosity shop, he describes it as an extension of a hobby. So, why is it that he designs clothes rather than knick-knacks? 'Clothes design came first because I was an assistant in a clothes shop; then I met my wife, who was a clothes designer and taught me everything I know. Being involved in the design of shoes, watches, spectacles, furniture, all came later.'

The young Smith suffered from dyslexia, leaving school at fifteen with no qualifications, but this seems not to have done him the slightest harm. 'I think leaving school at fifteen meant that I had to 'learn by doing it'. But my one regret about my lack of education is my lack of education! Often I feel out of my depth with well-read friends.'

I wonder if this makes Smith feel the need for practical jokes. 'I hopefully inherited the character of my father who was an easy going man with the ability to make people feel relaxed in any situation. Certainly visual jokes have helped me throughout my career to make people relax, and they were extremely helpful in the early visits to Japan when almost no-one spoke any English.'

Smith concedes that his work in Ja-



pan in particular has hugely informed his creative output. Considering his job demands such frequent international travel, does Smith ever get nostalgic for holidays here? 'As a child I holidayed in Dorset, in Charmouth on the coast. Days were spent looking for fossils on the beach, and as a teenager and cyclist, Derbyshire was heaven.' Is there anywhere he hasn't been before? 'The desert in Chile. It sounds like another planet with its amazing landscape and surreal colours.'

Perhaps this wilful escapism controls his designs. In response to my suggestion Smith admits that, for him, wearability comes before fantasy: 'Although I understand that many designers feel the need to send outrageous designs down the catwalk... I personally think that it is ridiculous. I try to send out interesting but wearable clothes and that everything we show we produce, unlike many others who will design only for the show.'

This all sounds quite sensible for a man who greeted me by flapping a fried egg. 'I'm not sure how I managed to have a strong, sensible side to me because most of me is frivolous. Fashion is about today and tomorrow and of course I am delighted with my success so far, but...'

....but for Smith, I sense retirement is a dirty word.

Olivia Sudjic

That is not my father, crouched
 by a dry stone wall, a fire at his face
 and the pelt of weather at his back,
 in a moorland sheepcot to fleece
 the elements. Nor the flat cap who grouched
 over pay and pensions, home to the terrace
 for his brew and missus, the black
 of pit work lingering in his teastained
 easy chair. Nor the male who slouched
 down the dole, so he could waste
 it in his throat, before a fracas
 for a ruined girl: your down-to-earth, if-you-please,
 everyday hero. He who avouched
 my generation turned an embarrassed
 smile suddenly on sensing the lack
 of man. We have short memories.

My Father by Ashley Riches

I was always good at faces. I could recognise old school friends in the street that I hadn't seen for years, their little playground

grimaces hidden in the crumpled frowns
 of middle age. In this job, though, too
 many faces go past – they become blank,
 blurred in my memory. I sit in my van
 all day and stare out at them, their
 lives hardly touching mine. Troupes
 of schoolchildren might trudge past in
 their cricket jumpers, bored and sweaty
 in the midday heat. Skeletal women
 will sometimes stop mid-jog and guiltily
 stare at the signs for 99 Flakes, hesitate,
 and jog on. I might get a nod from the
 patrolling parking warden, whistling
 aimlessly as he strolls around the park,
 trying to catch a motor-vehicle offender.

Dog walkers, au pairs, workers, football-
 ers, vagrants, lovers: back and forth they
 go, and I watch.

One face, though, sticks in my mem-
 ory. It was June. She couldn't have been
 older than twenty. At her feet stood a
 grubby little child, with greedy blue eyes
 and fat cheeks. The mother had pink
 shadows under each eye, pigmented in.
 A slight scar hovered above her right
 cheek, and there was a hint of something
 beneath her top lip. She didn't look at
 me as they approached the van, and
 mumbled her order to the clear, white
 surface of the counter. Everything was

precise, controlled, rigid, as if playing
 this role of ordering an ice cream from
 the ice cream man would make some-
 thing right, something stable.

As they walked away I watched them:
 the little girl wobbling on the tarmac,
 the mother bowed, her shoulders slop-
 ing downwards under some invisible
 weight.

I saw them at each corner
 when I drove home at
 dusk, and they flickered
 like phantoms across my
 eyelids in the night.



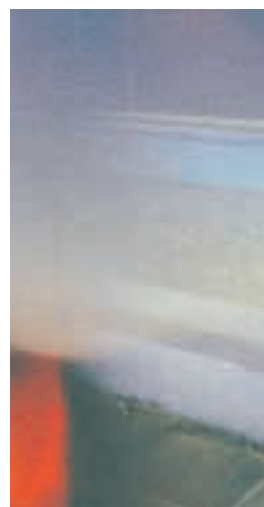
Emma Hogan

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

You start rowing. But who's that in the corner? Well, if it isn't old Leo and Kate doing tongues under the tarpaulin!

•p6 Yup, it's a film set.

•p17 No, it's Uncle Ambrose and Cousin Marge.



Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

'How did you guess?' says the Devil, removing his avuncular camouflage to reveal some pointy horns and a rather fetching tail. 'Are you Derren Brown?'

- p13 No, but you pretend you are.
- p14 No, but you follow his programmes religiously.



