



## Lifestyle

Our resident medic and alcoholic talk guavas and cavas. Page 19



## Fashion

Block your frocks off Page 16



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# VARSITY

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

## Fake 'Oxbridge educations' for sale over the internet

» Varsity continues BBC investigation and finds 'bogus Uni' trading on Cambridge name

ISABEL SHAPIRO  
News Editor

In early January a BBC investigation culminated with the expose of the "bogus" Irish International University (IIU). The pseudo-academic organisation had been renting rooms in Oxbridge colleges and institutions for seminars and awards ceremonies, using the Oxbridge location to lend value to their otherwise worthless degrees. Varsity has uncovered another organisation, registered to the same names and addresses as the institutions "outed" by the BBC, which is still trading in "dodgy" degrees from its internet site. The "European Business School Cambridge" (EBSC) has rented a succession of rooms in Cambridge institutions to hold its "award ceremonies" and seminars, even conning Cambridge academics into speaking at its seminars before trading on their presence there.

The EBSC's registered address with Companies House is 8a, King's Parade, in fact the offices of Walker's Solicitors. "Singh, Hardeep Professor" is listed as the Director of the firm, the same man who was listed as executive of the IIU when it was outed by the BBC. It is accredited by the "Quality Assurance Commission - UK", registered under the perhaps appropriate acronym of "QAC - UK", a body which is also owned by Dr Hardeep Singh Sandhu and operates out of a small "dingy" office in North London. The QAC-UK is registered to a small bungalow in the commuter village of Great Bookham, Surrey.

The EBSC offers a variety of "qualifications" on its website including a "Professional Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)" and a "Euro MBA". To gain a DBA from the EBSC candidates are required to produce a "thesis", which can cover any area from Marketing and Finance to Law and Sport, as well as prepare an article for pub-

lication. These requirements are the same as were asked for by the IIU; the coursework for which was found to be somewhat lacking in academic merit when examined by bona fide academic Prof. John Arnold of Loughborough University. Arnold described the qualifications as "worthless and bogus."

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland have been attempting to stop the IIU using the word "university" in its title for several years because it lacks any sort of proper accreditation. The same issues apply to the EBSC, essentially an IIU "sister-organisation", which had attempted to lend academic kudos to its "seminar programme"

by using Cambridge venues such as Peterhouse, Downing and the Judge Business School.

Photographs on the EBSC's website clearly show "graduates" of the EBSC posing in front of the Judge Institute as they celebrated their achievement. In a statement issued to Varsity the Judge admitted: "In 2004 and 2005 Judge Business School contracted to provide a number of sessions of the IIU's European Business School Cambridge residential programme." However, a spokesperson for the Judge explained that they had stopped dealing with both the IIU and the EBSC sometime ago when they realised the true nature of the

organisations.

Varsity has also discovered that the EBSC hired Cambridge academics to host sessions, giving presentations in which the Cambridge and EBSC logo were displayed next to each other. Dr Philip Stiles, a senior lecturer at the Judge, is pictured on the EBSC website giving a Powerpoint presentation to a seminar group. Staff dealing with the IIU and EBSC issue had been previously unaware of Mr Stile's involvement until informed by Varsity. Ms Aislinn Ryan, on behalf of the Judge, said "I think something's been misconstrued somewhere along the line." When questioned by Varsity over the po-

tential involvement of other Cambridge academics, she said: "There are so many different lines. I can't name specific names." A formal statement from the Judge, while coming to Stiles' defence, also confirmed that other academics were implicated: "Some academics from the business school were involved in good faith in providing some of the courses."

Although currently lecturing in Amsterdam, Dr Stiles managed to briefly contact Varsity to express his surprise and dismay at the issue, explaining he had little concept of the EBSC's credentials at the time. At time of going to press the EBSC is still trading.

## Debate

Are illegal immigrants entitled to treatment on the NHS?

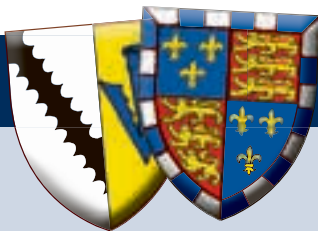
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## Face Off

Sidney Sussex take on Christ's in the fit stakes

» Page 18



## Interview

Wikipedia founder, Jimmy Wales, tells us about his encyclopaedic revolution.

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In Brief

Spot-the-paedophile?

Cambridge University researchers claim they have developed “uncannily accurate” software that can recognise internet predators. Crisp Thinkings boasts that its “Anti-Grooming Engine” checks chat room conversations so that “Groomers can’t beat the system or outwit the algorithms, as that would be like trying to dodge their own shadow”. Professor Bill Fitzgerald, head of research at the Department of Engineering’s Signal Processing Laboratory, lead the research for this product and found it to be 98.4 per cent effective in recognizing adult internet abusers with sexual motives. It is not clear how such research was conducted. One student, who wished to remain anonymous, told Varsity “I met one of my best friends from my internet blog. I don’t think that meeting people on the internet is always dreadful - you’ve just got to be careful”.

Alex Glasner

Beer bottle brawl

Police were called to the Soul Tree nightclub at around midnight on Sunday night following an incident at the CUSU-run night Shut Up and Dance. A 19-year-old student was arrested on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm, having assaulted a fellow student with a bottle. He was later released in the early hours of Monday morning with no charge due to insufficient evidence. The two parties involved are said to have been from Peterhouse and Christ’s, but the events leading up to the attack remain unclear.

Isabel Shapiro

French Invasion

A Magdalene marshal has alerted students to a mystery man acting strangely around college. Separate reports have been made, both sighting the suspicious behaviour of a man who is thought to be French. He has been described as a white middle-aged male of stocky build, dressed in a red check shirt, a dark lumber jacket and a white head scarf. The second sighting was said to be a scruffy man of similar description, wearing white gloves. Both individuals were professed to have been speaking French at the time of their intrusion. An MML student from Magdalene, is very perturbed: “If only I had been there to translate his mutterings. Only then might we get to the bottom of this.”

Isabel Shapiro

Hours, A-levels and Access: still the same old story?

MIKE KIELTY AND TOM MORIARTY

A recently published study showing that two thirds of British Students now gain a first or a 2:1 has given rise to fears amongst Cambridge students that they may be at risk of being short-changed.

The Higher Education Policy Institute report shows that whilst the average student in England spends around 25 hours a week working, Cambridge students who achieved a first or 2:1 put in an average of 41.9 hours’ work. The divide is most marked between the Russell Group’ of twenty top universities and the institutions that became universities after 1992.

CUSU President Mark Fletcher reflected many students’ assumption that “employers are fully aware of the value of having “Cantab” after your name. Deloitte, one of the major companies employing Cambridge students,

insists that they make no distinction between different universities, while Ernst and Young’s declared that the current

rent marking system is “not fit for purpose.”

These revelations follow the Russell Group’s recent release of a list of twenty “soft” A-levels of which the Group recommends applicants take only one. Cambridge published a similar list in 2006.

There are concerns that such a list might have an effect on access programmes. Dr Brendan Burchell who is responsible for Magdalene’s access scheme, often finds that students “think they’ve

“It may well be that the Russell Group universities don’t want creatively thinking undergraduates”

kept their options open, but in reality they’ve cut them off” by studying a broad range of subjects.

Although Dr Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions at Cambridge, welcomed the publication of the list, which would result in “students in secondary schools receiving better advice,” he admitted that the guidelines were “a barrier to wider participation” for students who “are not receiving appropriate advice when choosing their A-level subjects”.

But Prof. John Ellis, head of Media Arts at Royal Holloway, claimed that list suggests an “implied snobbery” within universities. He argued that the Russell Group should be concentrating on encouraging changes to the subject’s syllabus, and that

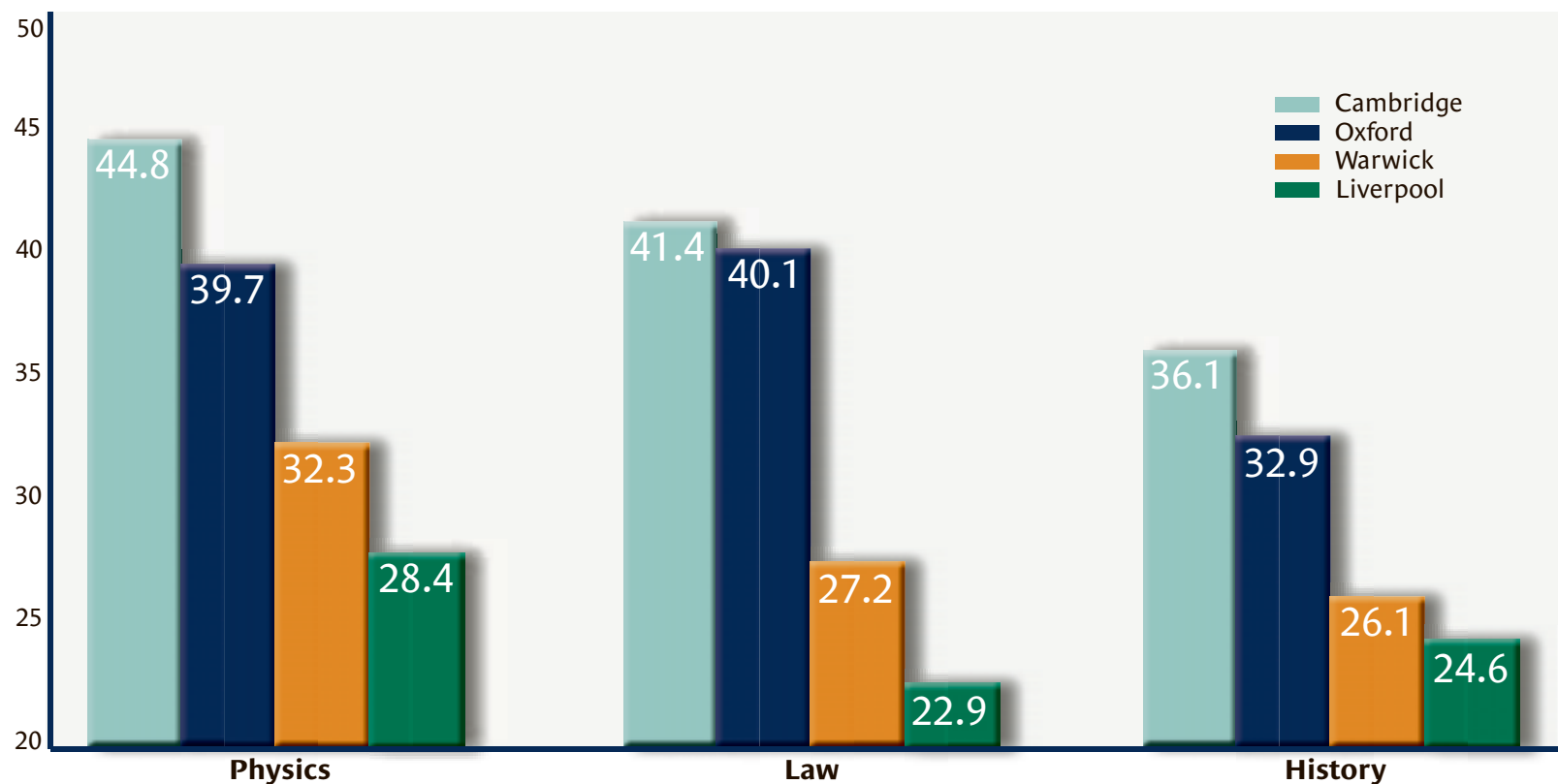
Media Studies demands different skills from more traditional A-Levels. He added “it may well be that the Russell Group universities don’t want creatively thinking undergraduates.”

OCR representative Bene’t Steinberg told Varsity “OCR goes to great lengths to ensure that the standard of all A-Levels is equivalent” and suggested that the Russell Group’s decision to treat qualifications differently is indicative only of the “personal views of admissions tutors.”

The admissions controversy has deepened following a report by the Sutton Trust showing what Sir Peter Lampl, the Trust’s chairman, calls “alarming” misconceptions amongst state sector teachers regarding Oxbridge. A third of state sector teachers questioned believed that 20% of Oxbridge students are from the state sector, while the actual figure at Cambridge is 54%. Almost half said they would “never” or “rarely” advise their brightest students to apply to Oxbridge. Despite Cambridge charging the same fees to undergraduates as almost all universities in England, 56% thought that it was more expensive.

Cambridge has recognised that more needs to be done to dispel the “myths and misconceptions” surrounding Oxbridge, but although they underlined the work they do to tackle the issue, spending £3 million on access annually, they offered no new ideas for tackling the problem. In contrast, Oxford has already started a programme to inform student teachers about the financial support and opportunities available to Oxford students.

But Cambridge Admissions implied that the cause of the misconceptions lies outside the University. Dr. Geoff Parks noted that teachers are the “key influencers” of young people; “It is vital that the advice they give is based on up-to-date and accurate information,” he said. Mike Robinson, the Admissions Officer at Magdalene, revealed that teachers on College open days “have openly said to their students “This place isn’t for you.”



The ‘soft’ A-levels

- Accounting
- Art and design
- Business studies
- Communication studies
- Dance
- Design and technology
- Drama and theatre studies
- Film studies
- Health and social care
- Home economics
- Information and communication technology
- Leisure studies
- Media studies
- Music technology
- Performance studies
- Performing arts
- Photography
- Physical education
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# Bristol's examination Blues

» Bristol Grammar pupils sit Cambridge-devised "1858 exam" to celebrate 150th anniversary of exams

KATHERINE SIRRELL  
News Editor

The sight of Flashman fag-roasting a selection of small boys over the fire would hardly have seemed incongruous at Bristol Grammar on Tuesday afternoon. To 'celebrate' the 150th anniversary of the University of Cambridge Long Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) pupils up and down the country will be subjected to a replica 150-year old examination. Bristol Grammar's exam, overseen by an actor in full early-Victorian schoolmaster's attire, will soon be repeated at schools in Warwick, Saffron Walden and Uxtoxeter. These schools were chosen because they were amongst the first to sit the original exams in 1858.

Eager pupils were tested in Preliminary Arithmetic, Geography, the Outlines of English History, English Composition and Practical Chemistry. In

Geography, the latter-day Tom Browns were instructed to "describe in words the coastline of England from the mouth of the Thames to the mouth of the Severn" and to "name the towns on the banks of the Rhone". In His-

**"Pupils had to learn information by heart. Today, examiners require students to analyse facts"**

tory, "date and give the names of the persons principally connected with" events such as the "Martyrdom of Ridley", the "Trial and Execution of Strafford" and the "Capture of Montrose". Celebrations continue with the launch of a book on the history of exams, an online exhibition of archive material and a visit to Cambridge by Prince Philip. The year will end with the anniversary of the first UCLES exam on 14 December, when extracts from a collection of Victorian exam questions will be published.

Andrew Watts, Director at Cambridge Assessment and author of a chapter on school exams from the board's commemorative book, believes that standards nowadays are very different: "Pupils had to learn vast amounts of information by heart. Today, however, examiners require students to analyse facts and dem-

onstrate their understanding of a subject."

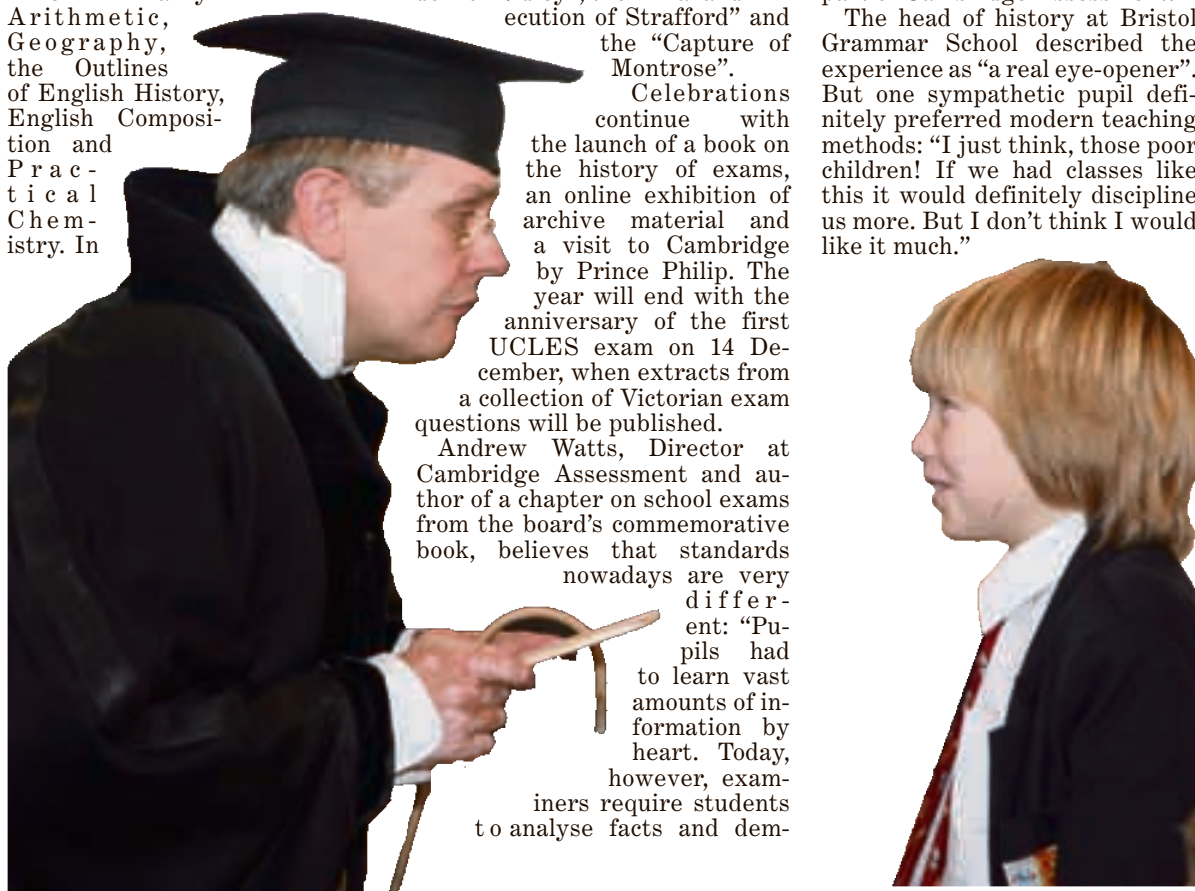
The results from the Bristol pupils were unavailable at time of going to press, but Varsity challenged current Cambridge undergraduates to sit the questions relating to their own subjects. Downing Geographer Alex Przewozniak scored a miserable 26%, describing the paper as "absolutely impossible" whilst fellow map-lover James Trafford of St Catherine's (who last year came top of Tripos with a double-starred 1st) scored a marginally higher 35%.

The Long Examinations Syndicate was established to raise standards in education by inspecting schools and administering exams for people who were not members of the University. Today's successor to the 1858 exams are those run by OCR, which is a part of Cambridge Assessment.

The head of history at Bristol Grammar School described the experience as "a real eye-opener". But one sympathetic pupil definitely preferred modern teaching methods: "I just think, those poor children! If we had classes like this it would definitely discipline us more. But I don't think I would like it much."

## Some more essay titles suggested by the UCLES

1. Objections have been raised to the Bible, on the ground that some passages are contradictory to Science. Mention any passages objected to on this ground. How would you answer all such objections?
2. Discuss the change produced in the habits of the people by Railways.
3. Discuss the difference of English life and manners at the present time from what they were at any period from A.D. 1485 to 1660.
4. Some persons complain that it is difficult to believe in miracles. Show that it is much more difficult to believe that Christianity could have been established without them.





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## ISSUE 11 OUT NOW

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# Oxbridge shun academies

RICHARD POWER SAYEED  
News Editor

Cambridge and Oxford Universities have rejected government proposals that they sponsor academies created by the 2006 scheme.

Cambridge originally justified its refusal to subsidise these independent but publicly funded schools by highlighting the potential “conflict of interest” which could arise when students from a Cambridge-sponsored academy applied to the University. However, Lord Harris of Peckham, a Tory donor who has sponsored six academies and the newest Oxford college, told Varsity that he was “very surprised that Oxbridge don’t want to sponsor academies”. Lord Harris, whose wife is an honorary fellow of Lucy Cavendish, said “I sponsor primaries; that doesn’t mean that children from those schools are going to get into the secondary academies.”

But the University argued on Wednesday that the problem with academy sponsorship is “not so much a conflict of interest, but more that it would distort the local market.” Since the aim of the Government’s Academies scheme is to encourage competition between schools, so that unpopular schools close, this could be interpreted as a veiled criticism

of government policy.

Mike Younger, Head of the Cambridge Faculty of Education, also expressed concerns about academy sponsorship. Though “not against academies per se”, he feared that there is “considerable state funding” going to “schools outside public control”, and that academy sponsors may not receive “sufficient vetting”.

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for

## Cambridge believe academies could distort the market

Children, Schools and Families, admitted last month that the government had been “pushing pretty hard” for any universities to sponsor city academies. At present eight further higher education institutions have taken up the offer.

Cambridge has said that it is considering “limited involvement” with academies, but University documents leaked to The Guardian mention the potential for “failure of the academy [and] private sponsorship difficulties”. The Guardian article

also quoted Sir Cyril Taylor, the government’s chief adviser on academies, as suggesting that universities’ expertise lay in “research and development”, and not in “taking over schools”. However, the University told Varsity that the possibility that it might be incapable of running an academy effectively “hasn’t even been considered” and that the Guardian’s claims were “wholly erroneous”.

Mike Younger defended the the University, arguing that sponsorship of an academy is neither necessary nor desirable. He said that the Faculty of Education has “built up a very good partnership” with around 180 schools in the region, through its Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme which “trains teachers and contributes to state education”. Arguing that sponsoring an academy would spoil the University’s relationship with other schools, Mr Younger said he would have been “disappointed if the University took a position that gave a privileged position to two or three of these schools.”

After the Oxbridge refusal to sponsor an academy was leaked to the press, head teachers from local schools contacted Mike Younger to express their support and approval for the University’s decision.



CAMBRIDGE EVENING NEWS

# Rorke’s Biro

ISABEL SHAPIRO  
News Editor

An engineer who stole a historic Zulu pen from University Library has been shopped to the police by his vengeful ex-girlfriend. William Harmer, of Comberton, Cambridge, took the “unique object” from the Cambridge University Library whilst working there as a book-runner between 2002 and 2004.

The theft remained undiscovered until Harmer’s ex-girlfriend

and a police report issued on December 14 2007 said that the pen was of ‘huge sentimental value’. Harmer told the Cambridge Magistrates Court last Thursday that he took the pen as recompense for docked holiday pay he believed he should have received. Now aged 22 and a qualified mechanical engineer, he described his behaviour as “totally stupid”, and attributed it to immaturity.

## Harmer described his behaviour as “totally stupid”

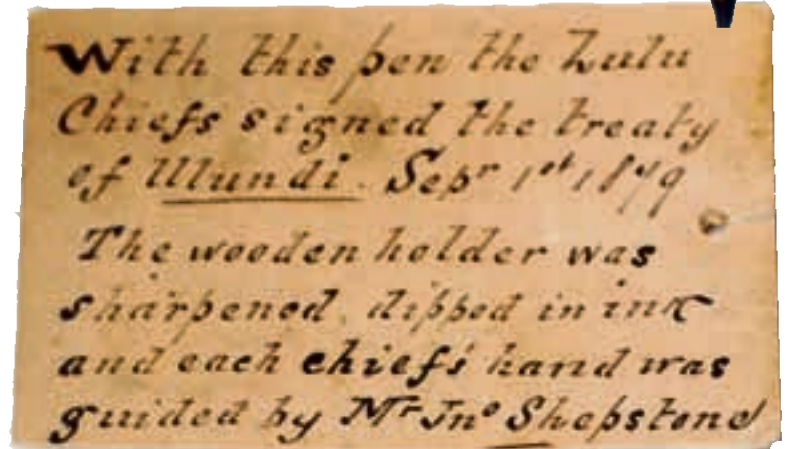
apparently tipped off police in an act of revenge after their relationship ended. Police then found the historical stationary in a drawer in Harmer’s home on December 12. Experts have valued the pen at between £1000 and £10,000, but described its historical significance as “priceless”. It was used to sign the Treaty of Ulundi on September 1 1879, which ended the Anglo-Zulu war, famous for battles such as that at Rorke’s Drift.

Rachel Rowe, of the Royal Commonwealth Society, said that the pen was “yet to be catalogued in detail” but was a “unique object”,

Gregory Hayman, a spokesman for the University, said that “the appropriate checks had been carried out” on Harmer. He mentioned that ‘a certain amount of trust must be placed in staff’.

The presiding magistrate Elaine Durham fined former scout leader Harmer £250 plus £75 in costs. The pen has since been restored to the University Library. DC Henry Wiley said that the police are “very pleased to be able to reunite it with its rightful owner”.

Despite efforts to contact Harmer’s ex-girlfriend by Varsity, she remained unavailable for comment.



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# Prof can buy you 14 years

CAITLIN BREEZE

Drinking in moderation, not smoking, eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and exercising could extend your lifespan by 14 years, claimed a recent study led by Kay-Tee Khaw, Professor of Clinical Gerontology in Cambridge and Fellow of Gonville and Caius.

A team of academics monitored 20,244 healthy 45-79 year-old men and women in Norfolk over eleven years, gathering information on their lifestyle habits from a series of questionnaires. The participants were graded on a simple points scale between 0 and 4, which award them one point for each of the four healthy habits they incorporated into their lives. After noting the mortality rate at the end of experiment, researchers concluded that people who scored zero were four times more likely to have died than those whose lifestyle ticked all four boxes. Perhaps even more shockingly, the research also suggests that a person with zero points, and who lived in blissful ignorance of all these health measures, had the same risk of dying as somebody fourteen years older with top marks.

It would be easy to dismiss these findings as yet another hyped-up story in a media awash with scientific



Professor Kay-Tee Khaw: increase your life span by 14 years

studies promising the formula for a longer life. Similar research projects include the 1999 Neurology study which advocated marriage in order to live longer, and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's 'church-going' study, which concluded that weekly attendance at religious services upped your life expectancy. Professor Khaw argues her study differs from the rest in that it simply aimed to quantify the effects of making "simple, feasible changes within the usual range of daily activity and lifestyle". But the healthy living website The Daily Green was more sceptical, stating that "there's nothing earth shattering here", a sentiment which a Cantabrigian Nat-sci echoes: "It's not exactly news to us, is it?"

It is more than probable that the student lifestyle wouldn't score so highly on Khaw's scale, so should we all write our wills and prepare ourselves for imminent death? Professor Khaw stressed that the study applied to middle-aged and older people and that the results could be different for students. As of yet, Khaw's research cannot confirm whether a permanent lifestyle overhaul could turn back the hands of time and give us a new lease of life. Nevertheless, the findings of this study may just give us that extra incentive to stick to our soon forgotten new year's resolutions.

## Pembroke go vegan

ISABEL SHAPIRO  
News Editor

A pioneering catering manager from Oregon has introduced a unique new menu at Pembroke buttery. The ambitious departure from standard hall fodder was made earlier this week and has quickly come to be known as "Super Trough", a phrase coined by Pembroke students.

Inspired by his Spanish wife and following Jamie Oliver's lead, David Harwood has created a free-range feast of vegan tapas to boost the brainpower and trim the waistlines of Pembroke students. Diners choose two or three dishes from an impressive array of dairy-free vegetarian options, made from locally sourced and free-range produce. From sushi to the more authentic patatas bravas, all tastes are catered for. Running

a close second to St Catharine's as the first fair-trade accredited Cambridge college, Harwood can now claim to have created "the first and only cafeteria of its kind in the country."

But for those of us who are more inclined to shirk vegan fare and hot-foot it to the Van of Life, Harwood is keen to point out he hasn't done away with all indulgences. "We provide individual sachets of butter and pots of grated cheese for those who want them", and there are still a few of the old favourites; chips and puddings alongside the new spread.

The queues were long and the plates scraped clean, so what do Pembrokiens make of it? "It's amazing!" shouts a satisfied veggie. Her fellow diner is slightly more skeptical: "I feel sorry for whoever's got to do all the washing up. It's the same as before, but in smaller dishes."



Pembroke students eagerly await new menu



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## Grand Arcade opening date set

The Grand Arcade shopping centre is due to open in ten weeks' time. The £240 million centre will contain fifty-two new shops including large retailers entirely new to Cambridge such as Ted Baker, LK Bennet, Swarovski, Hobbs, Phase Eight, G-star, The White Company, Coast, Jane Norman and Hugo Boss, as well as restaurants such as Carluccio's, Costa Coffee and Starbucks. Topshop will open as a three-story shop, complementing the new designer stores with high-street bargains which Lidia de Luca, the Arcade's Marketing Manager, hopes "will put fashion back on the map in Cambridge." Laurence Chadwick, retail Projects Director at Grosvenor believes that "the Grand Arcade has already delivered significant benefits to the city and we all await the opening in March 2008." Not everyone is so positive, however. One local resident recently complained that "there is no need for more shops or parking spaces and they detract from the ambience that the buildings and cobbled streets create. Cambridge should not be commercialised."

Hannah Marshall



# Landlords lash out

» Cambridge students have been left disgusted and upset at their treatment by local pub landlords

» In two separate incidents, students enjoying drinks at the Fort St George and The Mill were physically and verbally abused

ISABEL SHAPIRO AND CLEMENTINE DOWLEY

## The Mill

Luke Barbanneau, an undergraduate suffering from Cerebral Palsy, was with friends at The Mill on Monday when he was accused of faking his disability and physically assaulted by landlord Julian McCann.

Barbanneau told Varsity: "The owner came over and talked to us. He seemed drunk, but friendly. He asked who looked after me and I replied that I looked after myself." Having walked away from the table looking "perturbed", McCann later returned, and "without warning" picked Barbanneau up by the collar and dragged him along the floor. Ian Corder, who witnessed part of the assault, reports seeing Barbanneau "lying on the floor by the door."

According to onlookers, McCann thought that Barbanneau was pretending to be disabled. Mischa Foxell, a friend of Barbanneau, said that McCann "repeatedly yelled that Luke was 'playing a game' even when my friends and I pointed out his mobility scooter." She added "It was appalling to see him being treated like that."

'Boycott The Mill', a facebook group created following the incident, currently stands at 1,000 members.

When Varsity visited The Mill on Tuesday evening, McCann left the premises in visible distress. Asked where he had gone, his bar staff joked "he's in his office", showing reporters to the Granta Bar next door. Standing at the bar with a drink in hand, McCann gave an "off the record" but in depth account of the incident, an act he feels was reprehensible. Devastated, desperate and close to tears, he asked Varsity reporters to leave.

The following day Bill Hainsworth, Operations Director of the Passionate Pubs Company which owns The Mill, told Varsity that McCann is "no longer part of the business" and is "suspended pending a full company investigation." It has since been revealed that McCann has received a police caution for assault.

## The Fort St George

Four individuals, who wish to remain anonymous, claim to have suffered a "torrent of abuse" from landlord Ronan McLister as they enjoyed a quiet drink at the Fort

venturing to guess that he may have used "excessive language." A fellow barman claimed not to have witnessed the event, but added "I just heard the shouting from out the back, while I was having a fag". McLister has refused to comment. However, a source has revealed to Varsity that having recently handed in his resignation, he will leave the Fort St George next month.

## Hypocrisy

Both the Mill and the Fort St George are members of the Cambridge branch of the national Pubwatch scheme run by licensees to guard against disorderly and criminal behaviour in pubs. When the Cambridge News reported this week that drink induced incidents in local pubs are soaring, Tracy Ferguson, the manager of the Fort St George and singled out as a leading member of Pubwatch, commented with concern: "It is very difficult to prevent incidents happening."

But what if it is the publicans, not their patrons, who cause the problems? PC Peter Sinclair from the Cambridge Licensing Authority told Varsity: "Where there's been questionable behaviour from licensees in the past, Pubwatch have taken a very dim view." The Licensing Authority is dealing with the complaint made against the Fort St George.

Elsewhere, other Cambridge landlords are eager to stress the value they place in their student drinkers. Vincent Castiglione, who has run his pub The Maypole with his father Mario for the past 25 years, thinks such aggressive behaviour from fellow publicans is "absolutely crazy." The Castigliones have rarely had trouble with their university locals and Vincent assures: "Most students are extremely nice people."

## "I hope you fall off your bikes and die"

St George last week.

As the four were about to leave, they were questioned as to why they had no drinks. Several beverages had already been bought by the party over the course of the evening. Despite their protestation, the group alleges that the landlord began to swear at them "in a drunken fashion."

They claim he shouted: "Fuck off you fucking bony-arsed c--ts!", and proceeded to remove their table and to attempt to push one girl towards the door. The group feels that they were particularly targeted because of their student status and the fact that they had been talking about books. McLister is said to have declared "This is not a library. It isn't Starbucks" and on their exit from the pub, "I hope you fall off your bikes and die."

In response to these allegations, one barman from the Fort St George, who was not present at the event, seemed unsurprised and distinctly amused by his employer's behaviour, even





## Queens’ Liquid troubles

A certain Queens’ gent, infamous for innumerable previous disgraces, surpassed them all in the space of a few weeks over the Christmas break. On the Varsity trip he distinguished himself by first seducing a girl, conveniently dressed as Jane of the Jungle, and subsequently consummating their new-found relationship. During this process, suspecting a higher than normal level of moisture downstairs, said Romeo looked down to discover blood everywhere - his own. It soon dawned on him that a certain portion of his johnson (‘banjo string’, fact fans) had been severed. It allegedly took some weeks to recover.

Some weeks later, on the Queens’ Ski Trip, the same chap, after a heavy night on the lash, fell asleep on his bed. In the middle of the night, when nature called, he stood up and pissed on the aforementioned bed. Undeterred, he jumped back into the sodden bed and spent the rest of the night there. As if this wasn’t enough, he soiled himself again a few days later. In his own words, “My trousers didn’t smell of piss, but my jumper did.” Watch this space - we suspect this won’t be the last of his misadventures.

## Trinity Hall

### Ice cold comedian

A smitten young student took his city-slicking lover for an afternoon of wintry wonder at Somerset House. Holding his sweetheart tight and strutting his stuff on the rink, he thought he’d struck gold, Torvill and Dean style. Until, that is, with one over ambitious figure of eight, he let his partner go flying. Hours in A&E and one severe case of concussion later, the hapless Casanova was cruelly shunned for his perilous pretence of skating prowess.

## Wolfson

### A warm response

An unfortunate dame, moved to a state of intoxication by her boyfriend with some interesting cigarettes, found herself the next morning sleeping naked beside his best mate. Before she could fully comprehend her error, she heard the voice of her bedfellow’s girlfriend loudly demanding to be let in, and found herself bundled into a cupboard. Several minutes later, when his ‘true-love’ had left, the brute opened the closet, only to find that his new trick had made her revenge: she was asleep in the cupboard, surrounded by a pool of urine.

# Cambridge on the rocks

TOTO REISSLAND-BURGHART

Following the success of the ice skating on Parker’s Piece this Christmas, the University ice hockey team coach Professor Bill Harris is spearheading a campaign for a permanent ice rink. He wants one to be included in the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan.

Harris, whose own father led the team to victory in the Varsity cup match of 1913, pointed out that despite being one of the oldest ice hockey teams in the world and able to trace its roots back to 1885, the nearest ice rink on which Cambridge can train is over 40

miles away in Peterborough.

A Facebook group set up by Cambridge students in 2006 “demanding that the university give us an ice rink”, points out that “we would do a lot better in kicking the dark blues arses in Varsity ice hockey if we could actually play in Cambridge”. It also claims that in 1989 the University was left £1 million to fund an ice rink for the city’s students, which has remained unspent to this day.

Local residents have greeted Harris’ campaign with enthusiasm. Lizzie Davidson, owner of Cambridge on Ice, the company respon-

sible for operating the temporary rink, organised a questionnaire over Christmas which claimed there was a “clear demand for a permanent rink”. Of the 38,000 skaters who visited the temporary rink on Parkers Piece between 24 November 2007 and 6 January 2008, 90% stated that they wanted a permanent rink, with 41% going so far as to say that they would visit it more than once a month.

Depending on the success of the proposals, Cambridge could have a permanent rink within 3 years. While the majority of students and local residents have eagerly greeted

the possibility of a permanent rink, some have expressed concern at the environmental impact such a development will have.

According to Michael Buick of Climate Care, the average ice rink emits 900 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, the equivalent of flying from London to New York 600 times. However, Cambridge City Council said that they will adhere to their environmental strategy when considering all new developments. But Professor Harris remains undeterred, insisting that “Cambridge is eventually going to have an ice rink”.



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# VARSLITY

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## A first class scam

There is a certain class of villain that attracts admiration. Such individuals are usually confined to the realm of fiction: Thomas Crown, Flashman, and to a lesser extent Sean Connery in Entrapment. But in the last few days, a new character has entered this infamous canon. The ludicrously named 'Baron Knowth', a chartered account, who admits he bought his title and lives in the tax-free haven of Monaco, duped a string of Oxbridge colleges, as well as the vulnerable people on which he preyed, with his brainchild, the Irish International University.

The scam was an exemplary display of style over substance. Given the right backdrop, the appearance of authenticity - the IIU was accredited by QAC-UK Ltd and listed on the Department for Children, Schools and Families' website - and an industrial supply of mortar boards and flowing gowns, it demonstrated the power of illusion. The Baron's immortal and immoral genius is the entrepreneurial instinct that led him to take advantage of this fact. This man is obviously intelligent, enterprising and wily, skills highly sought after by employers. He may be a crook, but he's a damn clever one.

## A-Level playing field

The Russell Group has issued a list of 'soft' subjects. It is not without cause. One target, Home Economics, appears to have been plucked from the world of finishing schools and dropped into modern secondary education. Meanwhile, a sample examination paper from Edexcel in Leisure Studies begins with the scenario of a recent graduate who is looking for employment locally. The first task, for eight marks, asks candidates to "identify how Cath could find suitable job opportunities and explain why". It is an A Level less in Leisure Studies than Common Sense. Those who criticise the compilers of the list should focus their attention on the exam boards and not the universities themselves, where dumbing-down is rife. The 1858 exam paper, this week taken by students of Bristol Grammar School to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Cambridge Assessment Board, represents the lofty peaks from which they have fallen. Low standards have forced universities to discriminate. Raising them is the only solution.

Varsity has been Cambridge's independent student newspaper since 1947, and distributes 10,000 free copies to every Cambridge college and to ARU each week.

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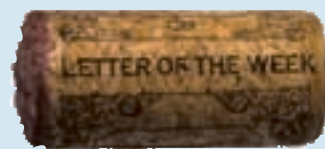
## LETTERS

letters@varsity.co.uk

### Teacher training

Sir,

It is surprisingly common at Cambridge to hear that someone's teacher or school not only didn't support them during their application but also tried actively to discourage them from applying. At least when the story is told here we have the comfort of knowing that the application succeeded anyway, but what about the numerous others who perhaps took that advice and didn't apply, or whose applications were weakened because their school wasn't able or willing to help them in the right way? Coupled to the other side of the story - those who simply wouldn't be here without the support and encouragement of one or several teachers - it is clear that teachers are absolutely vital to the university's efforts to attract more applications from state school students. After all, just one dedicated teacher making the effort to identify and support potential candidates can lead to a steady stream of applicants from that school, whereas a teacher with negative stereotypes of Oxbridge can put off generations of students. Teachers are no more immune than pupils to prejudice (as last week's Sutton Trust-funded MORI poll showed), and their perceptions are not helped by the media's consistently unhelpful portrayal of our "biased" admissions process.



That is why it is extremely encouraging that Cambridge is focusing more effort than ever on winning over teachers. Last week saw a very successful one-day teachers' conference organised for the third year running by schools liaison officers at several Colleges. It was attended by over 30 teachers, who were given information on the admissions process by experienced Admissions Tutors and schools liaison staff, as well as practical advice on identifying and encouraging applicants and writing references. They stayed in student rooms in participating Colleges, ate meals in Hall and were given a university tour that included lecture theatres, labs and libraries. Even those teachers who arrived asking challenging questions left enthused, and feedback has been so positive that the same event is being run again in April. Next week teachers from the east of England are coming to Newnham to give their opinions on the University's outreach work and will again have the opportunity to ask their own ques-

tions about admissions. In addition, many Colleges offer teachers the chance to come on short study visits in the vacations, where they can stay in a College free of charge and use University facilities for their own study or research.

Given the rather lukewarm account of our widening participation work given in the national press, I hope Varsity readers are interested to hear that so much is already being done to try and dispel misconceptions about Oxbridge among state school teachers.

Yours faithfully,

**Hanna Weibye**  
**HE Access Officer**  
**Pembroke & St Catherine's College**

### Strange white substance

Sir,

For the past three years I have observed small mounds of white powder placed at the base of many lamp-posts around the city, and so far I have singularly failed to discover the reason for them. Perhaps you, or one of your readers, could shed some light on this mysterious phenomenon, or the identity of the powder itself?

Yours curiously,

**J Parish**  
**Downing College**

### A penny for your thoughts

Sir,

The concept of pennyng is familiar to many Cambridge students. Does anyone know anything of the origins of this habit and whether it is exclusive to Cambridge?

Yours faithfully,

**A Wilson**  
**Darwin College**

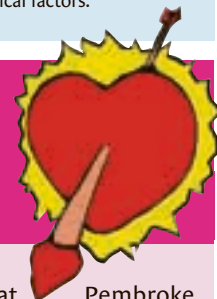
*Letters of the week will receive a bottle of wine from our friends at Cambridge Wine Merchants.*

### Correction

The sub-headline of Professor Simon Baron-Cohen's essay, 'Sex Differences in Mind' (Issue 663), misled some readers into thinking his address at the Triple Helix event in October 2007 was controversial. In fact, there was broad agreement on the panel of speakers that sex differences are indeed found, especially in the field of mathematics at higher levels, where the sex ratio is about fourteen males to every one female; the published essay was clear that assumptions about mind cannot be based on sex; and the author believes that the disproportionate number of males in hard science and mathematics may reflect a mix of social and biological factors.

## CUPID'S CORNER

SEEN SOMEONE YOU LIKE? RECOGNISE A DESCRIPTION?  
EMAIL LOVE@VARSITY.CO.UK



TO THE HAPPY HAT wearer looking fit on the 15th - you left me all tied up in M&S, maybe I could tie you up in S&M? ;-)  
**Flirty at Fitz**

YOU WERE IN GARDIES after Queens' Ent dressed as a postbox. I'll put myself through your slot if you can pay for the postage.  
**Pembroke**

YOU WERE PASSED out outside Cindies - I wanna be the one to resuscitate you.  
**Christ's**

YOUR JACK WILLS gilet at the Pitt Club made my collar stick up. What say I take you to Rock?  
**St John's**

YOUR NAME WAS KATIE, we sat together at formal. Your smile lit up the hall but I never asked for your number. Fancy dinner again sometime?  
**Magdalene**

TO THE SHORT-HAIRED blonde in 3rd year family law lectures. I don't hear a word when I see you sitting so close. Want to get any closer?  
**Trinity Hall**

TO FIT 3RD YEAR BIOLOGIST, you helped me find a book the UL. I could repay the favour if you like!  
**Hughes Hall**





**The Setup:** Last week, immigration officers removed a Ghanaian cancer patient from the UK. At one time a student in Wales, Ama Sumani, overstayed her visa and worked illegally before being taken ill two years ago. In need of a bone marrow transplant she cannot afford, she has been on dialysis. Access to dialysis in Ghana is limited and expensive. Without it, doctors fear she will die within weeks. **The Question:** Should she have been removed?



Adrian Pascu-Tulbure

YES

I find myself in rather bad company when defending the authorities' decision to remove Ama Sumani from the United Kingdom. Indeed, a quick Google search reveals that my main support seems to come from the BNP website, with the headline, "Ghanaian NHS Sponger Deported: How the 'Student Scam' Works. Quite.

It is perhaps easy to see why. For a start, removing Ms Sumani defies the British notion of themselves as a hospitable people, with the Good Samaritan looming large in the national list of role models. Moreover, it looks worryingly as if the Government is picking the easy targets: if Britain has a problem with immigration, as conventional wisdom suggests, then removing Ms Sumani hardly seems to be grabbing the bull by the horns. Not least, there is the concern that supporting Ms Sumani's removal makes one seem like a right-wing nutter, utterly devoid of compassion, rather like Tory Boy from the Fast Show: not, despite CUCAs best efforts, a good look.

So should she have been put on the plane to Accra? It does not make sense to say she should not get NHS treatment because

marrow transplant, to which she was never entitled. Furthermore, medical treatment in Accra is expensive but available, and as a member of Ghana's own national health system, she would have been treated – albeit with a bigger bill. The debate has already become one of economics, not of morals: cutting remarks about "health tourism" seem in less bad taste.

Indeed, in looking at the specifics of Ms Sumani's case, there are many ambiguities which, while not saying anything about her in particular, risk creating a worrying precedent. She came to Britain in 2003 as a visitor and soon changed her status to that of a student. Her lack of English, however, prevented her from pursuing her banking course and, contravening her visa's terms, she worked. In 2005, her student visa was revoked but she remained in the country, failing to make contact with immigration officials. In 2006, several months on, she was first taken ill. Who's to say, therefore, that she is definitely not the "scrounger" and perpetrator of the "student scam" of which the BNP accuses her?

It's unprovable and perhaps unproductive to decide one way or the other, but the point is very much an important one: should Ms Sumani be allowed to stay, her case will doubtlessly be used as a precedent – and not always in honourable cases. As an immigrant myself, I know full well that some of us will use and abuse anything to gain access to the country of our dreams.

Officially speaking, then, Ms Sumani should go. She can get a transplant in Ghana though not in Cardiff, she has on separate occasions contravened the terms of her visa, and the precedents established by letting her stay are open to abuse. Yet we still feel some distaste at ordering her to leave, due in no small part to the fact that it simply looks ugly to have deserted her in her hour of need.

Though fewer would admit it, we also feel distaste perhaps because we are ashamed at the state of our medical system which cannot cope with the needs of British citizens, let alone those of other countries; because we are acutely embarrassed at the disparity of wealth which causes so many to stake all on coming to Britain; and, because we are forced to realise that Hamlet's solution of being "cruel, only to be kind" has its modern-day parallels. Removing Ms Sumani is not the kindest solution, nor the prettiest one; but it is the right one.