Unseen Cambridge by Bethan Mathias

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

Threapleton has an epiphany and, realising that his command of slang is slightly lacking, leaves the set immediately to retake his English Language O-level. There's now a vacancy on set and so James Cameron asks if you mind filling in for the Chief Grip, who's been promoted to Threapleton's old job.

♥p5 Accept straightaway – this is a your big break!

♥p8 Hold out for something bigger, like Gaffer or Best Boy.



Europe's last dictatorship. An outpost of tyranny. These phrases echoed in my mind as the plane circled Minsk,

the capital of Belarus, in the heat of a summer night. I was visiting my then boyfriend, Nikolay.

Belarus did not promise to be much of a summer holiday. But the longer and more complicated the visa process became, the more determined I was to go. The government is suspicious of Westerners, fearing they might be human rights activists or reporters revealing the rigged elections that have seen President Lukashenko re-elected time after time.

Minsk is the perfect Soviet city. At the end of the Second World War it was razed and rebuilt as a Stalinist model. Everyone lives in identical apartment buildings, often topped by huge letters spelling out, 'Working Classes of the World Unite!'

Living in Nik's tiny flat for three weeks I met many Belarusians of my own age. There was Dimitri, a 19-year-old orphan working full time in a BMW factory for \$200 dollars a month. No Belarusian can afford to buy a BMW but they do good trade to rich Russians coming over the border. Dimitri will never earn enough money to get out of Belarus. 'I'm going to get married, settle down, and make the best of it,' he told me.

Then there was Kostya, an active campaigner for Lukashenko's opposition rival, Alaksandar Milinkievi. He is on the run from the police, moving from house to house and sleeping on people's floors. 'Do you know any Irish rebel songs?' he asked me. I was sad that I did not.

Some wanted to see a regime change similar to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Others distrusted all Western interference. I met far-right Nationalists who rejected the old ideas of Communism, the new ideas of capitalism and any dealings with Russia. They were the neo-fascists who wore black and greeted each other with Hitler salutes. In a country where the Nazis wiped out a quarter of the population I found these hard-faced boys impossible to understand. I saw only anger, hopelessness and desperation in their eyes.

Despite the local pharmacy containing nothing but a pack of paracetamol, my vodka-fuelled hangovers and the constant threatening police presence, Minsk was not all grim. I went to the countryside and drank a fierce home-brewed alcohol called Samagon. I rode on the Ferris Wheel in Gorki Park. I witnessed the endless parade of newly-

weds having their pictures taken next to all the city's war memorials. And I went out into the dense and beautiful forests. A boy called Dima showed me traces of partisan trenches. They still find bullets and skulls there, and no one knows how many partisans died fighting.

He said young people were quick to forget the lessons of the past; I thought of the fascist youths and agreed. But young Belarusians face a difficult dilemma. They must at once remember the legacies of past struggles, and forget enough of the past to move on. Dima and I sat for a long time in the silence, thinking of all the fallen youth in that sweeping waste. 'Let's go,' he said eventually. 'Let's leave them to sleep.'

No, Belarus was not much of a summer holiday. But I learnt more than I ever imagined I would. Perhaps it is true that Belarus is the page in the Soviet History book that Europe forgot. I will always remember my trip, and the lesson in humility it taught me.

The final time I saw Kostya, the fugitive, he left with a smile on his tired face. 'I am glad you like Minsk,' he said. 'I hope when you come back it is a better time.'

I hope so too.

Decca Muldowney

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

'Fantastic,' says he. 'I'll give this to my wife Kate Winslet. She loves jam.' In fact, she loves it so much that she decides not to leave Jimbo after all and the pair retire to marital bliss in the Cotswolds. Threapleton's consequently pretty chuffed with you and, as a reward, he employs you as his valet. Nice one.

You would be forgiven for overlooking Sark on a map. Stranded in the Channel between England and France

and measuring three miles by two, the tiny island stands isolated from the rest of the modern world.

Firstly, there are no cars. Horses still pull carriages through the winding dusty lanes, farmers drive stammering old tractors, and the elderly scoot around in electric buggies. Otherwise, transport is by bicycle or on foot.

Walking is the only way to properly explore its hidden nooks and bays. 'Sark scrambles' notoriously bring out the competitive instincts in would-be mountaineers: the more challenging caves include the Gouliots, Boutiques, and 'Fat Man's Misery', as well as a natural swimming pool – popular amongst skinny dippers – known as 'Venus Pool'.

Sark consists of two main parts: Greater and Little Sark. Little Sark has a wilder feel than the rest of the island, perhaps because it was allegedly inhabited by witches in the seventeenth century, or because of its warren of failed silver mines. Nowadays only the ruins survive, along with the heaving 'capital' of Little Sark: a courtyard of seven tiny cottages.

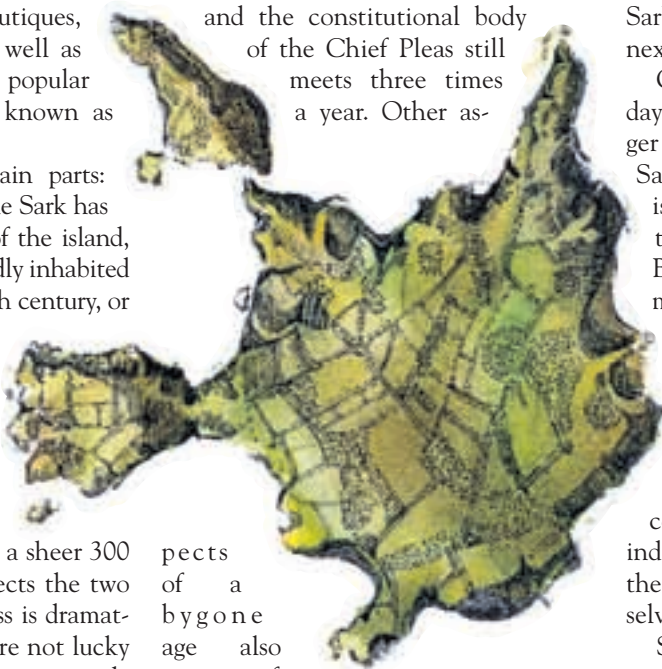
La Coupée, a narrow isthmus nine feet wide with a sheer 300 foot drop either side, connects the two Sarkes. The railed walk across is dramatic; residents before 1900 were not lucky enough to have one. On foggy or windy days school-children had to crawl across on their hands and knees to avoid falling over the edge.

It is easy to idealise such a place, but island life is not necessarily easy. There is no centralised water system; each house lives off a tank relying on rain-water or borehole. Nor is there a landfill site, making recycling a necessity rather than a virtue: individuals are responsible for their waste. Ellie, a neighbour of

my Grandmother, embodied this self-sufficiency. He died aged 95 – having very rarely left the island – in the house he had built himself. He spoke the Sark Patois, 'Sercquaise'; the language is almost extinct now, although a pocket of old Sarkees still speak it.

It was Ellie's ancestor, Helier De Carteret, who settled the island in 1565. He established the windmill, and the feudal system, both of which still stand today. Although the former has fallen out of use, the feudalism is still functional: the current Seigneur is Michael Beaumont and the constitutional body

of the Chief Pleas still meets three times a year. Other as-



pects of a bygone age also survive; for instance the Seigneur still retains the sole right on the island to keep pigeons. Like red London buses, this is a trace of ancient tradition, not the scar of a deeply entrenched hierarchy; Michael Beaumont is a humble and decent man devoted to the welfare of the island. I know he is subject to Sark's captivating wildness whenever I meet the octogenarian scrambling over the rocks for his daily swim – often in November. Here is

a man of Sark, not an island lord; what is feudal in spirit is democratic in nature.

In some respects this leaves the island vulnerable. In 1990 Sark was subject to invasion. The attacker was one man: Andres Gardes, an unemployed French nuclear physicist. He was armed with a semi-automatic weapon. Gardes arrived at night, and hammered up signs across the island declaring his intentions for invasion the following day at noon. As he sat on a bench waiting for twelve, he was approached by the voluntary constable. With the compliment 'That's a nice gun you've got there,' the constable jumped on Gardes as he was changing the magazine. He was arrested and imprisoned in Sark's two-cell jail, a tiny stone building next to the tourist centre.

Comic timing may have saved the day on that occasion; but today a far bigger and more sinister threat looms over Sark, this time from Brecqhou, a little island off its West coast. There, enthroned in their gothic castle, sit the Barclay Brothers, billionaire businessmen with a line in hotel development and a newspaper empire. They woo the community with new hotels, cheques for schools, a shopping mall and promises of a golf-course and helicopter-pad. Since their arrival, a newspaper has mysteriously come into circulation, which targets individual critics of the brothers. Now the Barclays have taken it upon themselves to reform Sark's constitution.

So this November the Chief Pleas will meet for the last time. Many islanders are in favour of the change, including Beaumont himself. Others fear that a benign feudalism will fall to a new capitalist autocracy, spearheaded by the Barclay Brothers. So far the island of Sark has stood with a graceful innocence, firm against the ebb and flow of wars and weirdos, invaders and patrons. Perhaps this tide of democracy will be its biggest challenge yet.

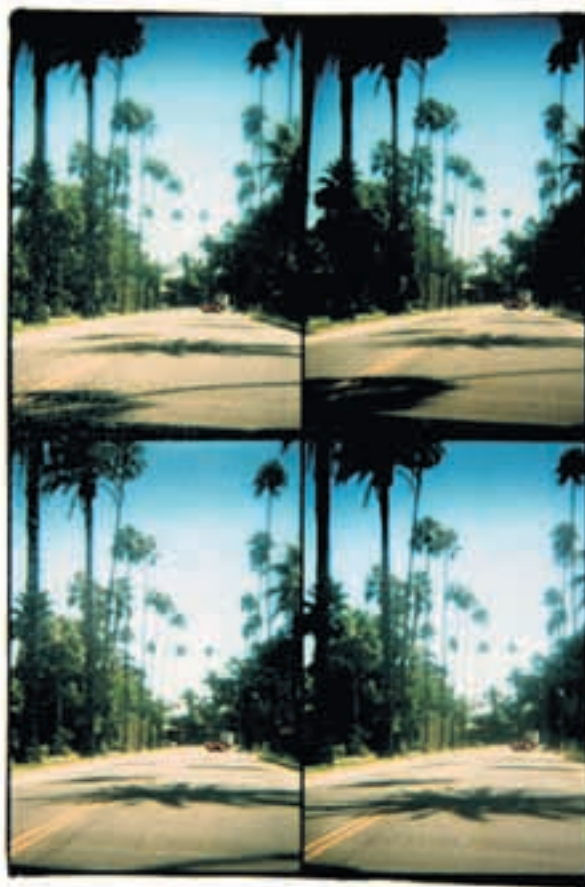
Daisy Belfield

Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

'You're lying,' says the Devil, and he should know. As a punishment, he condemns you to death by ouija board and makes you play Russian Roulette for eternity.