Ed Maltby

No

I'm amazed that it's even necessary to have this argument. Surely the fact that it is possible for the government to send someone abroad to face certain death should serve as a damning indictment of current immigration law? Surely the deportation ('removal' – if she survives long enough, she is entitled to make another application for entry) of a terminally ill woman is one of those ludicrously obscene acts that no-one could regard as a sane and just measure? Who could look at the summary execution of a sick woman for no crime other than being foreign and think "good job, the system works"? And yet this isn't an aberration or a malfunction of the system, this is the logical conclusion of New Labour's policy of, as John Reid put it in 2007, "making life this country ever more uncomfortable and constrained for those who come here illegally."

Wherever people are, they're still people. One's visa status shouldn't come into this equation. Wherever a person may be, if they're sick, they deserve treatment. That's the basis on which the NHS was founded. It was not a liberal invention, designed to win a particular national advantage for Britons. It was won by the workers' movement, and as such was not founded on a notion of a 'social contract' or some sort of a quid-pro-quo with the state. It was built on the back of basic human solidarity. It was built on the recognition that in the midst of the vast material wealth of advanced industrial society, it is obscene to refuse treatment to the sick. There is nothing complicated here, no moral conundrum. If a sick person finds themselves in a hospital, whoever they are, they have a right to expect treatment, independent of any other considerations.

But isn't the NHS stretched to breaking point as it is? It under-funded. But given that the government appears to have limitless cash to fund several wars, renew Trident, bail out disastrous PFI schemes and failed privatisations; and given that current top-rate income tax and corporation tax are at their lowest levels in some decades, it does seem a little rich to claim that "too many foreigners" is the reason that the NHS is short of cash. If there are British people on the waiting list for dialysis, then we should buy more equipment and medicines, and train more doctors. The idea that we should respond to temporary shortages in medical materiel by deporting patients is just absurd.

If we don't sentence this widow to a painful death, won't the UK look like a 'soft touch' on immigration? Won't we suddenly be flooded by immigrants demanding free healthcare? Well, no. People leave their countries and come to ours for good reasons.

**"Who could look at the summary execution of a sick woman for no crime other than being foreign and think 'good job, the system works'?"**

If they're personally facing serious poverty, political repression or other intractable problems, hearing about the UK's tough stance on immigration is unlikely to deter them. Equally, hearing about a relaxation of immigration law in the UK is not going to encourage someone to leave their home who otherwise doesn't have to. If you have to run, you have to run. If we seriously want to discourage people from coming to the UK, surely that means that we'd have to guarantee them more barbarous treatment than what they're fleeing from? If we don't want to appear an attractive destination for the world's poor, then we will have to make it clear that nowhere else on earth will give you a more cruel and miserable reception than the UK. We'd have to put ourselves in competition with other EU states to see who can threaten the worst treatment for their immigrant population. The 'soft touch' argument is useless, unless you want to accept a decline into barbarism. But maybe some of us don't have a problem with that.

More brutality won't stop immigration into the UK, but it will make the lives of the UK's hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants like Ama Sumani nasty, brutish and short. The only thing which can halt mass migration is an end to the economic and political crises which cause people to flee their homes. The shocking and arbitrary violence which is the corollary of the government's 'tough stance' on immigration is useless and indefensible. Ama Sumani's deportation is without justification, and it is beneath contempt.

Who wins? You decide.

Text 'Varsity Yes' or 'Varsity No' to 60300.  
(Standard network charges apply)







After this year's traditional festive binge of food, alcohol and faux-goodwill, how did you feel? Fat? Poor? Unhappy? Probably some sort of combination of all three. Since when did Christmas become such a drag? Answer: it always has been, at least in the twentieth century context of the commercialisation of religion.

We must consider what we regard to be the purpose of a holiday. Firstly, we can attach some kind of duty-based significance to it. For instance, Christmas is the time when we celebrate the birth of Christ. Or we can regard it as being something beneficial on a humanistic level, in that we are able to reward ourselves with stuff and stuff our faces with food.

All very well and good, but in the end does it weigh up as a positive? In terms of duty, religion and Christmas are becoming more and more like the opposite sides of the same coin. Recent figures show that more people do online shopping at Christmas than go to Anglican church services, a testament to just how vacuous presumptions of celebrating a 'religious' festival are in the face of relentless consumerism.

On the other hand, it doesn't necessarily follow that consumers, pursuing pleasure over religious obligations, are having a great time either. When the emphasis of Christmas is shifted away from a moral duty, is it not possible that its status as a family occasion suffers as well? What are we celebrating? What is there to draw us together?

There are those that would say that there is nothing wrong with having a secular holiday in a multicultural age, but I would posit there is something inorganic about this approach that precludes its viability as an alternative Christmas. The problem is that consumerism and not multiculturalism is the root of this transformation. With consumerism having essentially selfish objectives, Christmas takes on a very different character, with the accumulation of material goods taking primacy over the original significance of the holiday, which was centred on the family – with or without religion.

The principal duty has now become foraging for sufficiently expensive presents to sate our materialistic appetites. Hideous. It is surely time to end this charade of crass self-indulgence and abolish Christmas as a holiday apart from those who celebrate it for religious reasons.

Having said that, is being with the family really such a blessing? A combination of cold weather and stress from the retail frenzy that often starts before people have a day of holiday serves to create a pressured atmosphere that is only aggravated by being stuck indoors for several days with the same people. People harp on about "quality time, well spent."

It strikes me as a highly euphemistic way to present awkward chats with distant and disinterested relatives, who moan about the quality of the wine and steal all the sausage rolls, pervy uncles, and Jimmy, your seven-year-old cousin with spasmodic pyromania who everyone thinks is adorable but who you secretly know to be a twat. A friend of mine once said to me, "keep your friends close, in case your relatives turn out to be bastards." Truer words were never spoken.

Ed Maltby



## Our casino economy

The Northern Rock fiasco means we must nationalise the City

An eerie silence has fallen. The banks and politicians have stopped lying to us about the financial crisis, and are now meekly batten down the hatches. Running the world economy as a giant casino was always a very bad idea, and now the ruling class is having to face up to this fact.

Since the 1980s, the Thatcherites of the Tory party and New Labour have subordinated pretty much our whole economy (and therefore the jobs and savings accounts of millions of ordinary people) to the mad gambling games played in the City. More alarming still, the games played by banks and investors are now of a much more volatile nature than before.

The big money these days is in "credit derivatives" – a particularly risky and opaque invention, which involves bundling up different sorts of risk and selling them on. There are various sorts of derivatives. Some are options and futures, which involve betting on what the price of a given commodity will be some months down the line.

Others are CDOs, or Collateralised Debt Obligations – which are bundles of debt. A bank will bundle up mortgages and other debts into a package and sell them on: so, in return for money up front, someone else buys the promise of money to come when (if!) these debts are paid off. The buyer of this bundle of debts sells them on in turn, in a sort of game of hot potato with risky financial assets; and the proceeds from this selling and re-selling finance further investments and

speculation.

Many people also buy shares in companies which trade in CDOs, betting that the company's bets will pay off. In this way, one person's debt can wind up doing hundreds of things at once – being bought here, funding the purchase of shares there, and paying out a dividend to shareholders in not just one but several different investment banks. As Marx puts it, "The same piece of money can be used ... for various loans ... Everything in this credit system is doubled and trebled and transformed into a mere phantom of the imagination."

Thanks to low interest rates (cheap credit means more borrowing, so more debt to sell on) and soaring house prices (people use their houses as collateral on loans – if your house is worth a lot you can borrow more) credit derivatives have gone from nothing ten years ago to representing US\$26 trillion today.

An incredible chunk of the world economy is held up by these phantoms. This cheap derivative-supported credit has also made it easier for dread Private Equity pirates to buy out perfectly healthy firms, asset-strip them, sack their staff, and sell them off again for short term gain. Amongst private-sector employees, 19% work in companies controlled by Private Equity firms – that's 2.8 million people living and working under a financial Sword of Damocles.

If some mortgage-holders at the bottom of this pile were to default on their loans, the rug would be pulled out from under...

well, who knows? Any bank could have bought a bundle of debt which contained some bad mortgages, or hold shares in someone who was exposed to bad mortgages.

That's what happened with the sub-prime crisis, when loads of dirt-poor mortgage holders in the US started defaulting. The banks realised no one could really know how great anyone's exposure was, and decided not to risk lending money to anyone at all.

Dramatic as it was, this "sub-prime" debacle wasn't a major shock, and only one relatively small UK bank went under – but even that cost the government £40 billion to guarantee the life savings of Northern Rock's customers.

Much bigger disasters are in



store. Interest rates are up and house prices are falling. All the factors which created a ten-year boom in imaginary money are being reversed. Increasing US unemployment and rocketing fuel and food prices are taking their toll too, and many mortgage-holders previously considered good debtors are starting to 'go bad' and default. It's not just the subprime debts that are starting to look wobbly now.

This could get extremely bad. If a couple of big banks such as Barclays or HSBC were to take a tumble, the government wouldn't be able to guarantee their customers' savings, and thousands of people would be penniless. Investments would be abruptly ripped out of hundreds of businesses. Many jobs would go. We would all be stuffed.

It's not certain the worst will happen – there might be a miracle. But that's not the point. The real scandal is that we have come this far in the first place. We have allowed our jobs, our livelihoods, our savings for the future, and our houses to become chips in someone else's poker game.

To allow the world's economy to be administered by a secretive game of chance, understood only by a rich elite, that fetishises short-term profit and encourages crazy risk-taking is more than just foolish – it is obscene.

The existence of the City is an affront to democracy. It makes chaos and volatility systemic in our society. Only by placing the institutions of finance capital under transparent, democratic – preferably international – control, and by placing the commanding heights of the economy in the hands of the majority of the population, can we eliminate the danger of the kind of catastrophic crash which today threatens to engulf us.

Only by shifting control in this manner can we secure our savings and pensions, and put the world's wealth to work for socially constructive purposes.

We must nationalise the City.

David Staines



## A balkan split

Negotiating Kosovan independence is dangerous work

Recently, international attention has been focusing on the current most dynamic foreign policy issue: the final status talks over the future of Kosovo. This small republic nestles at the heart of the Balkans. It has a 90% ethnic Albanian Muslim population and is seeking to break away from more prosperous Serbia, which (Kosovo excepted) has a largely orthodox Christian population. This union is the last remnant of the old Federation of Yugoslavia that existed prior to the Balkan war of 1992. Since the last Balkan war in 1999, the province has been administered by the UN. Its recently-elected democratic government expressed a serious intention to declare independence within a short time frame. While independence for Kosovo provides a chance to make a clean break with the past, it would also unleash great anger in Serbia, creating problems for the international community.

In Britain and Western Europe, economic and social liberalism dominates political thinking. This paradigm is underpinned based on two basic beliefs: prosperity for all is regarded by people across all cultures as the ultimate end of government, and there exist commonly held, universally-applicable standards of justice. It follows that, in a world of universal democ-

cracy, the nation-state is irrelevant. By contrast, nationalists tend to exalt the welfare of their own people above those of all others.

More practically, the liberal criticism of contemporary nationalism is that when it is invoked, it is normally to hinder the liberal principle of international co-operation. Consider the animosity between Poland and Germany that resulted from the Kaczynski brothers' nationalist rhetoric. In the case of Kosovo, the concern is more serious, nationalist rhetoric could foment a new Balkan war.

Liberalism is therefore presented with a problem. It must choose between two camps of nationalists: Kosovans and the Serbians who oppose Kosovo's independence. The pillar of the liberal case in favour of Kosovan independence is the 1992 referendum, in which an overwhelming majority of the population endorsed independence.

Furthermore, the animosity and distrust between the groups prevents the state successfully achieving liberal ends, like furthering prosperity and human rights. There is a sense in Kosovo that Serbia has lost the moral authority to govern, and a new start is needed. It's needed not just for the sake of liberty, but to build up social and international order – so Realpolitik Conservatives should support Kosovan independence too.

Yet the question remains, how can the up-swell of Serbian nationalist fervour and any Kosovan nationalist excesses be contained? The answer lies with the EU. Its offer to provide for Kosovo's defence should prevent the outbreak of a conflict between the two states. As well, the offer of a road to membership to both (Serbia sooner) should encourage the fostering of diplomatic ties between them.

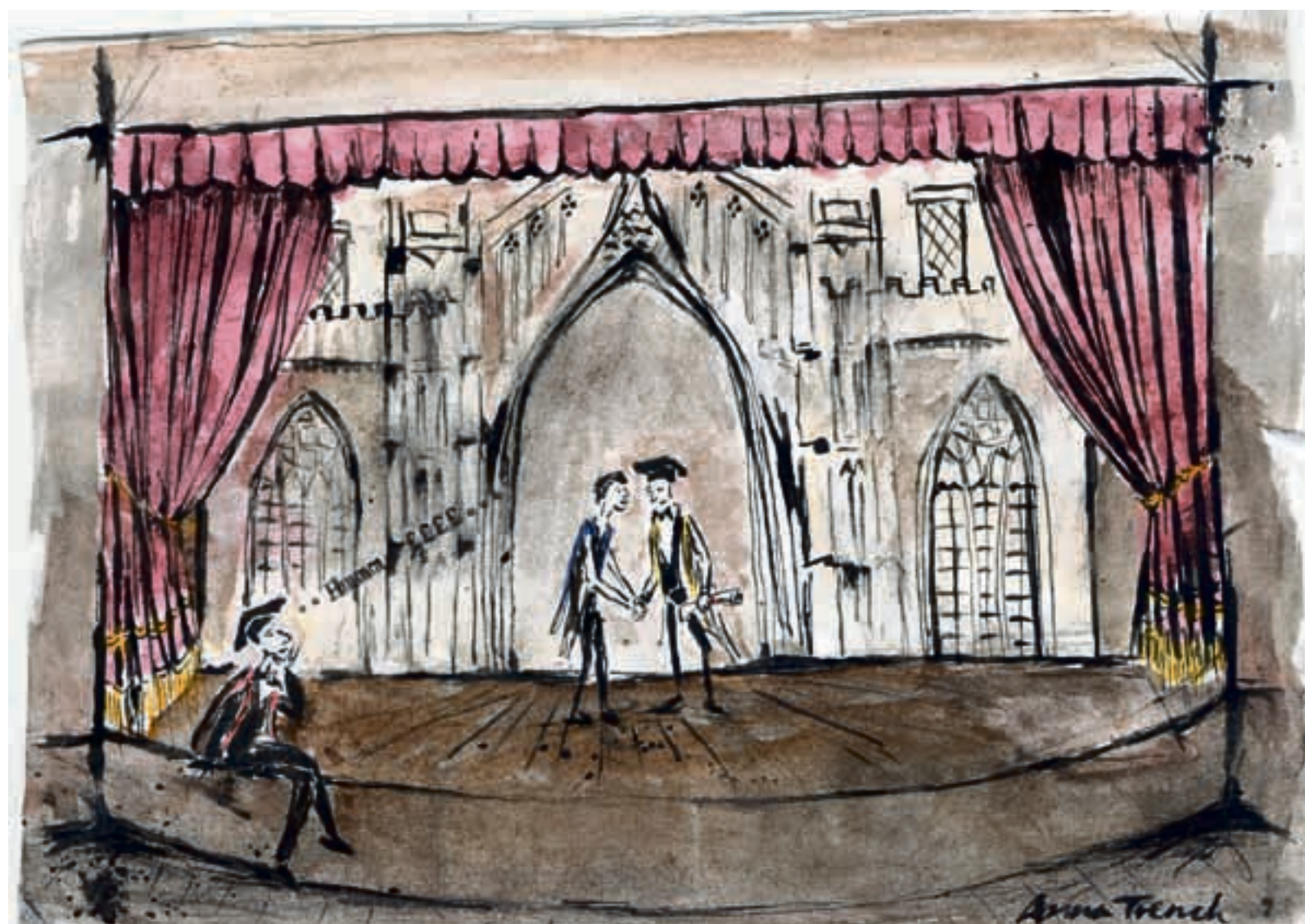
However, the problem remains that Russian intransigence at the Security Council is likely to hold up the recognition of Kosovo as a full UN member. This will embolden Serbian nationalists, while increasing feelings of alienation within Kosovan Serbs towards the international community. They already feel disaffected from the political process and largely boycotted the recent elections. Extreme Kosovan nationalists could also orchestrate violence, meaning there is a distinct possibility that inter-communal violence could flare up. Fortunately, a new EU mission is expected to take control early this year. This mission should be able to harness existing goodwill towards international forces and the EU and police the situation with sufficient care and avoid large scale loss of life or lasting damage to the political process.

Finally, Kosovan independence would not set a destabilising precedent for the region. The Serb

dominated area of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not analogous to Kosovo. That territory has a stronger multi-ethnic history. In 1994, before the Balkan war, 35% of the population belonged to minority communities. Breko, a district with an evenly split Serbian-Bosnian population, is one of the most peaceful and prosperous in the whole country. Additionally, extremists on both sides should be kept in check by the even balance of power within Bosnia, between Srpska and the Bosniak dominated Bosnia and Herzegovina federation. Moreover, the offer of dual Serbian-Bosnian citizenship for the people of Srpska is still on the table. This is of great significance to Serb nationalists, but could be blocked by the international community if violence spreads. All in all, Srpska and its government have more to lose than gain from allowing violence to run its course.

Overall, the future looks bright for an independent Kosovo. Serbian extremists should be kept in check by strong but even-handed policing from the new EU forces. The olive branch of EU membership should stop the Serbian government from straying from the path of peaceful coexistence. As bright as the future may be, the Russian position remains a problem and a serious flare-up in violence remains a possibility: the road remains treacherous.





Christmas at Sloth Hall! The friendly familiarity of the menu; the endearing whine let out by the chesterfields in the library as one post-prandially eases into them; the prevailing charm of festive lethargy: just like Cambridge, then, minus the basso continuo of emergency excuses explaining the lack of some essay or other.

Indeed, possibly the only vaguely academic assignment carried out over the Christmas vacation were my New Year's Resolutions, those delicate tracts of self-knowledge and morality which remind one of little more than Christmas wrapping paper: trotted out annually in deference to custom and propriety, and then, a few days later, dissected and discarded.

Yet this year, gentle readers, I aim to air my resolutions in the hope that such publicity will make my behaviour accountable to them. Then, and only then, will I be able to sort out my life.

1. I shall not take taxis to lectures.

I did this several times last year, when I found that I was running late to lectures. I would then arrive at Sidgwick, on time but five pounds the poorer, to find that I had no earthly inkling where the lecture (which would consistently not live up to its blurb) was. This was needless extravagance. From now on, if I ever find myself running late for a lecture, I shall simply go back to bed.

2. I shall not damage my lungs with tobacco.

I shall instead smoke cigars, which it is very poor form to inhale.

3. I shall not waste money on drinks in nocturnal watering holes.

The stuff they tend to serve is generally of very poor quality, not to say weak. Also, the barmen have a lot to learn about the correct use of whisky.

There is little that cannot be

**"From now on, if I ever find myself running late for a lecture, I shall simply go back to bed."**

remedied, however, by the smuggling in of a hip flask with a really significant quantity of eau-de-vie. At any rate, I'd far rather support the struggling owner of a small terroir in the Cognac region than Mr and Mrs Ballare.

4. I shall not waste time unnecessarily.

Instead, I shall devote said time to considering the necessities of taking time off in such a busy, thrusting world, which is a far more productive thing to do, really.

5. I shall never let a woman in my life.

This is a nod to Mr Henry Higgins, a man for whom I have deep respect and who occupies a plum spot in the Idler's Imaginary Dinner Table of Good People.

There you are, ladies and gentlemen. I have little doubt that yours will be far more active and worthy lists of gymnasiums memberships, summer internships, giving money to the homeless and getting on the Varsity Hundred.



Jo Trigg

## 'Soft' A level? Hard luck

The A level blacklist is counterproductive and ill-informed

On the advent of my penultimate term at Cambridge, I officially became a 'less ideal' student. I am inferior, according to my university, because I took a 'soft' A level. I can feel the great cloud of shame creeping over me as I admit it: Yes, I took an A level in Dance, one of twenty-five subjects that Cambridge has classified as 'less effective preparation' for a degree here. Other Russell Group universities are following suit, and although their guidelines claim that studying more than one of these subjects will make students unlikely to gain admission – or, as Cambridge puts it, "would not normally be considered to be acceptable" – the damage has already been done to each individual 'soft' subject.

When is an 'A' level not an 'A' level? When it's a nasty, deceptive A level which is actually a 'soft' A level in disguise. The press coverage publicising this 'soft' label says the Russell Group universities are "warning students", but all that is happening is students are being penalised for taking up the opportunities offered to them. Instead of penalising students, the educational powers that be ought to review all A level courses to make sure, as their qualification title would suggest, they are all the same level of difficulty. For if a subject is not sufficiently academic to be considered alongside other A levels for university entrance, why is it not an NVQ?

Had I applied this autumn, I would have a greater chance of being rejected than when I successfully applied three years ago. It was hard enough then. Having encountered my interviewer's face of condescending scepticism when I first applied, I made sure my second attempt would not be hampered by similar minority subject prejudice. I affixed a covering letter to my personal statement detailing exactly what an A level in Dance involved, and why it should be considered advantageous. My impassioned rant seemed to work. By the end of my second interview, after an intelligent discussion about the ostensibly inferior qualification, my interviewer had concluded Dance had actually increased my aptitude for my degree choice more than the traditional, academic

subject that was my third A level.

When Cambridge's 'less ideal' list hit the national media, I wondered whether my ideas of what Cambridge sought in an applicant were mere figments of my imagination. After checking the 'Guide to Interviews' on the university website, I can declare myself thankfully sane. Listed beneath the sub-title 'What we are looking for' are "a passion for your chosen subject; an ability to think independently; enthusiasm for complex and challenging ideas". Neither an ability to think in a certain way, nor passion for your subject are necessarily determined by what you already know, so why does it matter that I may not be able to recite

**"When is an 'A' level not an 'A' level? When it's a nasty, deceptive A level which is actually a 'soft' A level in disguise."**

the domestic and foreign policies of Alexander II of Russia like a good, academically adequate candidate, but that I can tell you about Merce Cunningham's 'chance' technique and translate a page of Laban notation? If these so-called 'soft' subjects equip a student with relevant skills, and if the student can demonstrate this, why condemn them to the ever-deepening pit of Oxbridge disapproval?

On the subject of disapproval, how is drawing up a long list of inadequately academic subjects, the large majority of which will be more commonly available at large state schools than small, private ones, going to help Oxbridge shatter its stuffy, elitist image? Couldn't this increased selectivity be interpreted as an increasingly selective awareness of newer subjects (otherwise known as ignorance)? Doesn't a narrow list of acceptable subjects demonstrate an uncanny resemblance to

narrow-mindedness? Had the deeply furrowed brow of the traditionalist Cantabrigian Don been looming disapprovingly over me when I made my A level choices, I might have chosen differently, but instead I opted for subjects which I enjoyed. Stop me if I'm inadequately qualified to say so, but aren't 'enjoyment' and 'passion' somewhat synonymous? Why stop sixth-formers discriminating between their potential subjects in the same way that Oxbridge interviewers do between theirs?