Home in the cochlea silences pose in a veil of movement
as sea-edged stanzas reveal their thought-twists and fragments of sponges
and at times a vertiginous leafiness raised to material status:
crystal flowers combine and a helical thing with a closed tube
moves one move off through my fingers, a species of mathematics
heard now as bells like the gulls where curving and clockwise forms are
composed for the length of a tide-change. So shells are essentially fluted
disclosing folds of the whorl of a greeny-blue word in your ear
if I may. If you stop you can hear it right through the bone to the night air
to a tip from the hand's own turn over to all the beginning's
lack of these stones. So that cutting across I think of a tissue
of acts composed of our shells full of coded visual or spiral
echoes the colour of molluscs, slighted tone slides of sounded
words in a haze-lit time, in a shellfish seam of blue noises.

Beach by Ian Patterson



Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

'Me too!' exclaims Lucifer, and the two of you settle down in front of the telly to watch the limited edition DVD of 'Derren Brown – Inside Your Mind'.



Last summer, though, I tasted of tangerines,
the glitter in the gloss stuck to my lips
as we lay on the beach, as we slowly kissed,
then wrapped each other up in cinemas.

Objects, yes, the tiny tub of tangerine
balm, the oversized hats and old photos
which we found in curious shops
in twisting streets, in clear light days when

we swapped admiration at second-hand,
the glee at new findings only delight
in ourselves. And as we walked the beach again
we stuck to each other like tangerine ice-cream,

so that now when someone else pulls away,
and tells me that 'you'd be a lot easier to leave
if you didn't taste of chocolate,' my new gloss,
it's you I remember. I feel like telling him

'you've got it wrong,' that as short a time ago
as last summer, I tasted of tangerines.

Tangerine by Colette Sensier

Searching for an appropriate birthday video for a friend one day, I stumbled

across a YouTube offering entitled 'Concert à emporter 2.1 - Jens Lekman - Happy Birthday.' I watched it with increasing joy, as the sweet Swede warbled his song in the dark from an armchair on an abandoned tennis court. Then I looked at who had put it up; La Blogothèque. From then on, the website which hosts a veritable cinematic panoply of the best of, dare I say it, 'underground' music became a firm favourite. Its creator, Christophe Abric, who goes by the pseudonym Chryde, entered into the ever -escalating blog craze and recruited some friends to help him initiate La Blogothèque in 2003. A few years later, the concept of the 'Take-Away Concert' was born, with the help

of Mathieu Saura, known in his role of film director as Vincent Moon. Who knew that a mere hobby would acquire worldwide following and admiration? So much success has led these two men to be included in Variety's list of top ten innovators, and with good reason. In today's world, the aspect of the visual experience of music is more vital than ever before, especially considering the overwhelming influence of the internet; the commercial MTV music video is no longer enough, and it is the ingenuity of La Blogothèque that fills the void. The constant battle to be more creative sees Abric and Saura forging ahead of others. While London's Black Cab Sessions are similar, there is

little variety to their guests, their performances a track or two from the artist's archetypal mode. La Blogothèque takes artists and puts them on a stage, gathering a varied and complex audience, or



Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

Bad move. 'What the hell am I going to do with a handmade beeline?' demands Threapleton.

•p12 Good point. You offer him a pot of jam as an alternative.

•p11 Explain to the doofus that it was just a figure of speech. You don't actually have a beeline to hand.



m; as the name sug-
ers are filmed playing
the back of the capi-
e of transport. But La
rtists such as Islands,
street corner at dusk,
y delighted or per-
places Beirut in all

their horn and accordion pomp and glory next to a cafe full of unsuspecting Parisians; they almost always perform more beautifully in such live sessions than they do in recording. It's the displacement of the artists from their normal environs coupled with the often unidentifiable locations which mean that the take-away concerts are more intimate and enjoyable than any mass-produced music video ever could be.

So, we decided to see if we could do the same. Or at least something similar. Focusing mainly on Cambridge based artists, the first hurdle was convincing them that it would be not only great fun, but successful too. That done, we turned to the logistics of the filming. Perhaps what isn't obvious from watching La Blogothèque videos is the problem of gaining good sound quality when playing out-

doors, which we overcame by using radio mics and an overhead microphone; unwieldy at the best of times, but especially when filming on a punt. And though unusual locations in Cambridge are hardly difficult to come by, each posed their own obstructions; the risk of losing the Chatto Quartet's prized instruments in the Cam, for instance, or the occasional irate resident of Portugal Place woken at 10.30 a.m. by the unexpected sound of the Staircase Band's trombone. But still, seeing in the online videos the incongruity of these extremely talented musicians placed in busy central Cambridge and the accompaniment of singularly striking views from the roof of King's College Chapel to some equally resplendent accordion playing makes it all worthwhile.

Alexandra Randell

*To see Varsity's Blogothèque, go to: www.varsity.co.uk
To compare with the original: www.blogothèque.net*



Adventure Story (starts on page 2)

'Eurgh – incest!' you cry in disgust. 'Relax,' Uncle Ambrose ripostes. 'If we're going to go down, we might as well go down in style.'

•p7 Agree with him. Incest is admittedly pretty stylish these days.

•p10 Say something outraged like 'you're the devil in disguise.'

Seven Questions for Scroobius Pip

1. Let's play a little game of Desert Island Discs. What eight records would you take to an island? What book would you take? And what luxury item?

CD's:

Animal Collective : Feels - An album that always puts a smile on your face!

Clouddead : Clouddead - Great album to just get lost in.

Johny Hartman & John Coltrane Session - Possibly my favourite album of all time.

Public Enemy : Its takes a nation of millions... - Just saw them perform the whole album live and it was amazing.

M.I.A. : Kala - Currently can't get enough of this album.

Laura Marling : Alas I Cannot Swim - Can't get enough of this either.

Kate Bush : Best of - Genius!

Prince : Best of - Double Genius!

Books:

Jack Kerouac - On the Road - Now this probably isn't my favourite book but its one that is more about a vibe than anything so I think I could read it over and over again and feel transported off the island.

Luxury Item:

A Piano! Seems like the perfect place to teach myself an instrument so I think I'd go for a piano.

2. Is 'Scroobius Pip' taken from Edward Lear and if so, why? Is 'nonsense verse' an important influence? What are some of your other, non musical influences?

It is taken from the Lear poem 'The Scroobius Pip'. Nonsense verse in general isn't a big influence but this particular poem has a good mean-

ing and moral. I will let you read it to find out! I like to take influence from all over the place. I often take a lot of influence from Cinema.

3. Is theatricality important to your music, and if so, in what ways? (I'm thinking here of the dramatic way you often perform and the use of different voices and characters to illustrate perspectives, e.g. in 'Angles'.)

Yeah, I feel it's important that when performing live you give people an entertaining show. Not just stand up there looking cool. A bit of theatricality can really add to a show and make it all the more memorable.

4. Why did you make the move from spoken word in to music?

I didn't really! My part of the act is still very much spoken word so I haven't had to adapt too much! Working with Dan [le Sac] really seems to bring out so much in the stories and lyrics.

5. What do you think of the British spoken word scene? Are there any contemporaries you particularly relate to, in the UK or the US (e.g. Saul Williams?) You seem to be a big Hip-Hop fan, can Hip-Hop be poetry?

I think Hip-Hop and poetry can cross over and be one and the same. People like Saul Williams and Sage Francis prove that repeatedly. In the UK there is an amazing spoken word scene. Some of my favourite are Polar Bear, Poem Inbetween People and Kate Tempest. There's a great thriving scene, which is great to be a part of.

6. Do you think of Dan le Sac and Scroobius Pip as bringing poetry to the masses? Or are you just concerned with writing a good song?

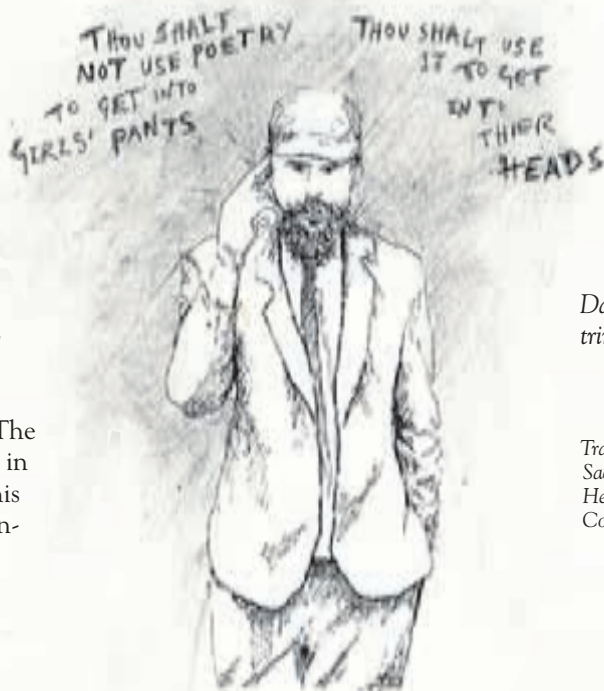
I'm just concerned with writing lyrics I can be proud of. It's great, and it's been surprising, that it's been welcomed into the commercial side of the music industry. The amount of airplay and support for something that is primarily left field has been amazing.

7. I'm sure you've been asked this many times before, but we just can't resist... are you 'just a band'?

Of course! I mean, we are barely even that since there are only two of us! Haha!

Scroobius Pip is a poet and musician. He often collaborates with Dan le Sac. We found him having his beard trimmed by David Shrigley's hairdresser.

Tracks to check out by Scroobius Pip and Dan le Sac: 'Thou Shalt Always Kill,' 'The Beat That My Heart Skipped'. And Scroobius Pip's album 'No Commercial Breaks'.