These criteria even make it difficult to meet the second of the qualities specified by Cambridge Admissions: independent thinking. How exactly does selecting subjects strategically to fit a narrow list of acceptable A levels demonstrate independent thought? An increasing number of sixth-formers are being lured to America's Ivy League because it allows them to study a breadth of arts and sciences. Employers and universities are finding it increasingly difficult to distinguish between candidates who all have a straight run of good results. To make their lives harder we are, of course, all being told to do the same A levels. Regulations on the conveyor belt at the factory of education have just got tighter, and everyone is due to emerge neatly packaged and identical – apart from those of us consigned to the discount factory outlets for our minor irregularities.

The Russell Group's blacklisted A levels may or may not be harder than their traditional, academic counterparts, but informed distinctions need to be made between those which do meet the required standards of the A level status and those which do not. Students ought to be allowed to prove themselves, rather than having admissions services bar them from an opportunity whose professed requirements they may well meet for the same reasons which disqualify them. An overhaul of the sixth-form education system is long overdue. When and if it finally comes, perhaps this mistrust of non-traditional subjects can be resolved, and students will find they can take subjects which they enjoy without being penalised. Until then, at least let us argue our case.





This man is Friedrich  
Nietzsche. He believed  
that one should  
aspire to become der  
**Übermensch**

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**Cleverest**  
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**Best.**

## Out on February 1st

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**OLIVER WYMAN**

A is for Artwork, B is for Business, C is for Copy, D is for Deadline, E is for Editor, F is for Firefox, G is for Gill Sans, H is for Helvetica, I is for Interview, J is for Juggling, K is for Kerning, L is for Listings, M is for Microphone, N is for Newspaper, O is for Office, P is for Panic (on a Thursday night), Q is for Quark Xpress, R is for Readthroughs, S is for Sport, T is for Time, U is for Untidy, V is for Varsity, W is for Website, X is for Xylophone, Y is for Yearbooks, Z is for Zapf Dingbats.

A is for Arts, B is for Brilliant, C is for Comment, D is for Didot, E is for Editor, F is for Features, G is for Golf, H is for Hard core, I is for Intelligence, J is for Journalism, K is for Kayaking, L is for Libel, M is for Madness, N is for Nice, O is for Oracle, P is for Perfection, Q is for Quantum physics, R is for Reporter, S is for Stories, T is for Technical, U is for Understanding, V is for Varsity, W is for Wild Wild West, X is for Xcuses, Y is for Yelling, Z is for Zany, A is for Aardvarks, B is for Britishness, C is for CUSU, D is for Destiny, E is for Editor, F is for Food and Drink, G is for Greatness, H is for Hairlines, I is for Independence, J is for Juxtaposing, K is for Kool Kats, L is for Leader, M is for Misdemeanour, N is for Nationals, O is for Ornithology, P is for Paper, Q is for Questions, R is for Reviews, S is for Sport, T is for Tragedy, U is for University, V is for Varsity, W is for Was, X is for Xellence, Y is for Yoga, Z is for Zapf Dingbats.

A is for Aardvarks, B is for Britishness, C is for CUSU, D is for Details, E is for Editor, F is for Film, G is for Genius, H is for Hairlines, I is for Independence, J is for Jealousy, K is for Kor Blimey, L is for Literature, M is for Manic Mondays, N is for News in Brief, O is for Office, P is for Puzzles, Q is for Quality, R is for Redesign, S is for Setting, T is for Theatre, U is for Underlings, V is for Varsity, W is for Wordplay, X is for Xtremes, Y is for Yellow, Z is for Zero, A is for Advertising, B is for Bishop, C is for Card, D is for Deck, E is for Editor, F is for Fact, G is for Guesswork, H is for Horseplay, I is for Irritation, J is for Japes, K is for King, L is for Lettuce, M is for Money, N is for Nonsense, O is for Oddballs, P is for Photoshop, Q is for Quiff, R is for Respect, S is for Students, T is for Technical, U is for Underdogs, V is for Varsity, W is for Wordplay, X is for Xenophobia, Y is for Youth, Z is for Ziggerat, A is for Article, B is for Badger, C is for Culture, D is for Dinosaur, E is for Editor, F is for Font, G is for Graph, H is for Honour, I is for IQ, J is for Jabberwocky, K is for Kicks, L is for Love, M is for More, N is for Nintendo, O is for Organisation, P is for Pictures, Q is for Quibble, R is for Rovers, S is for Sport, T is for Team, U is for United, V is for Varsity, W is for Wish, X is for Xplicit content, Y is for Yonks, Z is for Zapf Dingbats.

A is for Artwork, B is for Business, C is for Copy, D is for Deadline, E is for Editor, F is for Firefox, G is for Gill Sans, H is for Helvetica, I is for Interview, J is for Juggling, K is for Kerning, L is for Listings, M is for Microphone, N is for Newspaper, O is for Office, P is for Panic (on a Thursday night), Q is for Quark Xpress, R is for Readthroughs, S is for Sport, T is for Time, U is for Untidy, V is for Varsity, W is for Website, X is for Xylophone, Y is for Yearbooks, Z is for Zapf Dingbats.

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“Oh, students have always been lazy. I think it’s fine, so long as they’re just using Wikipedia as a starting point and then doing some actual research”

WIKIPEDIA FOUNDER  
JIMMY WALES TALKS PAGE 14

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Gerry O’Boyle turns nasty  
**Page 20**

Chas and Dave rabbit on  
**Page 23**

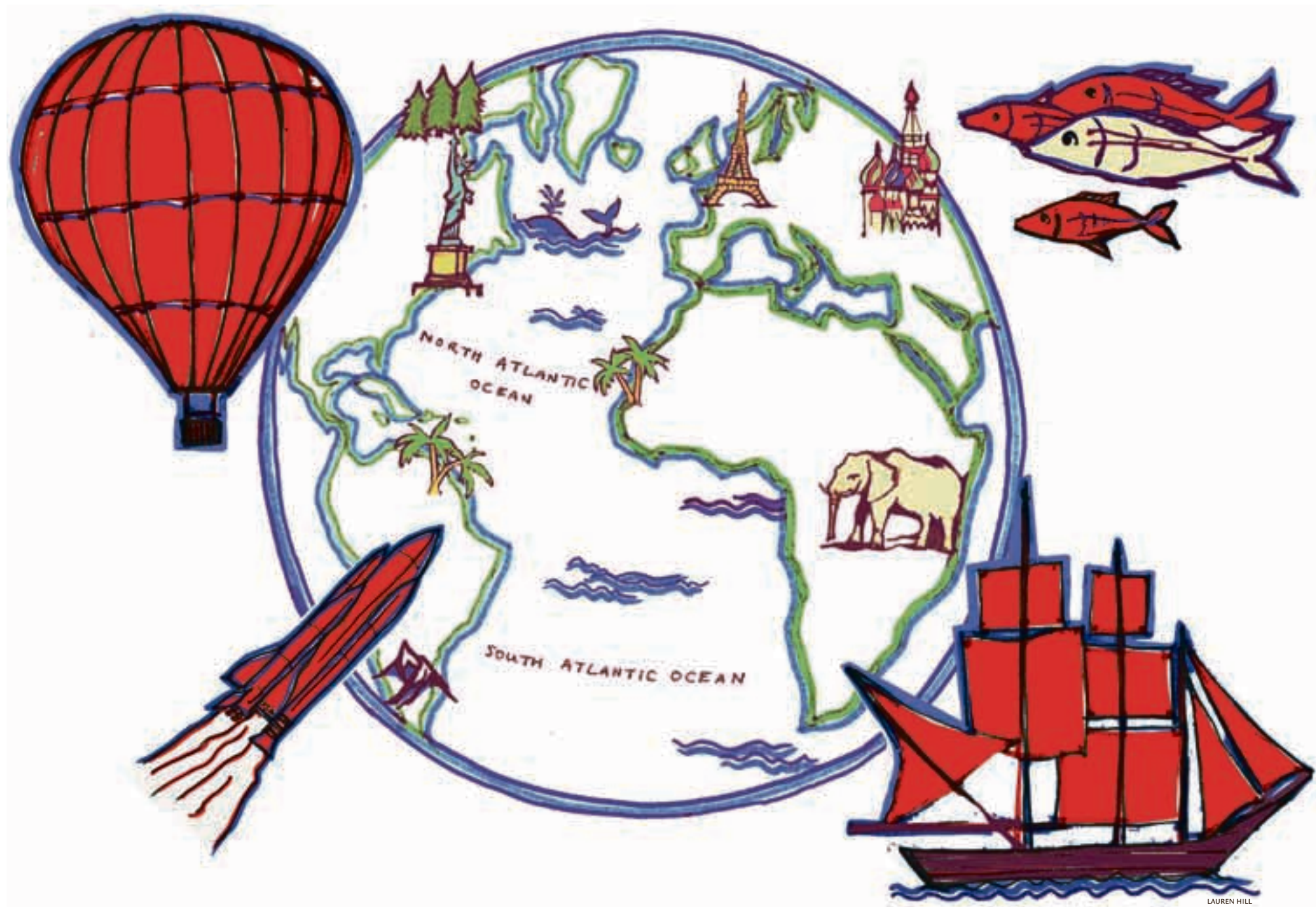
Julius Caesar at the ADC  
**Page 24**

# VIEW



# Jimmy Meets World

As Diderot was for the Enlightenment, Jimmy Wales is the father of the encyclopaedia for the modern age. **Katy Lee** meets the man behind the Wikipedia project to talk trust, techies and vandals.



In June 2007, a former president of the American Library Association railed against Wikipedia.org for its role in producing “a generation of intellectual sluggards incapable of moving beyond the Internet”. Alas, if you were to read the disturbing content of a Facebook group dedicated to the online encyclopedia, and populated entirely by students from the University of Cambridge, you might be inclined to agree with him. It would be easy to conclude from the kind of comments posted on the group’s message board that a pandemic of indolence

is spreading across this most prestigious of universities. “Nothing has reshaped undergraduate study at Cambridge like the invention of Wikipedia.org,” the group’s creator writes gleefully. “Gone is the need to plough through a library of monographs in a vain attempt to understand what the hell is going on in a topic, racking up facts that you’ll never possibly need for an hour-long timed essay where facts are roughly three per cent as important as having a slightly arrogant public school turn of phrase...”

Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia.org roars with

laughter when I tell him about this. “Oh, students have always been lazy,” he says. “I think

“It just turns out that most people are sensible and good”

it’s fine, so long as they’re just using Wikipedia as a starting point and then doing some actual research.” I am glad that this conversation is being

conducted over the telephone so that Mr Wales cannot see my incredulous expression. I wonder what he will think when he inspects the message board, where one Cambridge student boasts, “This essay I’m writing about Vietnam is based entirely on Wikipedia knowledge.”

But then, it’s not entirely surprising that Wales’s instinct is to think the best of today’s young students. The Wikipedia project is entirely based on trust. At the top of almost every one of the website’s articles is a button labelled ‘Edit’. You could click on it and advance the encyclopaedia

by writing lucid informative entries or by improving existing articles. Alternatively, you could click on it and write libellous drivel to your heart’s content. Some articles are natural targets for chronic vandalism, and frequently have to be placed in a state of protection where editing is restricted. “One of the costs of openness is that some idiot can come in and put giant penis pictures on the George Bush article,” Wales says dryly. Others get their kicks from plastering the entry on dyslexia with spelling mistakes. But, remarkably, the project has yet to descend into



complete anarchy. Nearly nine million articles later, Wikipedia is proof that a well-intentioned experiment – leaving itself completely open to attack – can survive on the big bad Internet. It now has an army of over six million editors working in 253 languages.

“It just turns out that most people are sensible and good,” says Wales. “People just enjoy the work. You get to collaborate with other smart people in building something to be proud of. The number of people that are malicious is actually quite small.” Most vandalism is removed from the site within hours or even minutes. Wales is not at all worried when I tell him that his own biography on Wikipedia has been marked by an editor as requiring “clean-up”. “I don’t need to look at it – if it’s just routine vandalism, somebody else will take care of it.”

The son of an Alabaman grocer, Wales made a mint in the 1990s by speculating on interest rate and foreign currency fluctuations. Casting around for something else to keep him occupied, he started tinkering with open-source software – software that can be legally modified by its users. It was during this time that he began toying with the idea of using collaborative software to develop a free online encyclopaedia. Nupedia, launched by Wales in 2000, was an ambitious project. The plan was that expert scholars would write pieces on their specialist areas – for free – which they would then submit to rigorous scrutiny by their peers in order to ensure that standards were kept high. But after one year Larry Sanger, the encyclopaedia’s editor, had collected just twelve finished articles. He and Wales were forced to conclude that they would have to widen their recruitment net. Wikipedia, the encyclopaedia that anyone can edit, was set up as a side project in January 2001, in the hope that it would enable content for Nupedia to be amassed more quickly. But a month later, when Wikipedia had notched up 1000 articles, it seemed clear that Nupedia would eventually be abandoned.

“One of the costs of openness is that some idiot can come in and put giant penis pictures on the George Bush article”

We should take Wikipedia’s description of itself as an encyclopaedia that anyone can edit at face value. Illiterate toddlers have the same facility to press the ‘Edit’ button as Harvard professors. “The fact that someone has a PhD in a certain field doesn’t necessarily



Jimmy Wales: founded Wikipedia, alone, without any help, not even a co-founder.

make them a better editor of Wikipedia than someone who doesn’t,” Wales declares. This is a total departure from the thinking that drove Nupedia, and not everyone has taken to it. Andrew Keen, expressing the concerns of many of Wikipedia’s critics, says the project favours the “dictatorship of idiots” over expert guidance.

A more minor concern is that Wikipedia favours the dictatorship of geeks. “We’re really good at technology, we’re really good on the hard sciences, we’re really good on geek culture,” says Wales. “Star Trek, Star Wars, things like that. We’re not necessarily as good on topics like parenting, although things like that have improved over the years.” Wikipedia’s geek bias is evident from the articles that receive the most attention from editors. At the time of writing, the most edited articles during the last month include ‘List of minor Naruto characters’ and ‘Religious debates over Harry Potter’. But Wales doesn’t think there should be any restriction on the writing of pop culture articles. “Trying to encourage people who are writing about Pokemon to write about Chinese poetry is probably a bad idea. Anyway, Wiki isn’t paper. If someone is writing an article about a Pokemon character, that doesn’t mean there’s no room for the article about some ancient Chinese poet.”

Wales makes a charismatic, if slightly sanctimonious, figurehead for the project. He tends to portray Wikipedia as run by sweet, unsuspecting types – he partially blames their trusting

tendencies for the recent fiasco over the Wikimedia Foundation’s former Chief Operating Officer, who turned out to be a convicted felon. The non-profit Foundation, which runs Wikipedia, had happily employed Carolyn Bothwell Doran to manage its million-dollar chequebook without realizing that she had numerous convictions for passing bad cheques, theft and petty larceny. “Part of the problem is that we’re very naïve and trusting – that’s what makes Wikipedia work. We assume that most people are probably good, but in this case we got burned.” Wales is relieved that no money appears to be missing, though he said he had been shaken by the affair. “The organization is slowly professionalizing. Be-

fore, we operated like a group of friends working together.”

But Wales’s portrait of himself as the benign father of this friendly experiment is not entirely convincing. It was Sanger who first suggested building an encyclopaedia around the Wiki software that would allow public editing, and he who dubbed the project Wikipedia. Yet Wales has been quietly deleting phrases on his own Wikipedia biography that describe Sanger as the venture’s co-founder.

“In the early years of the project, my role was not in dispute at all,” reads an irate statement on Sanger’s website. “Jimmy Wales did not start downplaying my involvement in the project until 2004, and he didn’t start denying that I am co-founder until 2005 or

2006 – in other words, just when Wikipedia began to enter the public eye.”

Wales, it seems, is determined to be hailed as the project’s sole creator, presiding benevolently over all Wikipedia activity. Regardless of whether or not you find his glory-seeking grating, he can rest smugly assured that Wikipedia is closer to achieving his noble goal of “enabling all human beings to share in the sum of all human knowledge” than any encyclopaedia in history. The Encyclopædia Britan-

“The most edited articles during the last month include ‘List of minor Naruto characters’ and ‘Religious debates over Harry Potter’

ica does not contain a detailed account of the delights of the Pacific banana slug, a comprehensive list of the FBI’s most wanted fugitives by year since 1950 or an exhaustive series of articles tackling the merits of the Power Rangers. Even Encarta, an encyclopedia which, like Wikipedia, doesn’t suffer the restrictions of existing on paper by virtue of its digital nature, cannot give you a complete description of how Italy performed at the 1988 Winter Olympics, or a meticulous exposition of cats’ intelligence.

The success of Wikipedia is derived from the simple principle that many hands make light work. As you read this, swarms of dedicated contributors are making hundreds of simultaneous changes, rephrasing here, tweaking there, and creating new articles wherever they’re needed. The project resembles the construction of a vast, elaborate hive by a colony of highly beneficent, pedantic bees. Much of their time, of course, is spent undoing the efforts of vandals, who are also labouring diligently. But so long as the pedants outweigh the vandals, it seems likely that Wikipedia will flourish.

## WIKIFACTS

» Its name is a portmanteau of the words wiki (a type of collaborative website) and encyclopaedia.

» As of December 2007, Wikipedia had approximately 9 ¼ million articles in 253 languages.

» By September 2005, its server cluster had grown to around 100 servers: main servers in Tampa, Florida and the rest in Amsterdam and Seoul.

» The English subdomain receives 55% of Wikipedia’s cumulative traffic, with the remaining split among the other languages (Spanish: 17%, Japanese 4%, German: 4%, Polish: 3%, French: 3%, Portuguese: 2%).

» A study by Hitwise found that visitors to Wikipedia are almost equally split 50/50 male/female, but that 60% of edits are made by male editors.

All facts sourced from Wikipedia.org





Dress, £1050, Akris



Shirt, Todd Lynn; Shorts, £80, Twenty8Twelve; White tights, £23, Walford; Patent shoes, £45, Reiss



T-shirt dress, from £110, Calvin Klein



Vest, Velvet; Skirt, Aquascutum

# WRITER'S BLOCK

Here's to starting the new year's wardrobe resolutions on a cleaner page.



T-shirt dress, from £110, Calvin Klein; Angel trouser, Todd Lynn



Dress, vintage Azzedine Alaïa



Dress, Amanda Wakeley; Tights, £23, Walford



Vest, Velvet; Skirt, Aquascutum; Loafers, stylist's own



Playsuit, £265, Biba; Tights, £23, Walford



T-shirt, £13, French Connection; Cotton corsage top, £700, Akris



# My Cambridge

## Cambridge University Boat Club



>>The Skate Park, Jesus Green. "When I skip school I go to the skate park to complain about my parents with my girlfriend and smoke cigarettes that I steal from my Dad" - Spencer Hunsberger.

>>Goldie Boat Club Captain's Room. To Steal old trophies to melt down and pay off library fines.



>>Tatties. Good food, dishonestly priced, and discussions on Turkish politics with Gem, the owner.

>>Hawks' Club. To pick up chicks, and enjoy Donna Martin's cooking.

MODELS: TOBIAS GARNETT AND SPENCER HUNSBERGER

## Face Off

They're fit, you're fickle. Who's fitter? There's the pickle  
**Round 1: Sidney Sussex versus Christ's**



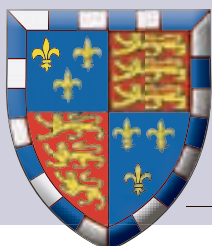
Lewis is a 2nd year NatSci and Rosanna is a 3rd year Lawyer



Matt is a 2nd year Theologian and Alice is a 3rd year reading SPS



TO VOTE FOR SIDNEY SUSSEX, TEXT 'VARSITY SIDNEY' TO 60300.



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## Cumming On Death



The best time to die if you're a celebrity is when you are still famous, and people will still be moved to natter wistfully about how important and valuable you were. The worst time to die is when you have wilted, like a neglected runner bean, and the only people who'll shed tears are your loved ones. 2007 was a particularly bad year for apt twig-leaving, and was instead notable for the number of stars going out with a whimper, rather than a bang.

One suspects this was particularly disappointing for Evel Knievel, who spent an entire career attempting to claim his life insurance (and there's a windfall) with an abrupt, loud, motorised noise. In his last interview he claimed to have "beat the hell out of death". Whilst it might seem slightly churlish to ascribe hubris to a man whose chosen vocation was to ride motorbikes into the sky, one has to wonder whether it's ever very sensible to claim immortality, particularly when one is so clearly dying. Another who slipped rather than dived into the murky pool was Ike Turner, the extravagant performer and producer credited with being one of the founders of rock and roll. An argument could be made for the significance of rock and roll as an art form, and for its invention as an achievement worthy of posterity. Unfortunately for poor Ike he will be remembered uniquely for punching Tina Turner, a gesture which would have been fine if not uniquely admirable had he not been married to her at the time, and had he not stated quite so clearly how uniquely admirable he felt his actions to have been. All of which begs the question of what we actually value in our public figures. Is punching Tina Turner more culturally important than inventing rock and roll? No. But crucially, it is slightly funnier. Wife-abuse, however, is not amusing in the slightest. Is Evel Knievel dying slowly, off his bike, funny? Horribly, crucially, yes. Is it funny for those close to him? No. Keith Richards snorting his dad's ashes is

funny, as is him falling out of a coconut tree and needing "trepanning", to use his own richly evocative phrasing. Your own father snorting Keith Richards, on the other hand, would be very perverse. It would most likely be very embarrassing if a member of your family fell out of a coconut tree, and in fact slightly shameful that they were up there in the first place.

Oddly the most tellingly pertinent story of the year so far has been the saga of the Nuremberg City Zoo's polar bears, Vera and Vilma, and their young. The bears are the stars of the zoo; national celebrities and a persuasive draw for tourists, yet just two



Mother bear: menace

weeks ago Vilma decided, in the middle of the night, to eat her two babies. This is not uncommon, for polar bears; there are, after all, bear necessities we do not understand. Moreover, it's difficult to suppress a chuckle when one thinks of the faces of the hordes of tourists, cameras primed, as Vilma nonchalantly strolled out of her cave in the morning, licking her chops. Yet it has provoked such fears amongst the keepers about Vera that they have removed her own baby, Knut, from her potentially cannibalistic care. They will raise the cub by hand, so he can be a star all of his own. It's unnatural, but he might have died otherwise. Nobody goes to the zoo to see real life anyway. Do we mock or console? Looking at this week's photos of Britney Spears, I think an earnest, nervous laughter seems appropriate.



Evel: boring death



# NICK KNOWS

Got a problem? Medic and CUSU HIV and sexual health rep Nick will happily answer any questions you may have. Send them in to [lifestyle@varsity.co.uk](mailto:lifestyle@varsity.co.uk)



## RESIDENT MEDIC NICK CULSHAW GIVES US HIS TOP FIVE TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER 2008

**1 Don't get bird flu**  
Unless you're a Vet, the chances of you coming into contact with any live chickens this term are pretty minimal; the chances of any chickens in Cambridge having bird flu are even smaller, but why take the risk? Cambridge based biotech firm Acambis have produced a vaccine that could give long-term protection against all Influenza A virus strains, including "winter" and bird flu. Following a successful US trial they will be conducting larger human trials- you'd be clucking mad not to volunteer.