Holiday Beach Novel Frontispiece by Michael Lovett

The stars are but stepping stones
A leap of Faith over the moon.
The sky was not the limit,
Because the space ; Limitless
boundless gawped. Like the
Ambition of the unholy hole inth' heart -
as sharp as the fire made of pure spunk.
Happiness! In the underbelly of stars,
Peace! On the skin of the moon,
Hope! In the jaws of nebulous holes.

Spunk by Kamal Hussain

Two Questions for Jens Lekman

What influenced your song 'Sweet Summer's Night on Hammer Hill'?

Hammer Hill (Hammarkullen in Swedish) is a suburb of Gothenburg, Sweden. I grew up there. During the 80s and early 90s it was known as the worst neighbourhood in the country, which wasn't entirely true, Hammer Hill did have a lot of problems with crime and violence but mostly it was a racist misconception based on the number of immigrants in the area which at one point exceeded 90% of the population. I had a bit of a rough time growing up there, but one night I walked out as the sun was set-

ting. You could smell the barbecues in the air from all the gardens and hear the carnival drummers practising for the big carnival in May, and I couldn't help but feel immensely happy with all my memories. There is also a song called 'Another Sweet Summer's Night on Hammer Hill' which deals a bit more with the darker side of it, but for the first one it was all joy.

What is your favourite summer memory?

My favourite summer memory was when I had just graduated and looked for somewhere to go that I could afford. All my friends had saved up money to go to London or Paris, but I didn't have a job and so I also didn't have any money. Finally I found a bus-trip to the Mosel

Valley of South Germany. It sounded fine to me, all accommodation and dinners included for the cheap price of 120 euros. So I went for it, only to find out it was a wine testing trip for seniors. Everyone was 60+ and the Mosel Valley is like Florida: just a lot of old people. I was so disappointed cause I wanted to party and meet girls and all that, but it turned into a really nice memory. The Mosel Valley is a really beautiful place, the Rhein River runs through it and I walked along it listening to my own songs on my walkman, dreaming of the future and burning my neck.

Jens Lekman is a Swedish singer/songwriter.

If you like 'Sweet Summer's Night on Hammer Hill', check out: 'The Opposite of Hallehujah,' 'Black Cab,' and 'I Saw her in the Anti-War Demonstration'.



→hey, have you seen Top Gun?






→→pack your bags, hot stuff, we're leaving on a jet plane...



→→cabin crew ready for landing



outta all your green
wordsshell bounced 'n split
moonbleamslit red ragged
running pemmican
'n the garden froze
broke tin faces
traces slept snow slap
finger traced
outta all

outta all by David Grundy

That was the August when it rained solidly.
Birds exploded from trees in an exclamation
that spattered across blotting paper sky.
We stared at the two-dimensional grey of clouds
squatting like Medieval heavens over Eden.

The edges of the day curled up and burnt into dusk,
with the noise of kids shouting at each other in the park,
and cars pulling up to the fish and chip van
before parking at the pub.
The grate of rain on double glazing.

In bungalows and semis, between sheets
that were changed every day and sheets
that were never changed at all;
under the lung-coloured pink of overworked sky

we fucked with Californian accents,
your mouth hot against my ear.

Estate by Hannah Bass

Dear Auntie Amy



I'm so glad you got your column back: it's a great column. I thought I'd write in to note firstly that, and secondly my problem. I'm a historian just through with exams and now beginning to stress about May Week. I'm pretty sure it'll be all "drugs and big picnics", and I don't like either. Last year I blew all my money on a ticket to rainy John's and then I didn't have enough to buy the right shoes. I of course then spent most of the night worrying about my 'downstairs' (using 'downstairs' here to mean 'shoes'). This year I thought I'd avoid that problem by not buying any ball tickets, so that means I have absolutely no plans. I'm worried I'll stay in and do nothing and be miserable.

Please make me better by Suicide Sunday (or at least the 16th), Sam.

Dear Sam,

Well to start with: well done for admitting that you have a problem.

May week can be tough, Sam. Like the popular Christmas/Hanukah it can be astonishingly hyped-up. But unlike Christmas/Hanukkah, it usually doesn't match this hype. In fact, during May Week people often wish it was actually December, since that would mean it definitely wasn't May Week, or even June at all. These people are, however, in the minority. 99% of all Cambridge students love May Week. Now my dearie, I'm going to place you in that leftover 1% and give you some practical tips for coping with that motherly (or should I say auntilly!!!!) charm you've missed, my dearie.

First of all, try not to worry too much. Second, in the event of worrying too much, make alternative and superior plans. For instance, if you're annoyed about a bash you're not able to attend, try hosting your own rival event. I remember in my first year at Cambridge having another Trinity May Ball in my own bedroom at King's. Similar measure should be sufficient to conquer your misery, dearie.

With love from your

Auntie Amy

Yikes! I'm completely consumed by envy. My best friend, Laura (not her real name, which actually Kate) is totally perfect, and that makes her at least seven times better than me. She's pretty, clever and confident and she dresses better than anyone I know, including our other friend Paula! Her hair's like heaven and she always has the cool guys falling in love with her. This week loads of them are taking her to balls and garden parties, plus I reckon she'll probably get a first. What shall I do about my dark thoughts?

Love

Sue

Dear Sue,

Gosh, your friend does sound amazing; I'd quite like to be her too. But Sue, such feelings never do anyone any favours. Though I'm awfully good in most ways, envy is also one of my weaknesses (yes it's true!). I make myself feel better about it by convincing myself that it's not my fault at all. Really, it's my friend Freya's, as she's so much taller and is always getting compliments about it. 'Freya you're so lovely and tall aren't you Freya?', being the worst.

Now, having accepted that we are both jealous-enviers, the next step is to find ways of dealing with it. I recommend reminding yourself of three things: firstly, that there will always be someone way better than you (facto of lifeum); secondly that you have will many, many virtues which deserve more time being focused on; and thirdly, that this girl must have some bad points somewhere that you can dwell on instead (if she's anything like Freya, she's a dippy one and also reads Tolkien).

If you find that you're the type who does compare yourself to others, without telling them so, find some new friends who definitely aren't better. Placing yourself at a happy medium on any life-scale is always so comfy I find.

With fondness and a new warmth having been so helpful,
Your

Auntie Amy

Auntie Amy Hoggart

SIDE A

- 1) THE STANDELLS - DIRTY WATER (1965)
- 2) MARLENA SHAW - CALIFORNIA JOL (1968)
- 3) OS MUTANTES - A MINHA MENINA (1968)
- 4) CARIBOU - MELODY DAY (2007)
- 5) THE ZOMBIES - TIME OF THE SEASON (1968)
- 6) THE IMPRESSIONS - YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING SADIE (1976)
- 7) LOVE - MAYBE THE PEOPLE WOULD BE THE TIMES OR BETWEEN CLARK AND HILLDALE (1967)
- 8) DAVID BOWIE - PANIC IN DETROIT (1973)
- 9) SAM COOKE - CHAIN GANG (1960)
- 10) THE BEACH BOYS - FEEL FLOWS (1971)

SUMMER MIXTAPE

SIDE B

- 1) NICK DRAKE - HAZY JANE II (1970)
- 2) THE FACES - OOH LA LA (1973)
- 3) MINNIE RIPPERTON - LES FLEURS (1970)
- 4) DEVENDRA BANHART - CRIPPLE CROW (2005)
- 5) BRIGHT BLACK MORNING LIGHT - EVERYBODY DAYLIGHT (2006)
- 6) BOARDS OF CANADA - ROYALTY (1998)
- 7) NAS - MEMORY LANE (SITTIN' IN DA PARK) (1994)
- 8) THE AVALANCHES - EXTRA KINGS (2000)
- 9) GUY BORATTO - BEAUTIFUL LIFE (2007)

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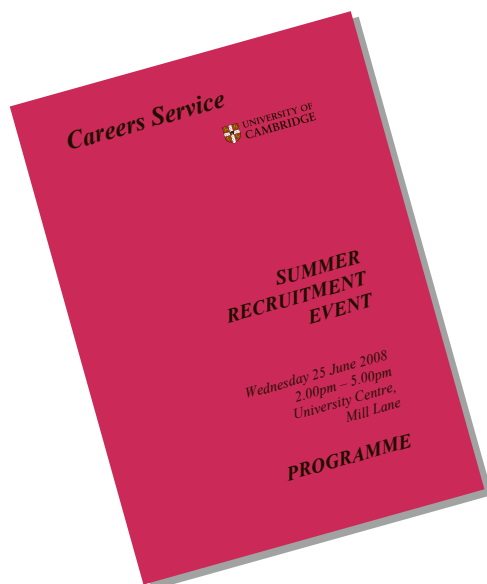