**2 Spend less time jogging**  
Bored of jogging aimlessly around Parker's Piece in your Jack Wills-college stash combo? You might look the part, but you can reduce the time you spend sweating and burn more calories by interval training. Why not try this:

5 minutes warm up jog  
1 minute "sprint" followed by 1 minute slow jog  
Repeat 6 times  
5 minutes cool down jog

As you get fitter, increase the number of sprint/ jog combos. You'll be healthier, thinner and have more time to bitch about your dissertation.

**3 Eat a guava**  
Guava is a great source of Fibre, to keep you regular, Vitamin C, which protects against cancer and wrinkles, and Carotenoids, which boost your immune system and might come handy if you can't get your hands on that bird flu vaccine.

**4 Drink pomegranate juice**  
Pomegranate juice is packed full of antioxidants, so combined with guava that's even fewer wrinkles and even more anti-cancer goodness. These antioxidants can also reduce the risk of heart disease and, by increasing Nitric Oxide levels, it's a natural form of Viagra- whilst vodka and pomegranate doesn't sound too manly, you could well have the last laugh come kicking-out time at Sunday night Life.

**5 Get an STI check**  
Syphilis can leave you paralysed. Human Papilloma Virus infection leads to cervical cancer. Hep B could mean liver cancer. Contract HIV and you could die from any old cold. The Laurels is a short walk from the town centre and if you really can't be arsed to walk then get on the Uni4 to Addenbrooke's.

# BOTTOMS UP

This is a dangerous time of year. On the eve of a New Year, whilst drinking one's body weight in claret may seem a dash impulsive, far rasher is the resolve to embark upon a bunch of eccentric lifestyle changes. Good-night to Gardies, good-morrow to supernutrient smoothies; out with the Lambrini, in with the Snapple ("The soft drink for adults™"); some even begin stumbling towards the boat houses at the sort of hour most

"Reject any wine which feels the need to advertise on television."

stagger away from Cindy's. Such admirable intentions rankle against the bohemian stereotypes of university life, and sour the Bacchic standards of this column, but how – having downed the requisite 2 pints of Evian a day – is one's thirst to be quenched?

Feeling thoroughly hanged-over following last year's extravagance and with the ugly aspect of binge-drinking culture looming unsteadily towards us, the first resolution seems clear: drink less, but better. Whilst Woody B

benders will be sorely missed, for the same price one may purchase such crisp and optimistically summery delights as M&S's Rosé d'Anjou 2006 – more alcohol, superior taste, and fewer charges of assault and battery.

Secondly steer clear of wine with sold in plastic bottles, bags and boxes. Furthermore reject any wine which feels the need to advertise on television. Whilst I am reliably told that the no-longer-pink-places-on-the-globe can produce the most ambrosial of nectars, New World wines pumped out on Coca-Cola levels of production invite comparison with everything from paint stripper to oil-tanker exfoliator. Try Sainsbury's Chilean Cono Sur Merlot or Sauvignon Blanc instead, both fruity £4 options that don't erode the throat.

Admittedly bringing good wine to for-

mal is like slipping on a pair of suede loaders to scurry round the 1600m hurdles: pennyng one's way through £15 of Châteauneuf-du-Pape makes for rather over-priced vomit. But the third resolution of the term should be to find a sober(ish) occasion, a half-decent formal and some suitably over-fermented opinions to lavish upon your finest bottle of hock - the upper-echelons of college wine lists are selected with choice amounts of vim and vigour.

Finally, May Week and Liwly Bollinger teach us that champagne suits all manner of occasions and all times of the day: from sipping at bubbles during sunset-lit, jazz-softened evenings to guzzling bottles at Suicide Sunday breakfasts. The festive flushing of Threshers' literally thrilling 3 for 2 on all wine and champers cannot be missed. Let yourself be drawn moth-like towards the burning bright of giant half-price tags and acquire bubbly by the bucket load.

Guy Stagg



## CHECK OUT WHAT'S GETTING US HOT UP TOP AND CHILLY DOWN BELOW

### SCORCHING

**CHRISTMAS FINALLY OVER**  
Thank GOD. Weeks and weeks of anticipation and planning culminating in a 48-hour lock-down. Dry turkey, dry entertainment (BBC's Ballet Shoes??) and dry conversation with dry relatives. Note to self: next year douse granny in brandy and set aflame.

**REISS SALE**  
When has it been considered acceptable for a high-street store to charge £89 for a cardigan (not even cashmere...)? The answer is never. When is the perfect time to nab said cardigan for a bargain-tastic £27.50? The answer is now.

**BBC1'S DAMAGES**  
Bye-bye insipid, British period dramas, hello ballsy, American corporate export. Glenn Close plays mega-bitch top litigator Patty Hewes, who recruits fresh-faced, angelic Rose Byrne as her latest associate. Don't expect a light-hearted romp around Manhattan; this gritty, suspenseful drama will have you hooked from the word go (and thankfully we have all 13 episodes, completed pre-Hollywood writers' strike).

**JOHN LEWIS TEAROOM**  
Johnny & Luciana are, as of yet, undecided about this new hangout. On the one hand, the cakes taste great, the view is pretty unbeatable and the decor is smart. On the other hand, the only people you'll find hanging out here are OAPs and, most probably, that supervisor you're trying to avoid. Oh, AND our eclairs cost about 4 quid. Yeah, each.

**BRITNEY'S MUST-SEE MELT-DOWN**  
We read Heat Magazine to laugh at Jordan's latest botched boob-job and swoon over naked Harry Potter pics. We do not find a 6-page photo spread charting this poor girl's loss of physical health, mental well-being and now her two children entertaining or suitable for public scrutiny. In the words of youtube overnight superstar, Chris Crocker, "leave Britney alone".

**AMERICAN ELECTION OVER-KILL**  
Tears before bedtime and we are only a few weeks in. Hillary Clinton, nobody cares if you only get to eat pizza on the campaign trail. There are more important things to worry about. Such as how bored we are by the entire malarkey already.

**BUTTERY FOOD**  
Leaving the comforts of home and Mummy's yummy cooking is always tricky. Salt is definitely rubbed into the wound following a little visit to the College Buttery. Ikam Asam Chicken with Broccoli Milanese, anyone? Yes, we know it's cheap. We also know why.



REISS



### SUB ZERO



# Boogie Down, Get Nasty

Filthy MacNasty's Whiskey Café was the amorphous cathedral for anyone for whom the spirit of spontaneous creativity and good old fashioned decadence had meaning. **Sophie Hauptfuhrer** meets its one-time owner and founder **Gerry O'Boyle**

**"T**he trick about doing a great bar," growls Gerry O'Boyle, his voice exuding a miasma of cigarette smoke and drawn curtains in the daytime, "is that it never in any way looks contrived. Everything that happened at Filthy's was done for the right reasons. We lived it. We were the real deal." And if anyone should know how to do a great bar, it's him. As O'Boyle himself says, "the roll-call was colossal": the stage has played host to impromptu gigs from Johnny Borrell, Pete Doherty and Shane MacGowan, as well as the book launch for Frank McCourt's Angela's Ashes and Channel 4's Mavericks film festival.

One of O'Boyle's greatest coups was a night called Vox'n'Roll. "The basic idea was to take writers out of bookstores and turn them into rock stars. We made it sharp and fast, like a great gig, with the author reading from their work and playing nine of their favourite songs – three readings, three pieces of music, and so on. It was a simple idea and it worked." Patrick McCabe, author of the Booker-nominated *The Butcher Boy*, was the first to read at Vox'n'Roll, soon to be followed by McCourt, James Ellroy, Roddy Doyle, Ken Kesey, Alan Warner and John Cale, as well as Filthy's regulars including McCabe, Howard Marks, Will Self, Irvine Welsh and Kevin Sampson.

Unofficially, Filthy's became a refuge for the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ellroy, the Sex Pistols, Dennis Leary and Phil Daniels. "It's important for the Creatives to have somewhere to go," O'Boyle says, and his scope for these Creatives was boundless. "It became legendary for hellraisers, rock'n'roll bands, models and the like."

Although O'Boyle was in control of his venture and knew what he wanted to achieve with Filthy's, he surprisingly attributes much of its magic to a figure somewhat outside the rock 'n' roll scene – Merlin the

Arthurian wizard. This isn't the whiskey talking (O'Boyle is teetotal) Filthy McNasty's is widely believed to stand upon the final resting place of this original trickster. Mixing with the "hellraisers, models and rock'n'roll bands" were witches, warlocks and various other disciples of the Order coming to pay homage. Filthy's was even host to a documentary following the final movements of the wizard, put together by Ken Kesey, a close friend of O'Boyle's. For O'Boyle the beauty of the situation was "being able to sit with Ken, one of the greatest authors of our time, and Shane [MacGowan], one of our most treasured musicians. Then there were our regulars, one of whom actually believed himself to be Mozart, all the druids, and some bloke who'd changed his name to 'King Arthur'. These were the extremes, but the

unexpected was certainly to be expected."

In 2000, however, it was time to move on. "The thing about Filthy's you see, what with Merlin and all, is that it is ruled by the planet Jupiter – the planet of decadence and excess." This constituted part of the reason he sold it: Filthy's was never just a bar. For many years Gerry housed down and out bohemians there, including Pete Doherty and Carl Barat, who worked behind the bar. "It all got too hectic. To the public it was just the way a rock and roll bar should be." But to the occupants, closing time was only the beginning. "It was a living thing, it was hardcore"

he mutters. "Someone once told me it was like being on tour with the Stone Roses for seven years. You can't live at that pace forever. You burn out."

Gerry returned to his Irish roots and spent three years as an auctioneer back in Sligo. "But I felt there was unfinished business; that I had more to offer." Thus was born The Boogaloo in Highgate, in 2003. The name originates from Boogaloo, a new and exciting type of music and dance emanating from the Spanish Harlem club scene of New York City. "The idea came to me when I was in Texas. I bought a book

called Juke-joint; just pictures of drinking

## Filthy Facts

### August 1993

O'Boyle founds Filthy's

### February 1997

Vox 'n' Roll launched

### September 1997

Mavericks Film Festival introduced

### March 2000

O'Boyle sells pub

### December 2002

The Boogaloo opens

### May 2004

Doherty and Barat play together for the last time at Filthy's

shacks along the Mississippi, but every one with a great jukebox." His vision was "to open a bar with great music, great people and the like," and to those who are familiar with Boogaloo, this is exactly what he and his business partner John Keane have done. Hailed as the "sweetest little juke-joint in the world" by GQ, the Boogaloo has a jukebox rotating ten albums monthly, selected by a rock'n'roll great: this month is Iggy Pop, next month Johnny Marr from the Smiths. "The only stipulation is that they are at least ten years old. Stand the test of time. And I would never have any Coldplay. We're not cut from the same cloth." And, though the partying continues at the Boogaloo, it is certainly of a more mature flavour than Filthy's. The décor is cosy; squidgy leather sofas and deep red walls with an atmosphere which, whilst euphorically energetic on gig nights, is intimate and homely on a Sunday.

Gerry is not just a Good Shepherd for high velocity stars of the underground; he is also an astute businessman. His current ventures include managing up-and-coming model and actress Friday Chamberlain (whom he spotted trying to jump the queue at a secret Babyshambles gig) and developing the Boogaloo into a 'food operation' both here and abroad. "We want to do some

cafés, with great food, books, and a jukebox of course. But I can't say any more than that." He has also recently begun a guerilla estate agency, RealtyJoe, with a business model based on having mobile agents all over the UK. "I wanted to take the dark arts out of the estate agent, to be more transparent. Estate agents have a bad name, being driven by greed, but it's not necessary. I was raised on buying and selling [his father was also a cattle dealer]; it's fascinating, and a great outlet for young minds. I'm looking to train young people all over the country and have them working with just a car and a laptop."

Gerry O'Boyle's legacy has developed far beyond the simple Rock'n'Roll bar where "you wouldn't find a five pound bag of nuts." Establishments such as The Hawley Arms and Proud Galleries in Camden openly replicate the template laid down by Filthy's and The Boogaloo. "It's flattering. I've never been to either though. I just do what I do well and there's room for everybody." It is this laid back approach that is at the heart of his bars, imbued with the quiet confidence that a bit of grit never did anyone any harm. Will he ever decide to pack it all in? "I don't know. I don't think that far ahead. As Saint Augustine said: 'Lord make me pure, but not just yet.'"







# Simmonds Says

Guardian cartoonist **Posy Simmonds** is notorious for her stories depicting suburban philanderers. **Anna Trench** introduces her Flaubert-inspired heroines

**P**osy Simmonds ushers me into her north London Georgian house and it's as if I've walked into a beautiful gallery of my favourite artists. There are prints and drawings all over the walls and she even proudly reveals two original Rowlandsons, a watercolour and a print. It's not for nothing that Rowlandson has appeared: like that late 18th- early 19th-century caricaturist, Simmonds takes the piss out of society in sharply observed line drawings and washes, "putting a magnifying glass to an aspect of life".

We sit in her large and rather messy basement studio with a cup of tea, surrounded by "all these bloody books". The messiness is a surprising contrast to the illustrations, newspaper cartoons and graphic novels she produces, which are always so perfectly composed and beautifully contained. On the shelves are hundreds of her old sketchbooks, and even some comic books she shows me which she made when she was nine. Her desk is surrounded by stacks of pens and pencils, paints and inks and on the wall is an enormous mirror in which she pulls faces to get her characters' expressions. There is no computer. Her inspirations are everywhere: wartime Picture Post magazines, 1960s Vogues, classic novels, a first edition Ronald Searle book, a Nicholson print and, rather incongruously, a Lily Allen CD lying on the floor. When I point this out she mumbles, "How embarrassing...old farts listening..." But although over 60, Simmonds is not an old fart. She's hilarious. She was listening to Lily Allen for research for her latest graphic novel, Tamara Drewe (a modern take on Thomas Hardy's Far From the

Madding Crowd), which includes two teenage girls. Leaning forward and transforming from her softly-spoken manner she relates some schoolgirls' dirty conversation she overheard on a top deck whilst doing more research: "Wot'd'e fuckin do then? 'Nuthin. It was like clothes on. Through zips. He patted the dog through the letterbox." Then she sort of giggles. "Oh it was just so wonderful...terrific".

The humour in Simmonds' work comes from recognition. We laugh and then realise we are laughing at ourselves, or at the person sitting next to us on the bus. She modestly admits, "If people recognise themselves or say you are hiding in my dustbin, I would be very pleased that I'd actually got something right". You'll recognize Posy Simmonds' work. She's been illustrating at the Guardian for over 30 years, from when she was a 'dogsbody' at Fleet Street amongst alcoholics behind typewriters up until Tamara Drewe, which was recently serialized in the Guardian Review. Older readers will remember her 1970s strip of the Webers mocking woolly liberal Guardian readers, while at the other end of the spectrum are her Fred and Lulu books for children. Equally popular are her Literary Life cartoons or graphic novel Gemma Bovary (inspired by Flaubert's tale), both originally

strips in the Guardian. I ask her if behind the soft lines and watercolours she is ever slyly attacking. "Oh yes. In some cases, absolutely". But she is a social observer rather than a satirist and certainly not a political one. "Their job is to bludgeon and call shit shit," she says of political cartoonists like Steve Bell and Martin Rowson. Her role is different, but she still affects people. "You can bash them over the head or you can make them feel...aaargh!" she makes a mortified face. Embarrassment figures a lot in her drawings. A key scene in Tamara Drewe is narrated by a nosy fat American who overhears a tragic marital argument whilst sitting on the loo. It is always funny, but there is often an undercurrent of something darker, whether that's the humiliation of being cheated on or patronised or just being schoolgirls desperate to shout about their sexual antics on public transport.

Her ideas can come from anywhere. A conversation overheard, an article read, or even something seemingly insignificant like a handbag can trigger the images and text that make up her stories. She rarely takes a sketchbook out with her in the street but she has an incredible visual memory and often rushes back to draw someone who's taken her fancy. Her sketchbooks are full of thousands of preparatory drawings. Dozens of characters, bags and cars, faces from all angles, pets

and floor plans.

She showed me some drawings of Princess Diana, whose character represents a final manifestation of Gemma Bovary. "It's like making a person", she says, "and like drawing a film." Even though there is text in her work, it is often just dialogue, and "the drawing has to do the descriptive work." For Tamara Drewe she also spent time in the countryside (where the book is mainly set) drawing cows and barns and noticing the differences between London teenagers and those from the shires. "There seems to be a lot more sex in the country, especially in the summer, when they're all out in the fields." There is also a lot of sex in Simmonds' work. You'd probably expect it from a graphic novel inspired by Madame Bovary (there is a brilliant scene where Flaubert's suggestively rocking carriage is transferred to a caravan in an underground car park). But the amount of sex she gets into a Hardy novel is impressive; Tamara Drewe certainly gets around.

It is the details in Posy Simmonds' work (the hand gestures and movement of eyes) and the text (she has the most acute ear for the nuances of dialogue) that are so rewarding and reveal an artist with enviable observational skills. I was terrified of meeting her; worried she'd be scrutinising my every move. But she only took the piss out of me once, mimicking my rather inane comment that "Hogarth's well good". When I left her house, reeling with inspiration, it was as if I'd taken a Posy Simmonds observational pill. I didn't stroll blindly through the streets as usual, but stared at everyone I passed, noting their different handbags.

## Get Involved The Shop XVIII Jesus Lane

### What the devil's this?

The Shop is a totally independent student-run project with no affiliations to the University. It hopes to bring together Cambridge's creative community by providing space dedicated to your artwork.

### Who's behind it?

Paloma Gormley (Jesus) and Lewis Jones (King's).

### Aha. Is this something to do with last year's Forum project?

Sort of. The Shop is an evolution of the Forum project which ran during May Week last year and is a reaction to the lack of communal space for creative work, somewhere that is constantly used by the entire student body.

### Sounds great. Where is it?

On Jesus Lane. Jesus College has given this project its support by offering us the use of a shop unit which has been converted into a studio, workshop and gallery.

### And who can use the studio?

Anyone. The studio will be open to all students.

### What exactly can we do there?

We'll provide facilities for making creative work – anything from printmaking to sculpture.

### And what kind of exhibitions will there be?

The windows will display a weekly rotation of exhibits and installations. Anyone interested should email XVIIIJesusLane@gmail.com with a short description and images, if possible. We will be having larger exhibitions once or twice a term, exhibiting work by established artists as well as emerging talent. We wish to keep a high standard while promoting challenging art. We will be having an exhibition at the end of term displaying the product of The Shop's activity.

### Will there be nosh?

There is no kitchen but the Cambridge Community Cafe Project are moving in a few doors down which will hopefully make Jesus Lane a new hub of student community activity.

### Super. Anything else?

We are also planning to run a programme of talks, film screenings and workshops and to use the space for weekly life drawing classes. We will be organizing workshops on practices as wide ranging as knitting and downing, the art of making a considered mess, Sally Anne communion, t-shirt printing, getting to know your photocopier intimately, hat making, the power tool (beginner to intermediate level), drawing and printing, tea brewing and cardboard boxes (advanced level). There will be ongoing projects created in The Shop, including a magazine and clothing line.

### Okeydoke, I want to get involved immediately. Is this possible?

Yes! XVIII Jesus Lane is run by volunteers and is looking for people to come and help. There is a 'Squash...ish' on Saturday January 19th (ie tomorrow) from 6-7pm at 18 Jesus Lane. You'll be able to sign up to use the space and get involved in making stuff happen!



## Great Works of Art at Cambridge

### #1: William Orpen's *Self Portrait* 1924

*Fitzwilliam Museum*

A rather narrow balcony runs around the top of one of the rooms in the Fitzwilliam Museum, with seventy-five paintings, none much larger than an A4 piece of paper, lining the wall. The visitor travels clockwise around the gallery, never aware of more than one painting at a time (for in taking a step back one risks tripping over the railings and splattering the gallery floor with one's own self-portrait). One sidesteps from painting to painting, face-to-face first with the bespectacled Lytton Strachey, then the bushy beard of Paul Verlaine; this is more like speed-dating than the ten-metre walk towards the Countess of Pembroke downstairs. Inspired by the collection of self-portraits in the Uffizi gallery in Florence, Sydney Cockerell, Director of the Fitzwilliam from 1908 to 1937, asked a number of eminent painters to contribute a self-portrait to the museum's collection. Amongst the gravitas of the five or so austere Edwardian gentlemen surrounding him, William Orpen's self-portrait is the most striking.

Born in County Dublin, Ireland, in 1878, Orpen was accepted into the Dublin School of Art aged only eleven. His education continued at the Slade, before the encouragement of John Singer Sargent helped to establish him as a popular society portraitist. After the breakout of war in 1914, Orpen was soon enlisted as an official war

painter, which is the reason he is remembered today. Proud portraits of generals and politicians occupied much of his time, which was also spent painting the desolation of the European landscape, and the carnage caused by trench warfare. Orpen's uncompromising response to the war can even be seen in *Self Portrait*. The untouched brown-green which occupies the forefront of the portrait is suggestive of the colours in Sargent's famous war portrait *Gassed*, a grim reminder that the effects of war were slow to subside.

The artist is sitting at his easel, painting. He turns into a mirror, stationed behind him, in order to paint himself painting. He looks at the mirror, and then paints himself on the canvas. But when he turns back to the mirror, there is another face in the reflection. This face too, he must paint into his painting. And so on, to infinity. Each time he paints another reflection the image is less distinctive, more lifeless, more colourless, retreating into the dismal background. The structure is like a demonic vanity table, multiplying the artist's face and distorting it. This painting of a reflection of a painting is very immediate: the first image of the artist's face is keen and worried, he is balding and greying and furrowed and the yellow mark in the white of his right eye gives the painting an unnerving atmosphere.



William Orpen  
(1878-1931)  
*Self Portrait* 1924

FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

# Fit for King's

**Stephen Cleobury** has revolutionized King's Chapel Choir. But, **Toby Chadd** asks him, does King's really deserve its reputation, and is musical innovation drowning out religious convention?

In the first half of the twentieth century, the typical musical education of a professional conductor, organist or composer would involve a stint at a cathedral or an Oxbridge chapel. This resulted in a musical establishment closely connected with the ecclesiastical set-up, and thus by association embedded in the everyday cultural life of the nation. The start of the twenty-first century has heralded both a funding crisis in the Arts and a sharp decline in congregations at services; it is no longer a rite of passage for composers to write church music, preferring instead to bolster their audience numbers and earnings by writing concert pieces.

Stephen Cleobury, director of music at King's, has seen both of these worlds. Organ scholar at St John's before moving on to Westminster Abbey as sub-organist, Cleobury marked the beginning of his stint at King's by establishing, in 1983, the tradition of commissioning a carol specially for the famous Christmas Eve Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. In doing so, he was conscious of establishing a tradition, and one which has now been accepted into the very fabric of this institution. "I think that the reason that I set up this tradition was that a lot of twentieth-century church music has been frankly of poor quality, for various reasons, and I wanted to show that a composer working in

contemporary mainstream music, for example writing symphonies for orchestras, can write good choral music. I think that some composers don't think of doing it until they're asked, and I've found that composers I've approached are extremely willing and pleased to be asked."

This year's Christmas Eve service seemed to have a more self-consciously modern feeling to it, particularly given the high proportion of carols written after 1950. "When I first came here, in 1982, I was extremely aware of the weight of tradition and particularly the degree of expectation, and I found that very burdensome; it took about five years to realise that I had to allow it be my own. I hope what I have allowed to happen is the embracing of more recent ideas of vibrancy without losing the technical quality – it is for others to say whether they like it or think I have achieved that."

King's overwhelming dominance of the Cambridge choral scene is an interesting phenomenon, yet Cleobury is reluctant to comment on it; this reluctance is perhaps symptomatic of King's musical connections being more with the outside professional world than within Cambridge, and thus it is not surprising that King's have come to be the public face of Cambridge musically. In an ecclesiastical sense too, Cleobury compares King's reputation and congregation more readily with the cathedrals than with other college

chapels. Indeed when he says that "church today ought to be, whatever one's religious stand-point, inclusive rather than exclusive", he seems to be talking not from the inside of the sort of community very often afforded by the collegiate system, but with the attitude of a much more public institution.

Cleobury is undoubtedly aware of this and its impact on evensong, commenting that "there are probably students at King's who prefer to go to a quieter liturgical celebration", and although it seems that King's position as fore-runners in choral music has come at the cost of the liturgical function of evensong and carol services. Dean Milner-White insisted that, in the Christmas Eve service, "the main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God through the windows and the words of the Bible" and that music serves, as Cleobury puts it, as the "handmaid". Although Cleobury insists that this is still the case, King's decision to use their choir as an innovator seems to have directly resulted in the loss of a purely liturgically motivated congregation, as has occurred for different reasons in large cathedrals nationwide. It may well be a good thing, then, that King's almost single-handedly attracts the tourist congregations, leaving the other colleges to continue attaining high musical standards without sacrificing liturgical function.



ANDREW HOUSTON - WITH KIND PERMISSION OF THE PRIEST AND SCHOLARS OF KING'S COLLEGE



# Chazzle Dazzle

**Chas & Dave:** Mockney muppets or original punks? As they reach Cambridge on the latest stage of their tour, **Hugo Gye** talks to Chas to find out

**C**has & Dave, the chirpy Cockney duo who have been plugging away at their own idiosyncratic brand of pub-rock for thirty years, have produced a veritable litany of urch-pop classics such as Gertcha, Rabbit and The Sideboard Song, as well as 1982's Number Two hit Ain't No Pleasing You. Their (seemingly never-ending) tour has just passed through Cambridge, and we were lucky to enough to have the chance to speak to Chas Hodges, lead singer and

mistaken for a pisstake. It has also been suggested that their early single Gertcha, named for the expression which Cockney gents of the prewar generation would use to avoid swearing, was punk before punk, appearing two years before the Ramones, and Chas agrees, saying that he and Dave would "class that as a punk song". Not, perhaps, a universally-held opinion. It is, however, undeniably punk to perform a song called Snooker Loopy, a tribute to 80s cue-wielders such as Terry Griffiths and Tony Meo, with its lyrics unchanged since its 1986 release, regardless of the disappearance of these names from the public consciousness.

Chas & Dave's extremely noticeable accents, their rather provincial themes and geographical particularism of numbers such as Down to Margate have always ensured their identification as a very specifically English band, something which was not quite planned at the start of their career, although Chas recalls his early

days as a backing singer in America with horror. "I'd always end up singing in an American accent, and after the show people would come up and ask 'What part of the States do you come from?' I'd walk away thinking, 'This ain't right, this ain't me.'" This disheartening experience led him back to his East End roots, with the logic that "If it's honest the accent doesn't matter." The truth of this is borne out

pains to emphasise that he was "straight as a die", with only a solitary pint as recreation). If you type in 'Chas & Dave' on YouTube, most of the clips seem to feature Doherty playing their songs in his flat. One might think that they would be bored of being asked about their celebrity fans, but Chas brought them up himself, describing his gratitude for the increasing youth of his audiences, which he puts down partly to their support although he notes that Chas & Dave have "always had a young following".

The attention they have regained in the last few years is obviously gratifying to the duo; but although they are clearly pleased to have been taken more seriously by the press than they were when they started out, the emotion is palpable in Chas's voice as he says that "When other musicians start following yer, you know you're doing something right." The thousands who go to see them play and enjoy bopping along to the least po-faced pop music ever made would agree.

**"When other musicians start following yer, you know you're doing something right"**

by the duo's popularity in the US, where they tour about once a year and where they are championed by Jack Clement, engineer at Sun Records in the good old days.

The surge in popularity enjoyed by Chas & Dave in recent years is in part due to their enthusiastic fans the Libertines, who enlisted the boys to support them at Kentish Town Forum in 2003 and Brixton Academy in 2004, and that association continues; last month they played with Peter Doherty at the Tap 'n' Tin in Chatham (Chas takes

**"If you're stuck in the mud then it's your own fault"**

pianist in this extraordinary pair.

Both Chas and Dave were playing music long before they teamed up around 1974: Dave played as a session musician with such bands as Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers, while Chas worked with legendary early rock 'n' roll producer Joe Meek, and spent some time in Jerry Lee Lewis' backing band. With nearly fifty years' experience in the business, you might forgive them for being tired, but no: Chas's only irritation was that he hadn't played a gig for four days, and couldn't wait to get back on stage. He says that "There's always something else to do in music. If you get stuck in the mud it's your own fault." Take that Coldplay, you moaners.

The duo are remembered as a comedic, 'Rockney' band, but that was not necessarily their intention: Chas makes the sensible statement that "We just want to write songs that we enjoy, and that other people enjoy"; in fact, he is most proud of 'Ain't No Pleasing You', their first straightfaced hit; he believes it was the "first serious song to be sung in a Cockney accent" – and their Cockney accents are so broad, even in conversation, as to be

Gig Review

**Lauren Cooney**



**Spice Girls**

A decade ago I cried my eyes out because Geri Halliwell announced that she was leaving the Spice Girls. The idea of seeing them again after ten years of maturely distancing myself from the Spice World so many tweenies inhabited was a bewildering prospect. My twenty-two-year-old sister squealed with delight when we received our concert tickets, and College conversation has been peppered with Spice allusions. It's not that we are a bunch of losers, bimbo feminists, or any other breed of tasteless geek; it's simply that the Spice Girls are great.

Reviewers who wish to diss the twirl of their dancing or the strength of their voice are simply missing the point. This is a reunion, an imitation, a nostalgia-fest: no-one is pretending that their recent single Headlines (Friendship Never Ends) was a good bit of tuneage; it clearly wasn't. But they played their cards right. This was going to be cheesy, tacky, and so unbelievably nineties. They careered onto the stage kitted out in an array of beautiful Roberto Cavalli costumes and for two glorious hours belted out a string of Number One hits.

Mel C was the most impressive performer, but even Mrs Beckham's awkward catwalk posing was met by approving cheers that drowned out the noise whenever she opened her gob to simper a line. Each girl successfully managed a solo moment, except for Mel B who made the bizarre decision to lap-dance to Are You Gonna Go My Way by Lenny Kravitz. Scarily sexed up, the whole concert reminded the twenty-something audience that Girl Power had become Woman Power, and despite the jubilant atmosphere in the arena, this brand of entertainment just wouldn't work today. Even if the Tube ride home was a little embarrassing it was great fun to don my buffalo trainers and Union Jack dress, so much fun I ended up going to the concert twice. Zig-a-zig-ah.



RICHARD SKIDMORE



## view from the groundlings



The sharp-eyed reader will notice that we have fallen down to earth from Mount Olympus and are once more lowly groundlings. The weight of expectation was too great, and anyway humility seems somehow better for the environment. So.

All eyes were on Rome this week as the term's theatrical shenanigans kicked off with a bang (or rather, a stab) as ETG marks its 50th anniversary with Uri Adiv's production of Julius Caesar; fresh from their European tour, they are back in Cambridge as per tradition to finish their run here. Having been assured by the Facebook group that it was going to be "brilliant", everyone was on the edge of their seats as the curtain rose, and I for one was not disappointed either by the actors' rather dashing purple sashes nor by the somewhat cornucopian use of fake blood flowing like wine.

The wonderful Alcock Improv lightened the mood later with a new repertoire of games and improvised sketches, though when they ended up, blindfolded and barefoot, breakdancing (in the loosest sense) around (slash onto) mousetraps, one had to wonder whether someone had slipped a little something in their shandy.

All very exciting. Indeed, this is shaping up to be a very exciting term, with plenty in store to delight and impress. New writing galore, not least from Alcock's very own ex-frontman Tom Hensby, whose short history of the world claims to address all those very real questions such the true cause of Wales's scuppered world domination dreams. Then there is the Footlights' Spring Review, also about history, and quills to be dusted off all over town as the Harry Potter Prize comes round again. There is even a new little Something (Nothing?) from last year's winner on at the Playroom in week 4. In fact, the Playroom's glittering line-up this term looks set to cement it as one of the best venues in town, even if it is L-shaped.

Finally, once you've finished this weekend's audition rounds, don't forget to book your ticket for A Night with Over the Bridge on Tuesday: a capella at the ADC for one night only as choral scholars from across the university come together to wow us with their take on the classic work of such musical maestros as Daniel Bedingfield and S Club 7. We can't confirm rumours that the big cheeses at King's Chapel have plans to bring them all back for an East-stravaganza, but I imagine they just want to get through this first; don't reach for the stars before you can walk.

Alex Reza

## Julius Caesar ADC

Dir: Uri Adiv

Theatre  
★★★★★



What this year's offering from ETG lacked in overall coherence it very nearly made up for with a number of bold individual performances. But not quite. Whilst rousing in many of the right places, the play never quite overcame the general impression created by its jumbled aesthetics and somewhat sluggish pace.

Josh Higgott's performance as Cassius showed maturity and focus, and he frequently dominated the stage with his natural and unaffected delivery of verse. His scenes with Ed Rice (Brutus) wholly succeeded in conveying the subtle dynamic between the rhetorician and his subject. These two had chemistry, and their dialogue felt suitably intimate, with its pace and intensity driving the play forward in its early stages.

In this male-dominated play the female characters provided a few enlightening glimpses into the private worlds of the very public figures onstage. Stephanie Bain's Portia, a small but important part, provided a well-pitched blend of feminine sensitivity and feminist frustration. Rob Carter's Mark Antony fortified this production with his collected energy and injected spirit and vigour through steadfast delivery. His crucial speech, given over Caesar's corpse, brimmed with an impressive level of sustained passion, though his achievement was somewhat let down by the disappointingly small mob he was addressing. Nevertheless, by placing Brutus and then Mark Antony on an empty stage for their speeches, the director ensured that the audience was properly engaged in the rhetoric.

The scene was compelling.

Despite these strengths, this production suffered badly from a lack of tonal cohesion. The rape, at the end of the first half, was a directorial liberty too far. Had the mob been big enough to create a more substantial, fleshed-out hysteria, the violation might have fitted in amidst the general chaos. But as a set-piece, it came across as a bizarre theatrical shock-tactic. Perhaps more importantly, and undesirably, the line itself had been changed from "Tear him" to "Tear her". While Shakespeare always demands a degree of interpretation, gratuitous sexual violence seems outside this remit. Yes, the mob is enraged, but rape implies a gendered malevolence beyond that present in the text.

Visually, too, the play was often confusing. What exactly was signified by the white pyramid structure bearing an image of Caesar's face? The set, whilst understandably minimal on account of the play's tour schedule, did little to evoke a place or time, and costumes seemed torn between a timeless and a quasi-Roman aesthetic. Furthermore, at times the large numbers of people playing different parts was a cause for uncertainty in the audience.

Julius Caesar succeeded in a few crucial places, and the cast confidently rose to the challenge of its rhetoric. Ultimately, though, the sum of its often worthy parts was an underwhelming whole. But you could do much worse with an evening than go and hear some of the finest speeches in Shakespeare delivered decently and with no frills.

Grace Jackson

## PREVIEW

### Pappy's Fun Club ADC

Comedy

**Varsity:** OK, why the name Pappy's Fun Club?

**Matt:** Brendan and I were trying to think of funny names for a friend of ours' baby, and 'Pappy' just came to us. Brendan used it for online games – it's quite nerdy. Sums up Brendan, really.

**Varsity:** Does it put a strain on the group that Brendan is still in full-time employment?

**Ben:** Well, before Edinburgh it was just a hobby really, but he's going part-time now –

**Matt:** Right, and Brendy and I used to live together in Wolverhampton while Ben and Tom lived in London, so there's always been an element of division through geography –

**Tom:** And race. [Pause.]

**Matt:** Don't really know what you mean, Tom. [Pause.]

**Varsity:** So, ahem, do you guys ever find it hard to 'turn off' and stop being funny?

[Pause. Muffled laughter.]

**Matt:** Oh, sorry, did you hear that? Tom just hit the 'secret conservation' button on the speakerphone and said "you fuck knuckle", just because he knew it would annoy me. We make ourselves laugh if nothing else – the worst is when

we get the giggles on stage and the audience are just thinking "what a group of fuck knuckles". My family don't find me funny.

**Tom:** I'm the least funny one of my friends.

**Varsity:** Would you say that some of you have your own strengths that you bring to the show? Like Tom's... knuckles, for example.

**Ben:** Like performance jazz.

**Matt:** We've got distinctive personalities and these determine the characters we play – they're usually deliberate extensions of ourselves. I tend to be anally retentive, overly controlling. What's a nice word for that?

**Tom:** Anally retentive.

**Matt:** The Times called Tom "red-cheeked and preposterous". I think that sums him up perfectly.

**Varsity:** It's actually quite hard to describe what you guys do on stage.

**Matt:** We take our tops off and stick gaffa tape to our bodies. *Pappy's Fun Club* are 2007 if:comedy award nominees. They're performing as part of *Alcock Allstars* tonight at 11pm in the ADC.

Interview: Will Pearse

## Alcock Improv ADC

Comedy  
★★★★★

Dir: Will Pearse

The problem with improvised comedy is that sometimes the humour can be a bit 'kooky' and that though the gags might be funny at the time, if you wrote them down or performed them as sketches then there would be very little high quality material to play with. You belly-laugh with everyone else and then you go home happy. Many of the jokes are actually rather obvious but they're shared and spontaneous and you feel pleased for the likeable performer that they've got a laugh. It's like rent-some-mates for an hour. The Alcock Improv didn't get off to the best of starts with a pretty limp introduction which ended "woof woof tweet tweet". A deafening silence fell, the last of the evening.

The chirpy host, Will Pearse, introduced a series of "games" (kooky, I know) where a word from the audience stimulated an sketch. He wasn't outstandingly funny but had a pleasing talent for picking the juiciest audience suggestions and snapping sketches to an end at the right moment.

Circumstances leading up to the punchlines are

almost impossible to succinctly explain, but an early highlight was the bearded Britney Spears' entrance to a dinner party: "Hey y'all, sorry I'm late. I couldn't find my children", the first big laugh of the night. The next "game" involved a Venezuelan lecturer holding forth on the topic of crabs and ladders in mock-Spanish, accompanied by an interpreter. The idea for the sketch was an excellent one, with Josh Higgott recalling Charlie Chaplin's famous microphone bending speech in *The Great Dictator* and Jessica Barker-Wren providing a superb sidekick.

The giggles picked up with some solid sketches, including a parody of *Newsnight* Review in which Nate Dern stood out for the first time. Adjoa Anyimadu was impressive for the range and depth of her quirky characterisation. The final sketch involved blindfolded breakdancing over a mousetrap-strewn stage. "They say 'The Steamroller' can't be done!" yelled Nate Dern, impaling his groin on a lamentably placed trap.

Olie Hunt and Elliot Ross



# British Sea Power Do You Like Rock Music?

Album  
★★★★★

I would like to be able to say that British Sea Power are as witty and erudite in interview as they appear in song. Unfortunately I can't. All I can say is that singer Scott (aka Yan) has a wildly impractical answerphone message. It consists mainly of air raid sirens and lasts approximately three minutes. That is the sum total insight gleaned from our twenty-minute interview.

So I am forced to make do with the new album. It is called Do You Like Rock Music?, which is, however you look at it, rather a silly name for an album. Perhaps anticipating the response "What, like Bryan Adams?" the band set up a Guardian blog to clarify matters. Apparently everything can be divided into Rock Music and non-Rock Music. Stewart Lee and John Peel are both Rock Music but Jimmy Carr, alongside cancer, is non-Rock Music. Courtney Love is both Rock Music and non-Rock

Music. I think the implication is that Do You Like Rock Music? is Rock Music.

It certainly does have all the hallmarks. There are big sweeping choruses, pounding drums and zealous use of crunchy distortion. Most of the songs sound like they have been designed to sound good at festivals when the band stop singing and the crowd fill in. Some songs with their bombastic guitar riffs will almost certainly make an appearance behind goal montages on Football Focus ('Down on the Ground') and still others directly incorporate braying drunken terrace chants ('No Lucifer').

This album is definitely, therefore, Rock Music. But it is not a middle-aged, balding, leather jacket sort. It is more an intelligent, heart-felt, I-like-reading-history-books' sort. How many other bands have written songs about tragic flooding incidents in Essex in 1953 ('Canvey Island'),

or Niels Bohr ('Atom') or even welcoming Polish plumbers to our shores ('Waving Flags')? Lord knows what Morrissey will make of the latter.

Every new 'indie' album is likened to the Arcade Fire, but here the comparison is meaningful. The thumping drums, string-driven choral sections and frail, breathy vocals are all very Arcade Fire-like. You could argue, in fact, that because British Sea Power have been around longer than Arcade Fire they actually own the sound. Arcade Fire should be called very British Sea Power-like. It doesn't really matter. What matters is that this is British Sea Power's third and best album. Do you like Rock Music? Buy the album to find out. A pathetically predictable way to end this review but then perhaps if Scott had answered his phone I might have thought of something better.

Oli Robinson

# The Magnetic Fields Distortion

Album  
★★★★★

Stephin Merritt, leader of the Magnetic Fields, has a habit of naming his albums literally. 1999 brought 69 Love Songs, a sprawling 3 CD masterpiece that tackled love and heart-break with the irreverence implied by its title. I followed a few years later, each of its tracks beginning with that letter.

Distortion delivers on its title, and will surprise many Magnetic Fields fans. Merritt has described his intention with this album as "to sound more like Jesus and Mary Chain than Jesus and Mary Chain", and the new approach sees them produce some of their most confident music yet. Merritt's reputation as a miserabilist is unfair – he's more of a romantic – but on Distortion there's little respite from gloom. The hilarious introduction to highlight 'Too Drunk to Dream' compares being sober (when "nobody wants you") and "shit-faced" ("they're all undressing") before giving way to the admission that "dreaming only makes me blue", but humour prevents the album from being too depressing.

The musical ethos has a mixed effect on the songs. The band has kept the pianos and violins found on earlier records, and the elegant twinkles floating above the thick sound give 'Old Fools' a touching melancholy. On some tracks Merritt's vocals are smothered by the effects, with some lyrics frustratingly difficult to decipher. As with his earlier work, this is clearly a carefully considered album, and Merritt's commitment to reinventing his sound is impressive. It's frequently satisfying, but the sound means that the songs are sometimes less memorable than they deserve to be.

Dan Cohen

When you go to these exhibitions – and make it snappy because they end this weekend – go in daylight. The first time I went was in crap January dimness, but the second time, in daylight, I had a minor revelation. What struck me were the uses of colour and composition in both artist's work and spectrum of emotions they could evoke.

The main exhibition space is given to Francis Davison, who was at Cambridge in the 1940s. After a trip to St Ives he began to paint but after settling in Suffolk in 1950 he dedicated his work to large paper collages exploring colour, shape, edge and texture, until his death in 1984. This is an exhibition you definitely need to wander through, to move around the collages and see them from different angles. Up close you can inspect the actual process with which the papers have been layered, ripped or cut, stuck on and torn off. Stand further away and you can feel the artist's anger or cold isolation. He seemed to be excited by paper: the different textures, smooth or serrated or fabiano stripes. But the colours are even more exciting: the variations in tone, contrasts and balance and depth produced make you quite jealous of someone who can be so confident not only with the large abstract composition and surety of surface materials but the intuitive

feeling for the right colour.

In the bookshop I overheard a lady looking at postcards of the other exhibited artist, Jack Shanahan, say "Oooh these are cute – aren't they?" Well, yes, in a way they are. Simple black outlined drawings with felt tip colours inside of anything he's inspired by, be it zigzagged rainbow trousers or traffic lights or fish or abstract grids. They look childish and can be amusing. The blurb on the wall says that 24-year-old Shanahan is cared for by a foundation for people with disabilities in Dublin. What seems odd is that Kettle's Yard should highlight this fact and yet not comment on it. After reading the blurb one cannot help but look at the drawings differently, and I wonder how much our responses stem from that fact, rather than the drawings themselves. The figure behind bars and the decapitated man holding his pink head or the massive open red mouth with pink lips, brown teeth and a dangling cigarette appear eerie and even tragic. What Shanahan has in common with Davison is the same confident eye for colour and composition, but whereas in Davison's work we can see the progression, of revisions and reworkings, in Shanahan's it seems purely intuitive, with no process to follow. *Closes on Sunday*

Anna Trench



Art  
★★★★★

# 4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days Arts Picturehouse

Dir: Cristian Mungiu  
Film  
★★★★★

The most impressive effort from Romania's recent cinematic revolution, 4 Months is an absolutely brutal portrayal of an illegal hotel-room abortion. Unlike last year's Romanian hit, the frivolous 12:08 East of Bucharest, this first feature from Cristian Mungiu pulls no punches as we're taken in quite shocking detail through student Otilia's (Anamaria Marinca) efforts to secure the abortion for her docile friend Gabita (Laura Vasiliu). This is no modern-day Vera Drake, however; 4 Months is commendably ugly, shot with wobbling cameras

and with desaturated colour as Mungiu has no intention of sentimentalising his harrowing subject. He forces one to view the hard-boiled nature of the totalitarian state, the sadistic abortionist and Otilia's uncaring family warts and all. In the best of the film's four set-pieces, you'll see Otilia reduced to tears by her snobbish in-laws. You'll also see Otilia straight after she's been raped, the insertion of the probe into Gabita's body and the dead foetus on the bathroom floor. And the film is all the more effective for it.

Patrick Kingsley

# albums every right-minded person should own



## Parklife Blur

Released at the height of Britpop in 1994, Parklife is definitive of its time, celebrating the glories of pop music of the past, as well as looking forward, with perhaps a little foreboding, to the approaching millennium. This 'concept album' was inspired by Martin Amis' novel London Fields, which Albarn confessed was his 'Bible for six months'. The songs engage fruitfully with the gritty socio-sexual and portentous aspects of the book, such as the rat race of 1990s consumerism, particularly 'End of a Century' and 'Tracy Jacks'. The anthemic and infectious title track and 'Girls & Boys' secured the band their first Top Ten and Top Five hits respectively. Albarn's voice, exuding Essex effrontery, is raw, edgy and sometimes uncontrolled in 'Girls & Boys' and the frenetic 'Bank Holiday'; but there are also moments of real refinement and warmth, in 'To the End' and 'This is A Low'. Albarn crafts his melodies with care, and they shine through in 'Jubilee' and 'Magic America'. He also incorporates a variety of string instruments to add texture and interest to the tracks.

Albarn's occasional poetic genius is somewhat lacking here, although the lyrics are candid and insightful: "It's love unlike and everyone's at it./ But words are cheap and the mind is elastic." There are a few nice surprises thrown in too: not every Blur release showcases the songwriting talents of another band member, and here we get a taste of Alex James's cosmological obsessions in 'Far Out'; then there is the folksy instrumental 'The Debt Collector', and just when we think the record has reached its climax of gravitas and melancholy in 'This is A Low', we are surprised to find the short and light-hearted coda 'Lot 105', as if to say life really isn't that bad at all.