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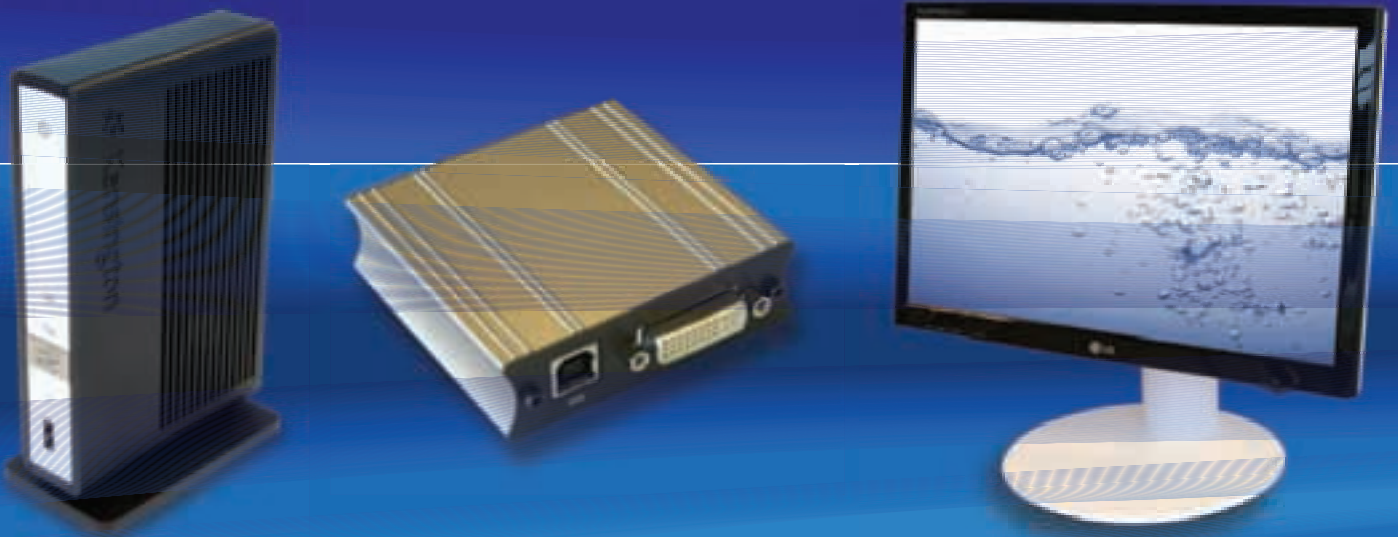
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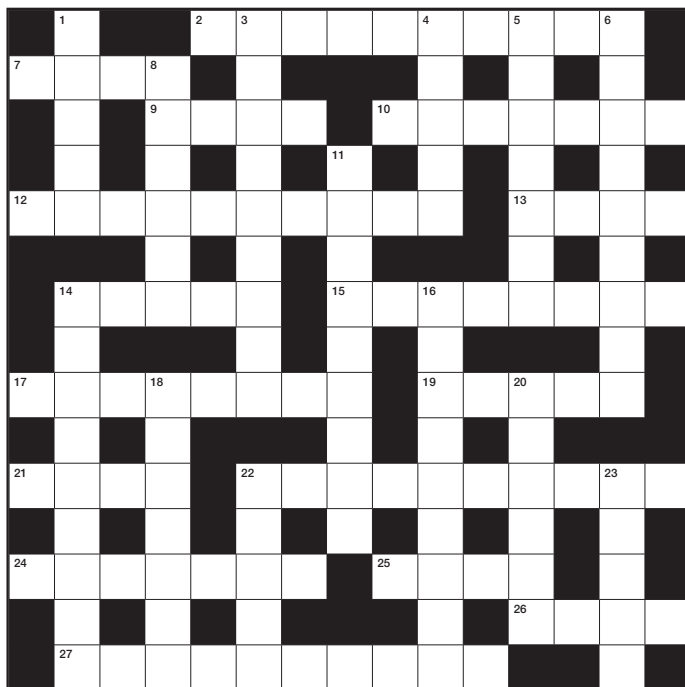
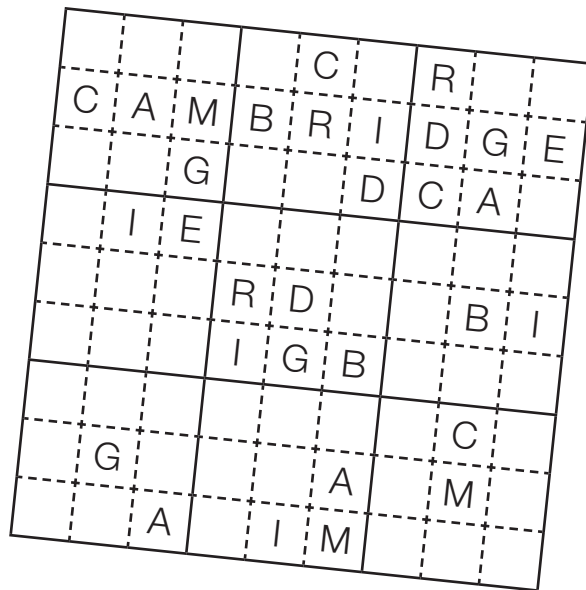
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GAMES TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH...



Set by Ed Thornton

Crossword answers on page 26

Across:

2. Racecar or a Toyota? It's the same either way. (10)
7. Hindu dress confuses a Sir. (4)
9. C sharp? Tone is all wrong. (4)
10. Ace settings for roads. (7)
12. Pretending to be someone else in bed? (10)
13. Even goes and odd gays make up this sordid revelry. (4)
14. Throw away turn? It's a numbers game. (5)
15. Terrible golf line remains until death. (8)
17. Dodgy carny led a wash without any water. (3,5)
19. Sleep with podgy extremities and a diaper. (5)
21. It is said to scare away fire when there is no time. (4)
22. Practices – listens again with a fifty second ending. (10)
24. Balthazar ran Germany concealing order. (7)
25. Rodents return for the sun? (4)
26. Pull an American? (4)
27. Answer: C-H-E-C-K – Question: It can help with lettering? (5-5)

Down:

1. Possess northern safe house. (5)
3. Drama then I strangle for this – it gives us its heart. (9)
4. Frogman initially drowned in very exciting rescue. (5)
5. Possess a target to shoot yourself in the foot? (3,4)
6. Come out of New York with the first critical dilemma. (9)
8. Apprentice is apparently queuing. (6)
11. Molten rock rises, can he alter mud slide? (9)
14. Graphs except maps. (3,6)
16. Fat cats in trouble, brilliant! (9)
18. Choir find aluminium in mineral deposit under church. (7)
20. Try to loose time after what has happened to Danish? (6)
22. Royal beer is returning. (5)
23. Fibbing concealed by ally in Germany



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OVERHEARD ON THE BACKS.—A MAY-WEEK POSER.

"What made the Venetians christen their bridge after yours?"