This is not Blur's most exquisitely crafted album, nor their most adventurous, nor their most vigorous. But it combines these elements to be fun and abundant in energy, moving with real progression and direction; it is also an insightful and at times haunting social comment. Marking a turning point for the band, and remaining a landmark album for a whole generation, this is a memorable and enduring opus, a real gem from one of Britain's finest bands.

Amara Sophia Elahi



	film	theatre	music	other	going out
<div><div><div>pick of the week</div><div>friday 18</div><div>saturday 19</div><div>sunday 20</div><div>monday 21</div><div>tuesday 22</div><div>wednesday 23</div><div>thursday 24</div></div></div>	<div><b>Sweeney Todd</b> Sat 19, Sun 20, Thurs 24 Jan, Vue and Arts Picturehouse, Various times</div> <div>Directed by Tim Burton, starring the ubiquitous, yet still quirky, Johnny Depp as well as Burton's wife, Helena Bonham-Carter. In an adaptation from the Sondheim musical, Depp plays the demon barber amidst songs and brutal violence, all portrayed through Burton's unique vision.</div> <div></div>	<div><b>Alcock Allstars</b> Fri 18 - Sat 19 Jan, ADC Theatre, 23.00</div> <div>The final two days of Allcock Allstars' improvised comedy week are a must see, if they aren't already sold out. Each night of the week has offered a different show (see below for specifics), a testament to this team's versatility and talents. They've earned excellent reviews from both the Times and the Guardian, and have rapidly been gaining a reputation in Cambridge for being the Footlights' main rival. Go and judge for yourself, and enjoy an hour of "adrenaline-fuelled comedy."</div>	<div><b>Paul Potts</b> Mon 21st Jan, Corn Exchange, 19.30, £24 SOLD OUT</div> <div>I think Paul Potts won one of those Talent Competitions. You know the sort. The ones where you are encouraged to laugh at borderline disabled people and then gleefully point as their fragile hopes get pissed on by some poorly educated egomaniac. Well done Paul. The fact that his face is made of plasticine and that he has a very similar name to the man who killed 1.7 million Cambodians just goes to show that anyone can succeed. Even you. So go on. Line up and be humiliated by Simon Cowell. The pick.</div>	<div><b>'A Line From Dante', Professor George Steiner</b> Tue 22 Jan, Quiet Room, Wolfson College, 18.00, free</div> <div>This O.G. has previously tackled Heidegger and Dostoyevsky; now he turns his attentions to another cheery soul, Dante. Steiner is a European intellectual of the old school, and a former Extraordinary Fellow at Cambridge. Expect him to riff on philosophy, literature, the art of translation, and many writers that you ought to know more about.</div>	<div><b>Shit Disco (DJ set)</b> Thurs 24 Jan, Fez, 22.00-03.00, £5 before 11, £7 after</div> <div>This charmingly named four piece conjure images of a utopian world in which pooing on the dancefloor is no longer taboo. Until that glorious day, we'll have to make do with their take on indie/electro. This DJ set will see them playing the usual angular, jittery fair, alongside some classics (the band lists the Prodigy and Donna Summer among its influences).</div> <div>No need to bring a nappy.</div>
	<div><b>4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days</b> Arts Picturehouse, 12.00, 16.45, 19.00 <b>Heima</b> Arts Picturehouse, 12.00</div>	<div><b>Julius Caesar</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45 <b>Alcock Allstars: Pappy's Fun Club</b> ADC Theatre, 23.00, £5/£6</div>	<div><b>Adore</b> Ska Ska Ska, 18:30, £5</div> <div>I imagine these guys do Ska music or something.</div>	<div><b>Ethiopian Encounters: A British Expedition to Ethiopia in the 1840s</b> Fitzwilliam Museum, free</div> <div>Last chance to catch this exhibiton (ends Sunday)</div>	<div><b>Destination Ibiza Beach Party</b> Queen's, 21.00-00.45, £5, bring your student card</div>
	<div><b>Sweeney Todd</b> Vue, 18.20, 21.20 <b>Charlie Wilson's War</b> Vue, 16.30, 19.00, 21.30 <b>St. Trinian's</b> Vue, 10.45, 13.15, 15.45, 18.10, 20.40</div>	<div><b>Far Away</b> Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, English Faculty, 21.00 <b>Julius Caesar</b> ADC Theatre, 14.30, 19.45 <b>Alcock Allstars: Scratch Impro</b> ADC Theatre, 23.00, £5/£6</div>	<div><b>aDORE</b> The Graduate 19.30, £4</div> <div>These guys dont turn off the caps lock key. Oh no they dont. rOCK oN.</div>	<div><b>Francis Davison</b> Kettle's Yard, free</div> <div>Last chance to catch this exhibiton (ends Sunday)</div>	<div>Not worth braving the streets of Cambridge. Be nice to your body for once.</div>
	<div><b>P.S. I Love You</b> Vue, 14.30, 17.30, 20.30 <b>It's Gonna Get Worse</b> Arts Picturehouse, 14.30 <b>The Kite Runner</b> Arts Picturehouse, 12.00, 21.10</div>	<div><b>Newnham Anonymous</b> <b>Players Present: Far Away</b> Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio, English Faculty, 21.00</div>	<div><b>Air Traffic</b> The Junction, 19.00, £11</div> <div>I just listened to these guys on mspace and they sound a bit like christian rock.</div>	<div><b>Patrick Hemmerle</b> Old Library, Emmanuel College, 21.00, £2</div> <div>French concert pianist Hemmerle plays works by Bach, Chopin, and Brahms.</div>	<div><b>Christ's May Ball 2008 Launch Party</b> Fez, 21.00-02.00, Free with student card</div>
	<div><b>No Country For Old Men</b> Arts Picturehouse, 13.30, 16.00, 18.30, 21.00 <b>Charlie Wilson's War</b> Vue, 14.00, 16.30, 19.00, 21.30</div>	<div>Oliver Cromwell banned theatrical performances. He would love Mondays in Cambridge.</div>	<div><b>Paul Potts</b> Mon 21st Jan, Corn Exchange, 19.30, SOLD OUT</div> <div>See pick of the week</div>	<div><b>From Reason to Revolution: Art and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain</b> Fitzwilliam Museum, free</div>	<div><b>Fat Poppadaddys</b> Fez, 22.00-03.30, £3 before 11, £4 after</div>
	<div><b>No Country For Old Men</b> Arts Picturehouse, 13.30, 16.00, 18.30, 21.00 <b>Breach</b> Vue, 14.30</div>	<div><b>Perspectives</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45 <b>Chekhov Double Bill: The Bear and The Night Before The Trial</b> Corpus Playrooms, 21.30, £4/£5.50</div>	<div><b>Alison Moyet</b> Corn Exchange, 19.30, SOLD OUT</div> <div>My dad likes Alison Moyet. When I was little I once asked why she sounded like a man.</div>	<div><b>Geoffrey Coombe and Friends in Association with Trinity College Music Society Present Jazz Record Listening Sessions: Miles and Monk: Jazz Originals</b> Lecture Room 1, Music Faculty, 19.30-21.30, £6/£4</div>	<div><b>Ebonics</b> Fez, 22.00-03.00, £2 before 11, £4 after</div>
	<div><b>Dan In Real Life</b> Vue, 20.50 <b>Lust Caution</b> Arts Picturehouse, 11.00, 14.30, 20.45 <b>The Golden Compass</b> Vue, 13.50, 16.40, 19.30</div>	<div><b>Perspectives</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45 <b>Chekhov Double Bill: The Bear and The Night Before The Trial</b> Corpus Playrooms, 21.30, £4/£5.50</div>	<div><b>Darkest Hour</b> The Graduate, 19.30, £9</div> <div>Political Metalcore. "Full Metal Jacket Metal with a barrage of madness". You know the sort.</div>	<div>Go see that Romanian abortion film. I hear it's a laugh.</div>	<div><b>Rumboogie [Cindies]</b> Ballare, 21.00-02.00, £4-£5</div> <div>You love it really.</div>
	<div><b>Sweeney Todd</b> Vue, 15.30, 18.20, 21.20 <b>Breathless ( A Bout de Souffle)</b> Arts Picturehouse, 17.00</div>	<div><b>Perspectives</b> ADC Theatre, 19.45 <b>Chekhov Double Bill: The Bear and The Night Before The Trial</b> Corpus Playrooms, 21.30, £4/£5.50</div>	<div><b>Whole Lotta Led</b> The Junction, 19.00, £13</div> <div>A Led Zeppelin tribute act. Or maybe just a load of light-emitting diodes. Blinking away all night long.</div>	<div><b>"When Church Meets State: A History of the Religious Influence on American Foreign Relations", Dr Andrew Preston</b> Dirac Room, Fisher Building, St. John's, 17.30, free</div>	<div><b>Shit Disco</b> Fez, 22.00-03.00, £5 before 11, £7 after</div> <div>See pick of the week</div>

# More...

## Theatre

### Anthropology

Wed 23rd - Sat 26th, ADC Theatre, 23.00

As if the ADC hasn't offered us enough already, they whip out an anthropologist's dream - a Materialist History of the World in One Hour. Don't let the academic nature of the title put you off, it



promises to be amusing, in a sort of QI-esque fashion, asking questions such as "If rowing went out of fashion in the 11th century, why do people still do it?" A pressing question for the majority of Cambridge students, I imagine. At any rate, it's been described as "As fast as Parker, as wild as Tarka, as funny as Farquhar." Excellent.

## Other

### Transcendental Meditation Society Introductory Talk

Tuesday 22nd, Seminar Room 1, Darwin College, 20.00

Amidst the constant hustle of Cambridge living, treat yourself to some otherworldly downtime. Claims to provide inner and outer fulfilment, and to make studying easier and less stressful.

## Going Out

### Shut Up and Dance! Presents Coldcut (Jon More DJ set)

Friday 18th, The Union, 21.00-01.00, £3 before 10, £5 after, free for union members

Don't be fooled by the billing - this is just one half of Coldcut, and their famous audio/visual trickery

is unlikely to grace the Union bar. It should be a crowdpleasing affair nonetheless. Dude's got some skills, and with roots in hip hop and dance stretching back two decades, it should be a set of bangers. Perfect for anyone who likes to pretend that the 90s never ended.



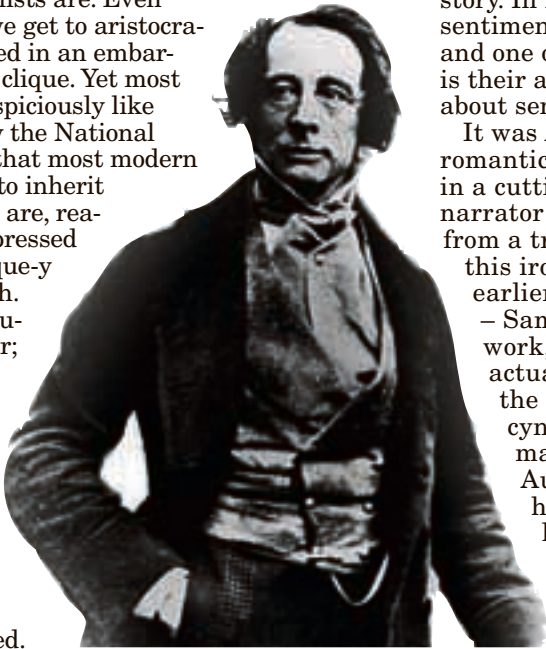


# Austen-tatious?

What is it with Austen and TV adaptations? **Alice Palmer** finds Dickens a better televisual proposition

**B**BC drama commissioners. If you're looking for a New Year's Resolution, I know where you can start. I'll even forgive you *Holby City*. Will you please, for the love of god, leave Jane Austen alone. Dickens, yep, you can have him. Whimsical characters, sweeping London street scenes – he was made for dramatisation. But if I see one more empire-line dress, hear one more coy twitter from the direction of the TV, I swear I will scream. Austen herself didn't like the twittering, and ridiculed her more overexcitable characters remorselessly. Yet switch on the Beeb's latest *Sense and Sensibility* and I can guarantee you'll have a headache within minutes. Most of the women rattle through their lines with a constant emotional wobble to their voice, at a pitch that choirboys struggle to reach.

Then there's the inaccuracy. The critic Juliet McMaster wrote that 'the landowning country gentleman is close to a prince as her heroines approach', and Austen goes to great lengths to show how boringly middle-class most of her protagonists are. Even *Emma*, the closest we get to aristocracy, is firmly embedded in an embarrassingly provincial clique. Yet most adaptations look suspiciously like they're sponsored by the National Trust. Now, I know that most modern readers don't stand to inherit country estates, and are, reasonably enough, impressed by attractively antique-y looking minor wealth. But this televisual supersizing goes too far; even in ITV's recent reworking of *Persuasion*, a parable of making-do, characters who are supposed to be in the throes of tragic levels of economising swan around lavish settings, perfectly coiffed.



The comedy Austen drew out of banal middle-class culture, when placed in these luxurious settings, is replaced by almost offensive indulgence.

Back to Dickens. A frustrated actor, his novels are shot through with a theatrical sensibility: his dialogue comes to life on the page and his wacky accents were clearly thought out phonetically. His openings are cinematic as they swoop over locations and characters. In short, he was made for performance on screen. Probably the best of recent adaptations was the BBC's *Bleak House*. Deliberately, appropriately populist, it ran in half-hour episodes straight after *Eastenders*. A Sunday teatime balm accompanying tea and cake with twiddly music it was not. The problem with Austen adaptations is that viewers enjoy feeling cultured (it's in period costume! it was a book!) while fixating on the most incidental part of the original novels: the love story. In fact, Austen was never sentimental in the literary sense, and one of the joys of her books is their almost total scepticism about sentimental slush.

It was Austen who reclaimed romantic fiction, who drafted in a cutting, ever-questioning narrator to save the genre from a trashy fate. In fact, this ironic look back at earlier sentimental novels – Samuel Richardson's work, for instance – actually dampens the reader's own cynicism about romance, and allows Austen to make her inevitable happy endings genuinely affecting. Indeed, as the aca-

demie Rachel Brownstein points out, this trickery of Austen's sceptical narrator 'speaks to the portions of our brains that suspect romantic fiction.' Austen's novels do not abandon idealism altogether, and her Elizabeth still weds Darcy as Richardson's Pamela does Mr B. However, such idealism as Darcy's choice of love over money in the frantic marriage-market

of the early nineteenth century finds an internal counterpoint in her narrator. By internalising that criticism Austen denies her critics the opportunity to mock her characters. In film and television versions of her novels, however, there is no narrator to offer a sage, timely interjection. Austen's narrator is not only joyfully sharp-witted, but forms a crucial element of her novels' structure which adaptations invariably drop. Austen builds sympathy between readers and her heroines by blurring the thoughts of her narrator and her more heroic characters, and this intimacy sits in stark contrast to the chasm separating the narrator

from Austen's malignant or more unattractive characters.

Film or television versions of Austen's novels are overly stark places, without the mediating voice of the narrator to take the edge off the unfair situations in which her heroines inevitably wind up, and the troglodytes presented to them as potential husbands. So please, commissioners: I don't like starkness, especially not in January. Just let me have the books, and read them in peace, without all that lake-jumping malarkey.



# Faulkner vs. Amis vs. Decency

What do Martin Amis and William Faulkner have in common? They're both ardent agitators, says **Luke W. Roberts**

**I**n an interview with the public affairs magazine *Reporter* in 1956, William Faulkner spoke about segregation in Southern schools, particularly the case of Aurtherine Lucy, who had tried to enrol at the all-white University of Alabama with the help of the NAACP. He said, "If that girl goes back to Tuscaloosa she will die. Then the top will blow off. The government will send its troops and we'll be back at 1860. They must stop pushing these people. The trouble is the North doesn't know that country. They don't know the South will go to war. But if it came to fighting I'd fight for Mississippi against the United States even if it meant going out into the streets and shooting Negroes. I will go on saying that the Southerners are wrong and that their position is untenable, but if I have to make the same choice Robert E. Lee made then I'll make it."

Though he'd been drinking heavily that morning and claimed to have been misquoted, these brazenly offensive comments are deeply troubling to anyone familiar with Faulkner's work. His novels contain humane portraits of African-Americans, developed more fully and more sympathetically than any other prewar American novelist. Take Dilsey, maid to the Compson family in *The Sound and the Fury*, and the only character with any dignity by the end of the book. Or Joe Christmas, whose search for racial identity forms the plot of *'Light in August'*. Or *'Intruder in the Dust'*, an anti-lynching tract which was turned into an MGM film in 1949, the same year the author won the Nobel Prize.

So, do we simply discount the statement and put it down to Faulkner's alcoholism, or begin looking for an unconscious racism in his novels and stories? It's true that there's a latent strain of 'white man's burden' sentiment; it's the 'responsibility' of the Southern man to allow African-Americans respect and equality. Perhaps before WWII this was a remarkably enlightened position for a Southern aristocrat to take, but by 1956 it stinks of patronising discrimination.

In the case of Faulkner, an author I respect and admire, I'm tempted just to sweep it under the carpet and concentrate on the aesthetic quality of his work, but that's not possible, and certainly not the right thing to do. This kind of thing happens time and again; reading a biography of ee cummings, it turns out that he was a rabid anti-Semite, a fact that one can't un-know, and which colours our reading of his work even though his general sentiment is of a deep love of humanity.

And, to bring things up to date, now we have Martin Amis making obnoxious comments about Islam left, right and centre. The difference is, in Faulkner's case there's some sense of conflict and disparity between the man and his work; a consideration of his complex attitude to race perhaps even deepens our understanding and appreciation of his achievements. Amis' unrepentant idiocy, particularly in his letters responding to criticisms, simply strengthen the argument that he's not very good at writing, and he's even worse at being a decent person.





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 16th March - Survivors

**CU SU  
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News from the River

Perhaps it is fitting that another American should bring news of the women's side of Cambridge rowing, after the updates from CUBC last term. For this first column, I believe that CUWBC deserves a bit of explanation - tucked away with our training as we usually are (until after our Boat Race perhaps).

Compared to the men, we row and train about the same - that is, to the average Cambridge student, a completely mad amount. When told that we train twelve times every week, the coach of another Cambridge team (remaining nameless) responded, 'How? - There are only seven days in the week!' But you've heard about all of the training from the men's side, the difference with ours being that we row in the mornings, via 5:58am train to Ely. If you've never seen the cathedral in the light of dawn, I would recommend that you do it once... that's probably enough.

But I digress. With little financial support and an unpaid coach (recently honoured with a Special Award for a Lifetime Contribution to Coaching by rowing's governing body), we nonetheless compete at the highest levels of UK rowing. We row in races ranging from Fairbairns on the Cam, to the Women's Head of the River over the course of the men's boat race on the Thames. Of course, our focus is on the Henley Boat Races and last year our Blue Boat not only won on the day, but also took the gold medal at the British University rowing championships, beating Oxford for a second time.

I can brag because it wasn't me that rowed in that boat. In fact, last year I was rowing for my college, having noviced there in 2004. Because the women's and lightweight men's boat races are lower profile than the CUBC's, with fewer helicopters, and only the viewers on the banks at Henley, CUWBC has a strong relationship with the colleges, sourcing most of its rowers from their first boats and novice squads.

Last September saw many different techniques and approaches to the sport, all coming together to learn the university style. Now, just back from our January training camp, our squad of former college rowers is taking shape, with the heavyweight reserve crew, Blondie, looking especially strong in comparison with in years past. In our final 2000m race of training camp, Blondie pushed the Blue Boat hard, resulting in both of the boats clocking quicker times. As well as a packed programme of races in February, the Women's Eights Head of the River race, held on the tideway on March 1st, will be especially important, pitting our Boat Race crews against Oxford in a time trial just weeks before the Easter Sunday Henley races.

**Samantha Elizabeth Bennett**

SPORT IN BRIEF



Emma vet, Sam Cutts (pictured above on her horse Piccola Star), represented GB at the recent Student Nations World Cup Final over New Year. Winning a gold in the team showjumping event, and bronzes in team dressage as well as the final standings, Sam was the highest placed rider in the team, putting her in contention for a place in the national team for the forthcoming world championships.

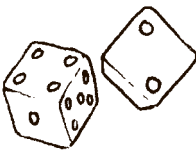
U21s Fail To Make Early Pressure Pay

This year's U21 Varsity game, the traditional curtain-raiser to the main event later on in the day, was one of unfulfilled promise for a Cambridge team that previously had swept all before them in a maelstrom of attacking rugby.

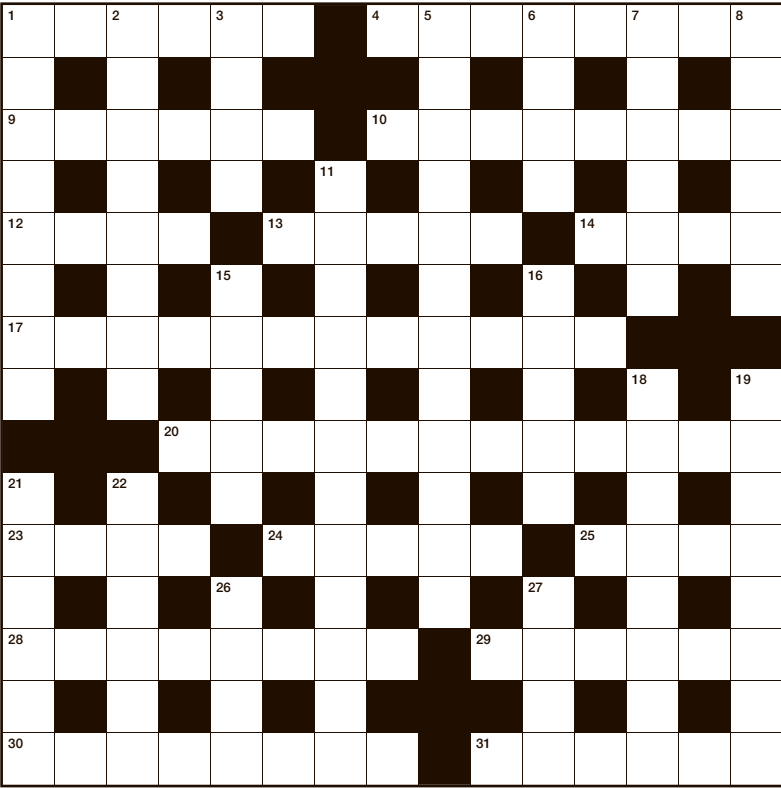
The match started brightly for Cambridge, as the pack put enough pressure on the Oxford forwards to win two penalties in front of the posts. Unbelievably, the bandaged leg of fly-half Will Balfour categorically failed to make the most of either opportunity, meaning that despite dominating early exchanges the score was still 0-0. The Oxford backs looked more threatening from the start, and when a neat dummy from the Oxford fly-half split the defence, some quick handling opened the scoring for Oxford through their left winger Catling. This was not converted, meaning that Cambridge were still firmly in the game when Alfie Weston, the Cambridge scrum-half and new kicker, slotted a penalty to bring the score to 5-3 at half time.

Despite going down to another Catling try, Cambridge continued to fight valiantly, but kept putting themselves under unnecessary pressure. After 65 minutes, an Oxford penalty was converted into points to leave the score at 13-3. This is how it stayed until full-time, leaving Cambridge to rue the defensive lapses that led to the two game-breaking tries.

Games & puzzles



Varsity crossword no. 477



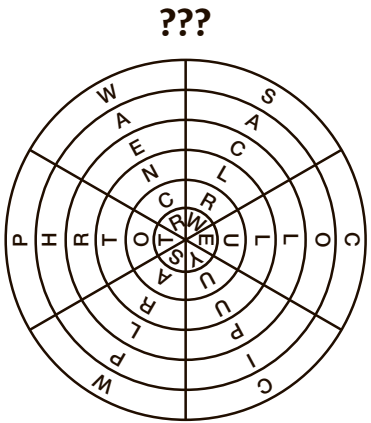
- Across**
- 1 Cover sign of tiredness (almost). (6)
  - 4 Flower is fake stone. (8)
  - 9 Initially bored, I leave uglier musician. (6)
  - 10 Allow to go after thin glove. (10)
  - 12 Beginning of allegiance to honesty? (4)
  - 13 Bring together you and nobleman, we hear. (5)
  - 14 Infernal writer loses head with initial bet. (4)
  - 17 Veteran biter destroyed insect, perhaps. (12)
  - 20 Bloke's mirth in killing. (12)
  - 23 Engrave in 19. (4)
  - 24 Mad evacuee returned, hid,

- Down**
- 1 Man with brother in the East finds dessert. (8)
  - 2 Bad photograph? (8)
  - 3 Turnip nurturer starts to urinate backwards. (4)
  - 4 Jilter makes earth tremble before big wave. (12)
  - 6 My shaft? (4)
  - 7 Rectangular knob, longer inside. (6)
  - 8 Man swallows scrambled bird for cat. (6)
  - 11 A French man the German stick inside when lacking workers? (12)
  - 15 Arse diameter begins to be depressing. (5)
  - 16 Period of time actor spent on this? (5)
  - 18 God lost head about bird for a long time. (8)
  - 19 Miserable waster initially threw up. (8)
  - 21 Brand to cuddle up with? (6)
  - 22 Inch or no inch, oddly symbolic. (6)
  - 26 Cut corn, perhaps. (4)
  - 27 Guys you apparently list. (4)

Set by Miss Eater

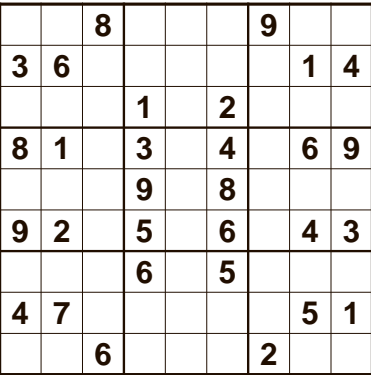
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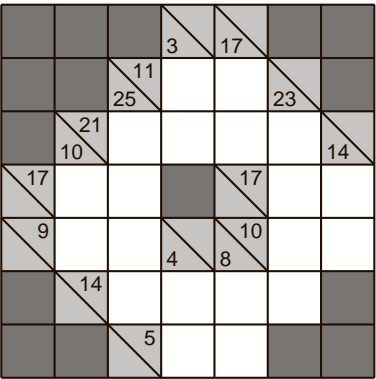
Sudoku

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



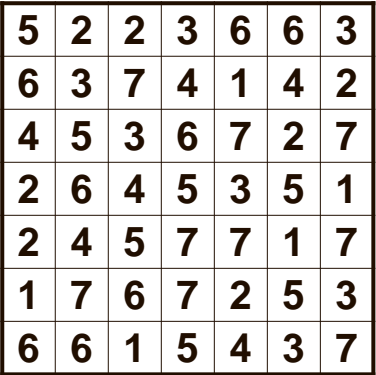
Kakuro

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

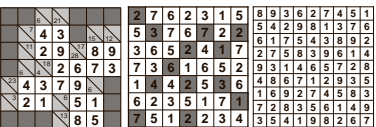


Hitori

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



Last issue's solutions





Gamblers  
Unanimous

ED PEACE &  
NIAL RAFFERTY



Not surprisingly, given our blistering finish to last term, news of the column's return has sent shivers down the spines of local bookmakers. Michaelmas ended with a glorious banker/long shot double and after nine weeks we've already quadrupled our starting stakes. Rest assured we'll be looking to compound the bookmakers' misery this term with tips that Posh Spice's hairdresser could only dream of.

This week's banker takes us to White Hart Lane, where Tottenham play host to Roy Keane's struggling Sunderland side. Tottenham's 1-0 defeat in the reverse fixture on the opening day of the season set the tone for a disappointing campaign, yet Juande Ramos is gradually repairing the damage. Sunderland, meanwhile, have been woeful away from home. They've collected just two away points all season and have conceded as many away goals as Derby. Against the league's top home scorers, the Mackems could be in for a whipping. Whilst Spurs will always give their opponents a chance to score, their prolific strikers should wreak havoc against the Wearsiders' defence, so wise money is on a Tottenham victory.

Our prediction this week takes us to Spain, where all is not well in the city of Valencia. At Valencia Juan Bautista Soler has been throwing his considerable presidential weight around in taking a side containing the likes of Villa, Joaquin and David Silva to seven points above the drop zone, being sued for 80 million euros by former captain and midfield stalwart David Albelda in the process. Meanwhile city rivals Levante are the laughing stock of La Liga, collecting a record-breaking eight points from nineteen fixtures and struggling even to get a squad together from the players who bothered to returned from the winter break, having nor been paid since November. An accumulator on Villareal to beat Valencia at home and Mallorca to come away from Levante with a win at 7-2 looks almost too good to be true.

It's down to Ascot for the long shot. With the Cheltenham Festival, rapidly approaching, the competition steps up a gear this weekend as some of racing's big guns look to show their championship credentials. Schindlers Hunt should make a big impression in the Victor Chandler Chase on Saturday. The Irish trained gelding is a real mud lark and will love the soft conditions forecast for Saturday. The obvious danger is odds on favourite Twist Magic, who has been successful on both his previous starts. This horse will take some beating if he's at his best, but the massive 12-1 being offered on Schindlers Hunt gives us a good enough reason to oppose him.

THE BANKER	4-5
TOTTENHAM TO BEAT SUNDERLAND	£4
PREDICTION	7-2
Mallorca and Villareal to beat Levante and Valencia	£3
THE LONG SHOT	12/1
Schindlers Hunt to win Victor Chandler Chase	£1.5 each way
RUNNING TOTAL £33.30	

# Unlucky Blues just miss out

»Cambridge left off the piste after hard-fought contest on the slopes



Pete Calvert burning the Super G on his way to 2nd place

LAURA ABRAM  
Sports Reporter

In what must have been the closest competition in a long time, the Cambridge blues race teams narrowly missed taking away the overall team titles despite excellent individual performances and team success in several events.

As Selwyn hosted its snow ball and others enjoyed Christmas bops and formals, the University racers set out for Val Thorens for a week of gruelling training, in preparation for the 86th Varsity Races. Looking to qualify for one of the two women's or three men's race teams, hopefuls from Cambridge joined their Oxford rivals and committed to 18 hours of training. The final teams were decided after time trials on Monday of Main Week, the Varsity races taking place the following day and additional races throughout the rest of the week.

In the individual Varsity competi-

tions Cambridge triumphed. Rachael Nordby, from Pembroke, taking the individual ladies' title in both the slalom, with a combined time of 1:29.32 and in the Giant Slalom, with a combined time of 1:44.09, thus winning the overall individual ladies' prize. Rachael was presented with

“One of the most successful years for CUSSC”

the Keeley Cup by former president Patrick Keeley, for the ladies' Giant Slalom. In the men's individual races Pete Calvert, from Trinity, took the overall men's prizes for the Slalom and Giant Slalom combined, finishing second in the Slalom, with a combined time of 1:18.93 and third in the

Giant Slalom with a combined time of 1:38.38. Evan Scouros, also from Trinity, had great individual success in the Giant Slalom, finishing in second place, with a combined time of 1:37.84.

It was the Giant Slalom also, in which both Cambridge blues teams performed strongest: the men leading with a time difference of 0.41 seconds and the ladies with a difference of 1.49 seconds following this event. The competition was very close and the advantage slight. As crowds gathered and the racers made their way to the top of the piste for the floodlit Slalom, neither university could be sure to take away the overall title. Having won the slalom last varsity, Cambridge were quietly confident, but a year of training and a summer camp paid off for Oxford as they finished first overall this year in the slalom and went on to take the overall team prize, winning by fifteen seconds over a total of sixteen minutes of racing.

Even closer, however, was the overall men's result. So close in fact that Varsity officials found it difficult to award the overall title to the actual winning team. First Oxford, then minutes later Cambridge were awarded the title, winning by 0.3 seconds. However, after a mere two hours of celebration the title was withdrawn and re-awarded to Oxford, who actually won by 0.92 seconds. Rachael Nordby's performance was so good that her time was taken for one of the men's, causing this error. Nonetheless, all the men raced extremely well and to lose by such a narrow margin demonstrates the competitiveness of both the Oxford and Cambridge teams and the high standard of competition.

The men's second and third teams should also be congratulated on their efforts and the ladies' second team congratulated for beating the Oxford second's in both the Slalom and Giant Slalom.

In addition to the Varsity races, a Super G was held for the first time this year. Open to all those who competed in the blues teams, Cambridge once again produced some fantastic results. In the men's Super G, Pete Calvert came second overall, with a combined time of 2:11.17 and Evan Scouros finished in third place, with a combined time of 2:13.18. The fastest single run was had by Pete Calvert, with a time of 1:05.30. In the ladies' super G, Laura Abram, of Newnham, was in second place after the first speed run, with a time of 1:23.03 but was disqualified after missing a gate in the second run.

To summarise, Camilla Barnes, president of CUSSC said, 'This is one of the most successful years CUSSC have had in a long while and the training the racers have put in throughout the year has really paid off. CUSSC is continuing to go from strength to strength and next year we hope for even more success.' Could 2008 be the year for Cambridge to take away the titles?

CAMBRIDGE BLUES LADIES TEAM: Laura Abram (Captain), Rachael Nordby, Camilla Barnes, Stephanie Sgoda, George Rose, Emma Cohen

CAMBRIDGE BLUES MENS TEAM: Pete Calvert (Captain), Andy Wheble, Evan Scouros, Max Shepard, James Pockson, Andy Chetwood

## Captain's Corner

Modern Pentathlon  
Noel Cochrane



What is it?  
The Modern Pentathlon consists of running (3km), swimming (200m freestyle), shooting (air pistols), fencing (epee) and showjumping.

What is the training schedule like?  
The club has set training for all five of the disciplines. There is some sort of training everyday for roughly an hour and it's usually coached.

How did you get into it?  
I come from a riding family and background from which I had experienced Pony Club Tetrathlon. Coming to university I wanted to give something new a try which focused more on my own performance. Pentathlon gave a great mix of things I could do and many that I had never attempted. After a week I was hooked.

Recruitment - who can join?  
We are an extremely diverse club, which is something we're proud of. We welcome people of all standards to join and I'd like to point out it's still not too late for this year. Our coaches produce fast progression. I had never shot or fenced and could not swim very well when I joined, so lack of experience certainly isn't a barrier to entry.

Season so far?  
The club competed in the Sealions Pentathlon competition last term held at Whitgift School with great results. We have a training weekend coming up with our Old Blues and a competition at Millfield School before BUSA in March. We will also be returning to Millfield in March for a training week before our Varsity match.

Varsity Prospects?  
Our Varsity match is on the 2/3/4th April this year and is to be hosted by Oxford. The men's team is looking strong and will be picked after BUSA, giving plenty of opportunities for people to fight for the places. Oxford has lost a few of their key players, but retain one of GB's top pentathletes, so a lot rests on how well they have recruited new stock. However, our skills events remain strong and we are working on our physicals, which were our weakness last year. We eagerly await the big day.





# Roff day at the office for Joe

» CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

Time and again they picked and drove with their forwards, but they couldn't break through. Then they tried with their backs, but that wasn't to be. Cambridge's defence was monumental, never have I seen such passion and sheer dogged determination not to let the opposition through.

It was fitting that it was Ross Blake who finally cleared Cambridge's line, kicking the ball into touch at the final whistle. Blake's performance throughout the match was exemplary, be it as scrum-half or 10 he led his side with a cool head and a near perfect performance. But it wasn't a one man show; Blake had the support of a tighter, stronger and simply better pack than Oxford. The game was won in the tight with sterling performances by Jon Dawson and James Lumby in particular. The Blues backline was slick in attack and strong in defence; they denied Oxford most of the ball used it well when they were in possession.

Unfortunately for Joe Roff he was denied the fairytale ending to his rugby career that he had bitterly hoped for. After the match he looked completely gutted, but was quick to complement his team, "I've pride in leading that group of guys; I wouldn't swap having played this season, I have an immense sense of pride mixed with disappointment." But for the Cambridge side the jubilation at a third Varsity win in a row was more than evident.



Going nowhere: Oxford drive into a light-blue wall around the fringe

## Ross Blake

Hughes Hall  
DOB: 29/12/1979  
Height: 6ft  
Position: 15



Blake led the team from the front just as comfortable at 10 as at his usual 9. His tactical kicking sets him apart from many players at University level and he used it to great advantage during the Varsity Match.

## Jon Dawson

St Edmund's  
DOB: 12/4/1980  
Height: 6ft  
Position: 3



Dawson was the rock of the scrum, absolutely crucial in the tight. His textbook early try set the standard for the forwards for the remainder of the game, and they duly followed his example.

OXFORD			CAMBRIDGE		
8/10	Rupert Allhusen	1	Anthony Fitzpatrick	8/10	
6/10	Dan Rosen	2	Joe Clark	8/10	
5/10	Ricky Lutton	3	Jon Dawson	10/10	
6/10	Jon Chance	4	Trevor Boynton	7/10	
4/10	Dylan Alexander	5	John Blaikie	8/10	
7/10	Peter Wright	6	Richard Bartholomew	8/10	
8/10	Simon Ackroyd	7	Joe Wheeler	8/10	
6/10	Anthony Jackson	8	James Lumby	9/10	
7/10	Chris Mahoney	15	Hamish Murray	7/10	
5/10	Jonan Boto	14	Andy Stevenson	8/10	
5/10	Euan Sadden	13	Chris Lewis	9/10	
6/10	Joe Roff (capt)	12	Sandy Reid	9/10	
7/10	Tom Tombleson	11	James Wellwood	7/10	
7/10	Craig McMahon	10	Ross Broadfoot	8/10	
7/10	BrendanMcKerchar	9	Ross Blake (capt)	10/10	

## Eviction time in the CUBC household

After a particularly lacklustre performance at Fairbairns, which no doubt identified elements within the crew that needed addressing, as well as providing a wake-up call to the entire squad, the rowers of the CUBC were faced with the most important event of the Michaelmas Term, Trial Eights.

Trial Eights is the only opportunity the club has to race the full Boat Race course at pace prior to the race itself. Preparation and training is conducted with the utmost concentration and demand. The two crews, after being selected, are separated completely, as coaches find that any overlap in water time can result in heated arguments. Such behavior may sound deplorable to the outside observer, but it is essential to the year's preparation. Trial Eights is in simplest terms a mock Boat Race. Thus, each crew treats the other as Oxford, a fate that would surely get on anyone's nerves.

But despite the tension of selection and racing the weeks and months outside term are when a team truly comes together; a fact that may have manifested itself in somewhat atypical names for the two Trial Eights crew.

It is tradition for the team to name each of the two boats; the only 'rule' is that the labels bestowed upon each

crew have to be famous pairs. Think "Guns" and "Roses" or "Cowboys" and "Indians". The media can then write some witty headlines on the race outcome and everyone is happy.

This year, however, the rogues decided to push the limits of acceptability and name the two crews "True Love" and "One Night Stand". The race itself was one of the best in recent memory. True Love shot out to an early lead of almost a length, holding its advantage around Fulham Bend when One Night Stand had the advantage. However, after the course straightened out leading up to Hammersmith Bridge, One

Night Stand found a strong base rhythm, eventually overcoming True Love. In a manner reminiscent of the Blue Boat's win over Oxford last year, One Night Stand won the hard way – rowing around the outside of Surrey Bend.

After only 8 days of holiday, however, the Blues were back on the road again for their notoriously brutal annual training camp in Banyoles, Spain. Aiming to shake down the twenty athletes remaining its goal is to develop the first concrete ranking that will lead to "shadow" boats – lineups that will eventually turn into the Blue Boat, Goldie and

the spare pair.

Seat Racing was, as ever, the primary means of selection. Two four-man boats race side by side on a fixed course over 1500 meters, with coaches manning the start and finish lines, as well as intermediate points every 500 meters. The stroke rate – the amount of strokes taken in one minute – is set by the coaching staff, and if exceeded, races are stopped, brought back, and restarted. The point of all these steps is to control as many variables as possible in what is often a highly subjective process.

To illustrate, let us pretend that Boat A beat Boat B by 2 seconds in run 1. The boats are then brought together and one person from Boat A – Man A – is switched with the corresponding person in Boat B: Man B. The race is conducted again and times are compared. If in the second run Boat A and Boat B tie, the result is interpreted as a 2 second win for Man A. Man A goes on to win all his races, gets into the Blue Boat, races Oxford and goes on to become the leading character in a hit TV show called House.

With the Boys in Blue now safely returned to Blighty, their attentions will now be turning inexorably to final selection for their shot at glory.



## "Rugby for Girls"

Moments after the end of term I, and around 36,000 others, journeyed to London for the two-day Varsity Experience. That's two days, because, naturally, no trip to the capital would be complete without a night on the razz. Sure enough, amid the London lights, cataclysm of noise, vanilla-scented smoke and potentially lethal lasers, the figures of some over-excited Cambridge students were just distinguishable, jumping up and down in adrenaline-fuelled Fabric ecstasy, their eyes a-fire with the joy of living. I had a feeling we weren't in Kansas any more, Toto.

After physically and violently dragging half our party from the depths of the duvets, we finally vacated the house, missing a couple of trains, and arrived at Twickenham, in the rain, feeling and looking like we'd got on the wrong side of the bouncers on the doors of Life. Yet refusing to lose heart, we made our way to our seats to watch the U21s, excited by the prospect of seeing people we actually know play. Although a disappointing result, the experience of watching the game was enjoyable. The songs of some elaborately face-painted Oxford stallions bearing drums and what looked suspiciously like various forms of tribal weapon allowed us a terrifying taster of the witty abuse to come. "We hate the tabs" – clearly the poetry of the world's finest young minds.

After a brief hiatus, during which we shelled out an entire term's student loan on some soggy chips and a glorified fish finger – the Van of Life never seems to be there when you need it – we were back to our seats for the Blues' match. Seventy-five minutes of bulging thighs later, and we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of great excitement, as the losing Oxford side began to lay siege to the Cambridge line. Thankfully, the heroic light blue defence was more than sufficient to overcome any amount of huffing and puffing, and after a heart-stopping final minute, our side of the stadium erupted into screams. I recognise that while my involvement in the game, and yes, appreciation of the rules, was tantamount, my critical skill is perhaps somewhat lacking. So I went for a more knowledgeable male perspective: "Ultimately, the outcome was a triumph for the greater academic ability and character of the Cambridge side. Oxford's lack of either was epitomised by their captain and supposedly star player, Joe Roff, spending the last twenty minutes as a spectator masquerading as a full-back". Very patriotic.

And so it was that The Varsity Experience met its end in a distressingly long, soggy queue for Twickenham station, but nevertheless on a particularly positive note. Well done Cambridge.

Alice Tyler



# SPORT



**Skiing** p30  
**Christmas**  
**round-up**  
**inside**

## Blues hold out for Varsity win

» Roff retirement starts with sour grapes as Cambridge savour champagne occasion



Triumphant Blues celebrate hard-earned victory

**CAMBRIDGE**  
TRIES: DAWSON; MALANEY; LUMBY  
CONS: FIORI (2)  
PENS: BROADFOOT  
**OXFORD**  
TRIES: MAHONEY CONS: MCMAHON  
PENS: MCMAHON  
DROP: MCMAHON (2)

**22**  
**16**

GEORGE TOWERS  
Sports Reporter

Over the course of a season Cambridge had, at times, been woeful. Finding form only with a couple of narrow victories in the run up to the Varsity jamboree, the bookies were predicting apocalypse against an Oxford side marshalled by Cambridge reject Joe Roff that had won ten of their twelve fixtures. However, inspired by the prospect of a hat-trick of victories, the boys in light blue came of age and unleashed a tsunami of attacking rugby that swept the dark blues

into oblivion. Despite being underdogs, Tony Rodgers, Cambridge's coach, commented that his team were "confident from minute one"; which was translated into points as Jon Dawson scored a try from a textbook driven maul from five metres out. Ross Broadfoot sent the conversion just short, but a five point early lead was just what the Blues needed to settle their nerves and put the pressure on Oxford to raise their game.

The Blues continued mounting up the pressure with a Broadfoot penalty, which extended their lead by a further three points. However, the inevitable dark blue fight back came, and it was none other than the infamous Joe Roff who led his side from the front. Playing at outside centre Roff scythed through the midfield putting Craig McMahon in a prime position to slot a drop goal.

The Blues quickly reasserted

their dominance and took the match to Oxford, come the mid-point of the first half and Cambridge were leading in both possession and territory. The pace of the game slowed a little as both sides resorted to several periods of timid kicking exchanges as neither dared risk anything too fancy in case it backfired.

**FOR PLAYER RATINGS AND FURTHER MATCH ANALYSIS, TURN TO PAGE 31**

One aspect of the match in which the Blues were absolutely on top, and never looked like faltering, was up-front. Towards the end of the first half Jon Dawson and his boys destroyed the Oxford pack, continuing their rock-solid performance in the tight.

Half an hour into the match, Jonnan Boto, Oxford's winger, exploiting a gap in the Cambridge defence,

coming off his wing to feed the ball to fullback Chris Mahoney who ran in a try. McMahon's conversion brought Oxford the lead and put the pressure on Cambridge just minutes before half time. Roff knocked on 20m out from the Cambridge line moments later, denying him a try that may well have proved fatal for the light blues. Going into half time Oxford led 10-8.

Early after the resumption of play Oxford extended their lead with a penalty; Cambridge's misery was compounded when fly-half Ross Broadfoot left the pitch with an injury. A backs reshuffle saw captain Blake move to the 10 position, a position he had played before but not under such high pressure conditions. Another McMahon drop goal further punished the light Blues, who hadn't looked threatening since early in the match.

Playing at 10, Blake seized con-

trol of the match; several well placed chip kicks through brought the Blues valuable territory. A second driven over try, this time going to Tom Malaney, saw Cambridge spring back into the game. Having lost their only regular place kicker, Juliano Fiori, a backrow replacement, stepped up and took the honours with a well taken conversion.

With the match at 16-15 to Oxford victory was well within the grasp of either side. With ten minutes remaining, Cambridge's rampaging No.8 James Lumby smashed through for what would prove to be the winning try. Again Fiori made the conversion taking the score to 16-22.

For the last ten minutes of the match, Oxford literally threw everything at Cambridge's try line. For one nail biting minute after another the dark Blues camped on the Cambridge line.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

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